

PALESTINE-WHEATLEY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020

- I. Welcome-The meeting was called to order and guess welcomed by Derrick Boileau, president.
- II. Establish a Quorum-Roll call: Shane Clifton-absent, Jamie McCoy-present, Jared Parker-present, James Smith-absent, Shannon Bridges-present, Vernon Thweatt-present, and Derrick Boileau-present. A quorum was established.
- III. Report
 - A. Elementary School Report-Kristi Wilson, Principal
 - B. High School Report-Randy Cannon, Principal
 - C. Facilities Report-Jon Estes, Superintendent
 - D. District Report-Jon Estes, Superintendent
- IV. Adjournment-A motion was made by Vernon Thweatt and seconded by Jared Parker to adjourn this meeting. All rose in agreement.

This meeting took place in the High School Cafeteria at 6:00 pm.

Vernon Thweatt, Secretary

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1. Krista Wilson
2. Randy Cannon
3. Bradie Johnson
4. K. Jayson
5. Debbie Roemer

Palestine-Wheatley Elementary

Grades K-6

Annual Report to the Public

November 9, 2020

Palestine-Wheatley Elementary encompasses grades kindergarten through 6th grade with a total of 429 students. We employ 26 teachers, all of which are highly qualified. We hired two new teachers for the 2020-2021 school year. Maria McCoy was hired to teach Kindergarten and Alyssa Foster for 4th grade. We have 3 instructional assistants to assist with special education, Dyslexia, interventions and to oversee the computer lab. We have one counselor, a secretary, two custodians and a district technology coordinator.

Special Education teachers are Mary Oltmann (grades K-4) and Annette Sparkman (grades 5-6). Combined, they serve 29 students in indirect and resource room settings. We have 36 students in our gifted and talented program. Mrs. Medford works with our K-2 students using a push-in model and a pull-out method with 3rd & 4th grades. Grades 5th & 6th are served through their classroom teachers with enrichment type activities. Bonnie Halbert is our literacy coach. She is responsible for assisting teachers and students with English, reading and writing in an effort to raise test scores. She is also responsible for overseeing our district's Dyslexia program.

Our focus for the 2020-21 school year is to raise our achievement focusing on student attendance and test scores. Although our school rating improved there is still room for

improvement. One struggle we continue to face includes the academic performance of school choice students and the gaps that exist because of their previous academic experiences in mostly private school districts. We have blocked off the first two hours of our instructional day for support staff to provide students with literacy interventions for those in need of support. We have recently purchased an intervention program called 95% Group. We are in the early stages of implementing the program due to our mandated release in March. This will provide our students with reading interventions and help bridge the gap from lost time with in-person learning. We will provide after-school tutoring for students who need support in academic areas of Reading, Math and Science.

We have the opportunity to improve the school quality score by focusing on our Science Achievement and Improvement. Mr. Quattlebaum, the Science Specialist at Great Rivers Educational Cooperative, is helping our teachers plan their instruction and supporting our teachers weekly in their day to day lessons. He has also assisted us in receiving a grant that has supplied our 3rd and 4th grades with new science equipment.

Palestine-Wheatley Elementary has made many adjustments and modifications in order to safely serve and teach our students during the COVID pandemic. Our students are encouraged to wear masks daily as well as our employees. Our 5th and 6th teachers are traveling to the students in order to eliminate those students from further exposure to the virus. Hand sanitizing stations have been placed at different points in the building for student access.

Our students have been given the option of attending for on-site instruction or virtually. Our virtual education is being provided through Edgenuity. This is an online program which provides all core courses as well as electives. Our students are paired with a virtual teacher provided by the company. This alleviates our teachers from having to provide both on-site and virtual learning. Currently we have 28 students attending virtually and 401 on-site.

The Palestine-Wheatley Elementary provides 4 days of on-site instruction and 1 virtually. The virtual day was originally on Monday and has now been moved to Friday. This was designed to allow a 3 day 72-hour sanitization period for our buildings. Our teachers received 2 days of Google Classroom training this past summer in order to prepare for virtual Fridays as well as a possible shutdown due to the virus.

Palestine-Wheatley High School
Grades 7-12
Report to the Public
November 9, 2020

Palestine-Wheatley is a 7-12 grade high school with 345 students attending face time school and an additional 28 students attending total virtual school. We employ twenty-two teachers, all of which are highly qualified. We have one instructional aide in special services. We have one counselor, one district technology coordinator, one secretary, and three custodians (one is part time).

Special Education teachers are Annette Ivory (grades 9-12) and Annette Sparkman (grades 7-8). Combined, they serve 42 students (12%) in indirect and resource room settings. We have 70 students in our gifted and talented program (20%). Emily Medford works with our teachers to provide services for our G/T students. We have a literacy specialist, Mrs. Halbert, that is working with students and teachers which has helped us significantly improve scores in English, reading and writing. She is testing coordinator and dyslexia coordinator also, as wearing many other hats.

We have 61 students attending EACC classes. These students are taking a total of 106 class seats, some online and some in classes taught on our campus. EACC furnishes teachers to teach these classes on our campus. This year English Composition I, English Composition II, American History, College Algebra and Physical Science are being taught on our campus. We also have a group of 61 students taking online classes from Virtual Arkansas. All of our students are required to do a virtual day each week, on Friday. Teachers use Google Classroom to present their lessons on that day and students log in and do their work online for that day.

We administer a Citizenship Test to all students before they graduate as an additional requirement by ADE. This is the same test given to foreign people trying to gain citizenship in the U.S.

Technology is readily available to all students in our school. We use computers, chrome books, and I pads to fulfill our technological needs. We have a stationary computer lab adjacent to our library. We have new computer labs in the business

classroom and in the 7/8 grade computer science lab. Much of our testing is being done online rather than on paper. Our teachers also have access to the latest technology in their classrooms. The Department of Education has asked schools to provide offerings for online classes in high schools to prepare students to take online college classes. The ADE requests that all students will take an online course before they graduate high school. We also offer a computer science coding class to help students learn the workings of a computer and learn coding for developing computer applications.

We have added a new competitive team. PW recently entered the world of competitive video games known as E-sports. The students participate on a weekly basis against teams from around the state. There are three different games that are played, League of Legends, Rocket League, and Smite. There is a fall season and a spring season, each lasting eight weeks plus a week of single elimination playoffs. Miss Graham coaches our e-sports team.

Our shooting team has increased and Mr. Lockhart is confident he will receive a sizable grant from Arkansas Game and Fish to help him expand his offerings to our students.

State testing is through the ACT Aspire Assessment. This test is taken online by all students in grades 7-10 in the high school. (Our eleventh graders take the regular ACT test) We have taken the ACT Aspire test for the last three years. The first year we used this test we were not pleased with the results we received. We have implemented several interventions, including mandatory tutoring, use of a literacy specialist, and specific curriculum and teaching methods to help our students achieve more success on the test. We improved our scores in nearly every area of the test. We are not nearly finished with this endeavor but we are moving in the right direction. Emphasis is being placed on raising the scores on this test. We recently received recognition from the Office of Educational Policy for our improved scores. We have several new teachers this year and everyone has fit in well with our existing staff. We attribute our student's progress to the quality of the teachers and support staff that we have at Palestine-Wheatley High School. They keep their students engaged in learning within their classrooms and everyone is eager to do whatever it takes to improve.

As a school we are looking at two specific areas of improvement, 1) raising test scores and 2) improving attendance. These two things go hand in hand and we have room for improvement in both areas. Attaining the higher scores has become increasingly difficult with the diverse backgrounds of students coming to us from school choice however with hard working teachers and persistence we are seeing success in raising these scores. The communication of expectations with parents and the interventions we have implemented have shown positive growth. Parents have learned the expectation of students coming to school is imperative for their children's success.

The new school has been fantastic. It enables us to separate the lower grades from the upper grades. The seventh and eighth grades have their own hallway, bathrooms, lockers, lunch period and group of teachers. They are able to go through their day with little or no contact with older students. All students seem to be proud of their new building and are taking precautions to protect it.

Covid 19 has had everyone stressed, teachers, students and parents alike. We have had little problem with this pandemic in the high school but we are constantly and diligently doing the things we need to do to minimize the risks.

2020-2021 Annual Report to the Public
November 9, 2020
Palestine-Wheatley School District

- Palestine-Wheatley School District is in good standing with the State Dept of Education, we are not on any sort of probationary status at this time.
- Our October 1 enrollment numbers were 779 students, which is down 20 students from last year's enrollment count of 799 and down 39 from three years ago. Just to put that in perspective, our co-op area lost 913 students over the last two school years.
- On October 1, we had 167 students in 9-11 grades. The AAA uses a three year average of 9-11 for classifications. This loss in numbers puts us at a definite advantage of bumping back down to 2A during the next athletic cycle.
- We are currently operating 2 schools with 2 LEA numbers. We operate a K-6 for Elementary and a 7-12 high school.
- Our district's finances are on sound financial footing since we have reversed the trend of declining balances. We have built up good reserves that we hope will offset the need for a milage increase for future building projects. We did not ask for and have not sought a milage increase for the new high school which is amazing and unheard of.
- We should start breaking ground on the new athletic facilities late this week.
- Although, both our high school and elementary schools were the highest performing schools in our co-op area. We are working on improvements in both.
- We are working well during this Covid 19 plandemic and doing way better than most thought we would when school started.
- Altogether, we are off to another very good year!!

GT Annual Report to the Public
November 9, 2020

In the 2019-2020 school year we had 110 students being serviced as Gifted and Talented. We currently have 106 students identified as Gifted and Talented in grades 3-12 for the 2020-2021 school year.

Grades K-2nd:

All K-2 classes receive whole group enrichment once a week by the GT teacher. These enrichment lessons last 30 minutes and are centered around logical reasoning and creative thinking skills. At the end of 2nd grade, students are eligible for formal identification and placement into the gifted program.

Grades 3rd -4th:

In grades 3-4, identified gifted students are serviced through a pullout program. They are excused from the regular classroom one day a week for a total of 150 minutes to attend GT classes. During this time, the students participate in many activities including weekly inventions or challenges, class newspapers, contests and research. The GT curriculum is centered around thinking skills being taught rather than just the acquisition of knowledge itself. Students are given opportunities to use critical and creative thinking and to use both logic and creativity to solve problems. The GT fair this year is focused on creative problem solving. This gives the students the opportunity to approach a problem or challenge in an imaginative or innovative way. The students also work to build leadership abilities and to provide opportunities to study in individual areas of interest. Fourth, fifth and sixth grade students are given the opportunity to participate in Elementary Quiz Bowl.

Grades 5th -8th:

GT services at this level are provided through secondary content classes. The classroom teacher has been trained to provide activities of differentiation to challenge these students. This differentiation includes study skills, leadership skills, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills and decision-making skills. Documentation is submitted to the GT teacher each nine-week grading period. Several of these students are enrolled in the Duke TIP Talent Search sponsored by Duke University. This program allows eligible students based on standardized testing scores, the opportunity to take the ACT or SAT to give greater insight of college entrance exams.

Grades 9th -12th:

GT students in grades 9-12 are placed into Pre-Ap or Advanced placement classes. Advanced placement classes are part of a nationwide program designed to set high standards for high school students and to allow them to be better prepared for college. Many of these students are also receiving concurrent college credit through East Arkansas Community College.

Nominations for the Gifted Program will be taken throughout the year and testing will begin in early spring.

Yearly surveys and evaluations are given at the end of the school year for suggestions to improve the GT program. The GT Advisory Committee meets annually to discuss these improvements and suggestions to help better the GT Program at Palestine-Wheatley.

Emily Medford
GT Coordinator/Teacher