

12-4-2012

HELLO AND WELCOME TO MY REGULAR VIDEO MESSAGE. I'M JANET BARRESI, OKLAHOMA STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

LIKE MOST OF YOU, I HAVE HAD A VERY BUSY FALL. LET ME TAKE SOME TIME TO CATCH YOU UP ON SOME EXCITING THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN HAPPENING.

IN LATE OCTOBER, WE RELEASED OUR A-F SCHOOL REPORT CARDS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REFORM WAS TO GIVE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS A MORE TRANSPARENT LOOK INTO HOW THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL IS PERFORMING. I'VE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE MANY EMAILS AND PHONE CALLS MY STAFF HAS RECEIVED PRAISING THE REPORT CARDS. I'VE ALSO BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE MANY NEWS STORIES I'VE READ IN WHICH DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS HAVE SAID THE REPORT CARDS HAVE SHOWN THEM AREAS WHERE THEY CAN CELEBRATE SUCCESS AND AREAS WHERE THEY SEE A NEED TO FOCUS MORE ATTENTION TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES. THIS WAS THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEEDED REFORM. THIS WEEK WE PLAN TO RELEASE DISTRICT REPORT CARDS, AND LATER WE WILL RELEASE THE STATE REPORT CARD.

SINCE THE SCHOOL REPORT CARDS WERE RELEASED, I'VE ALSO EMBARKED ON A STATEWIDE TOUR CALLED "RAISE THE GRADE TOGETHER." I'M VISITING DIFFERENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE STATE, HOLDING MEETINGS WITH GROUPS OF LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO DISCUSS WAYS EVERYONE CAN GET INVOLVED IN RAISING THE GRADE AT THEIR LOCAL SCHOOLS. THESE MEETINGS HAVE BEEN INSPIRING AND INFORMATIVE FOR ME AND WILL HELP US CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR GRADING PROCESS AS WE GO FORWARD.

IN NOVEMBER, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION HELD ITS BOARD MEETING IN SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA AT THE FREDERICK SCHOOL DISTRICT. I'D LIKE TO SAY THANK YOU AGAIN TO THE FOLKS IN FREDERICK FOR THE HOSPITALITY THEY SHOWED US AND FOR THE FRANK CONVERSATIONS THEY SHARED ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACED AT THE RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL. THESE VISITS INFORM THE DECISIONS THAT WE MAKE EVERY DAY ON BEHALF OF STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND THEY SERVE AS A REMINDER OF HOW OUR WORK AFFECTS THE EDUCATORS WHO ARE HARD AT WORK IN OUR SCHOOLS. WE WILL HOLD OUR JANUARY BOARD MEETING IN HOWE PUBLIC SCHOOL. I ALSO WILL BE VISITING MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE COMING YEAR.

IN THE MEANTIME, I CONTINUE TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH STATE LEGISLATORS AND THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE CONCERNING OUR FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET REQUEST. IN OCTOBER, THE STATE BOARD APPROVED A \$289 MILLION BUDGET INCREASE REQUEST FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. BY REQUESTING SUCH A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE, I AM PROMISING A RETURN ON INVESTMENT TO OKLAHOMA TAXPAYERS. IN FUTURE YEARS, I EXPECT THESE FUNDS TO BE TIED TO GAINS IN CORE SUBJECTS SUCH AS READING AND MATH, SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATEWIDE TEACHER AND LEADER EFFECTIVENESS SYSTEM, AND GAINS IN CLOSING THE STATE'S ACHIEVEMENT GAPS FOR MINORITY STUDENTS. IT'S TIME FOR A NEW CONVERSATION ABOUT OUR STATE'S EDUCATION SPENDING THAT FOCUSES ON

TARGETED STRATEGIES AND CLEAR-CUT RESULTS.

ADDITIONALLY, WITH AN INCREASE IN STATE AID TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, I WILL BE REQUESTING AN INCREASE OF FOUR INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS ON THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR, AND I ANTICIPATE THAT LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS WILL USE A PORTION OF THE NEW DOLLARS TO BOOST TEACHER SALARIES. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE WORK TO ASSURE WE CAN ATTRACT AND APPROPRIATELY COMPENSATE GREAT TEACHERS.

FINALLY, AS WE ENTER THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, I WOULD LIKE TO WISH EACH OF YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.