

## **Chalkboard**

By

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Gentry Public Schools**

The RULES GOVERNING STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (last adopted November 2007) specify that “Each school district shall provide and publish, in a newspaper with general circulation in the district before November 15 of each school year, a report to the public detailing progress toward accomplishing program goals, accreditation standards, and proposals to correct deficiencies. If there is no paper media with general circulation, notification shall be mailed to parents.”

With regard to “accreditation standards” and “deficiencies”, only a simple statement is required- all four of Gentry School District’s school campuses are fully accredited by the Arkansas Department of Education and the North Central Accreditation Association thus there are no deficiencies to report. That of course does not give you a complete picture of your district’s standing so the following information is provided.

The Gentry School District has a land area of approximately 85 square miles. From within the district, 1461 students were enrolled with the Primary school having 362, the Intermediate School reporting 347, the middle school denoting 311, and the high school completing the total with 441 students enrolled. Approximately 825 students are transported daily with 14 route buses and four “town” buses logging over 700 miles daily. Because a school day encompasses two meal periods, the district serves, including breakfast and lunch, approximately 1300 meals daily.

Serving the instructional and logistical needs of the students are 129 certified employees and 83 classified employees. The district has a principal administering each campus, along with an assistant principal at the high school who also serves as the district’s athletic director. The district also has certified staff overseeing and coordinating various specialty programs such as Special Education, Gifted and Talented and ESL. In addition the district has a certified employee responsible for coordinating the district’s technology services and programs. Three classified employees provide oversight and direction for the district’s food services programs, transportation, and maintenance.

The district is governed by a seven member school board with five elected from zones and two elected at-large from the district. The board

hires and directs a school superintendent who is charged with oversight of the school district's day-to-day functions and who serves as the board's ex-officio secretary. The board's adopted mission statement reflects its values; "The mission of the Gentry School District is to work with the community in providing safe and successful educational experiences for each student."

In this school fiscal year the district will collect approximately 13 million dollars of revenue with 54% being state monies, 42% being generated from local and county collections, and 4% being derived from federal sources. The district will have expenditures of roughly the same amount with the single greatest expenditure being employee salaries. The district will also spend approximately 1.2 million dollars for bonded indebtedness or payments on loans for existing facilities. The district has been classified as being in "fiscal distress" by the Arkansas State Board of Education and has filed a plan to remedy this status.

The district offers a myriad of extracurricular activities for its students especially at the middle and high school levels. At the high school 63% of the students participate in extracurricular activities with the percentage increasing to 68% at the middle school. The district has found that students who are involved in extracurricular activities have a high graduation rate, less discipline incidents, and academic performance comparable with the general school populace.

The district has experienced success within its instructional efforts to promote student learning. Various initiatives such as Total Instructional Alignment, Targeted Testing, Effective Literacy Training, Classroom Walk-Through Training, Response to Intervention, Great Expectations, Reading Comprehension, Character Education, Research Based Instruction, ongoing, and continual professional development have and are being utilized. The fruits of these efforts, and others, in improving student achievement within the district is substantiated by the most recent Math and Literacy test results which reflect Gentry students performing on the same or higher level with their northwest Arkansas and/or state counterparts. This success is also demonstrated by the district having met or exceeded Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with regard to No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Obviously this is a mere capsule sketch of the happenings of the district and the hard work by the teachers and the work of the many others who services are required each school day for each student to have the best opportunity for a quality education.

A review of the district's Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) and other pertinent data related to this summary report to the public may be found on the district's website at

<http://www.gentrypioneers.com/>.