

# **SUPERINTENDENT: Success is a tradition**

By Paul Upchurch

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Congratulations to all Oldham County School employees, parents, board members and community stakeholders for another great year.

Once again our school system has earned the No. 1 ranking on the state test in 2010 among all county school districts in Kentucky.

Senior students from our three high schools posted a composite ACT score of 22.3 compared to the state composite score of 19.4. In addition, each of our three high schools was identified as being among the group of America's top performing high schools.

In 2010 Oldham County Schools' 774 graduates ranked fourth in the state for college/career readiness following three districts having a much smaller number of high school graduates (74, 189 and 47) than our district. Furthermore, performance at all ten of the district's elementary schools is well above national averages on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

The state of Kentucky ranked 19th in 2010 on the NAEP test, which rates all 50 states based on academic performance on a common test covering the basic subject areas.

These results provide evidence that our state, led by Oldham County, is continuously improving its rank and status in the national educational community while preparing students for a productive future. Education reform is working and all Kentuckians and Oldham Countians have cause to be very proud.

Recently, the Center for American Progress released a report that was a culmination of a yearlong study of the efficiency of the nation's public education system, which included almost every school system in America. The purpose of the study, entitled "Return on Educational Investment," was to study educational productivity by analyzing each district's student achievement compared to funds expended.

The Oldham County School district ranks among the top three districts in Kentucky in terms of a "Return on Educational Investment." In 2009 the Long-term Policy & Research Center published a report that placed Kentucky fifth among all fifty states with respect to "Return on Educational Investment." This information certainly confirms the fact that, although our school district ranks 173rd out of 174 districts in revenue received from the state, the Oldham County Board of Education leads a highly productive school district and makes excellent decisions concerning instructional initiatives and district finances.

In addition, the quality of work and outstanding student experience provided by Oldham County teachers has been recognized by national education organizations. Over the past few years our school district has been working in concert with the Public Education Business Coalition in Denver, Colo. The PEBC is an institute that focuses on training teachers to coach their students in critical thinking and problem solving strategies.

The purpose of this training is to equip Oldham County teachers, and ultimately students, with the tools necessary to apply thinking strategies in all subject areas.

As this culture of analysis and deeper understanding of curriculum is established in each classroom, evidence showing individual student application in daily lessons and on school and state tests is gathered on each student.

Throughout this training, staff developers from PEBC have had multiple opportunities to observe in Oldham County classrooms. During their visits they have made comments such as, "These are some of the best

lessons that we have seen in classrooms as we have worked with districts across the country.” These comments affirm the quality of classroom instruction and rigor that we, as principals and district administrators, observe on a weekly basis in classrooms across the district. Also, as a result of Senate Bill 1 and Kentucky’s recent reform initiatives, we are working with Authentic Education to align curriculum with the new national educational standards.

The curriculum specialists from Authentic Education have also commented that Oldham County teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators are among the most knowledgeable, dedicated, and hardworking educators with whom they have worked.

Whether the standard is state or national testing, educational productivity, excellence in classroom practice, school leadership, community support, or parent involvement, the Oldham County Schools continue to excel. We are very blessed in this community to have the personnel in place to meet the educational needs of our children and young adults as they are preparing for their futures.

Thanks to our faculty, staff, parents, and stakeholders for making success a reality.

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