

Chalkboard

By

Dr. Randy C. Barrett, Superintendent
Gentry Public Schools

My mother “raised me” to say “Yes, Ma’am”; “No, Ma’am”; and “Thank You”. So; in deference to my mother and the Arkansas State Legislature (Arkansas Code Annotated 6-15-1702), I want to say “Thank You” to the parents who came to school for our first Parent-Teacher Conference this year which was held on September 20, 2005 and September 21, 2005. Roughly, 58% of our student body had a parent attend. Regular readers will know that the theme of parents being involved in their children’s education is a key to their children’s success is a reoccurring topic in the **Chalkboard** articles.

I would also say “Thanks” to the sixty citizens who made the effort to vote at our Annual School Election that was also held on September 20th. In the same breath I offer the same “Thank You” to both Ms. Watanabe and Mr. Williamson for having the initiative to seek a seat on the Gentry School Board. Ms. Watanabe’s close margin of victory seems to affirm some earlier public comments I had made in saying that both candidates were well qualified to serve on the board.

My final “Thank You” is addressed to the school district’s patrons who took time to attend the district’s and the individual campuses’ *Annual Report To The Public*, which was presented at the Middle/High School Cafeteria on September 13, 2005. If you had wanted to attend this meeting but did not have the opportunity, there is no need to despair. The next seven **Chalkboards** will summarize the information presented at that meeting. As in past years, each presenter at the meeting will be a “guest author”. If you are the type that had rather watch the movie than read the book, then log on to our website at <http://www.gentrypioneers.com/> and watch the PowerPoint. The district summary begins with the next paragraph.

“The mission of Gentry School District is to provide a comprehensive educational experience for all students in kindergarten through grade twelve that will emphasize literacy and mathematics to provide a foundation for lifelong learning.”

Gentry Public School District is comprised of four schools- Primary, Intermediate, Middle, and High. All four schools are fully accredited by both the North Central Association and the State Department of Education. Grades K-2 attend the Primary, Grades 3-5 attend the Intermediate School,

Grades 6-8 attend the Middle School, and the High School serves grades 9-12.

The enrollment of all students is 1451. The counts by grade are K, 118; First, 111; Second, 124; Third, 128; Fourth, 106; Fifth, 104; Sixth, 101; Seventh, 109; Eighth, 109; Ninth, 141; Tenth, 104; Eleventh, 81; and Twelfth, 99. Student enrollment has grown at a steady pace in the last five years. In the 2001-02 school year the district had an enrollment of 1207 students. To serve these students the district employs 128 certified staff members and 84 classified staff.

The Gentry School District has a land area of approximately 85 square miles. A seven-member school board serves the district. Five are elected from zones; two are elected at-large.

The district operates 12 “out-of-the-city limits” route buses and 3 “Town” routes. Counting both morning and afternoon transports, approximately 837 students are transported daily with all trips adding up to over 727 miles traveled each day.

The district operates two school cafeterias. Counting breakfast and lunch, approximately 1282 meals are served daily

The district’s budget, excluding the building fund, will total approximately \$11,500,000 in expenditures. Of that amount, \$8,573,757, or about 75% of the total budget is allocated for employee salaries and benefits. Almost equal amounts were budgeted for maintenance and operation of the district and for debt service obligations, \$1,210,900 and \$1,224,505 respectively. Capital outlay needs required 1.27% of the budget at a cost of \$146,167 and non-salary federal programs responsibilities netted \$316,381 comprising about 2.76% of the overall budget. On the revenue side of the ledger, the district is projected to receive 53.45% of the total budgeted revenues from the state, 36.42% from local sources, 6.24% via federal programs, and 3.89% as payments from other districts in the special education consortium that Gentry leads.

Next week’s *Chalkboard* will be penned by Kimberly Glass, the newest member of Gentry’s administrative team. Ms. Glass serves as the district’s federal and curriculum coordinator.