

Oklahoma State Board of Education Western Heights Report



OKLAHOMA
Education



Timeline of Events - 2021

- April – Accredited with Probation
 - 90 days to comply
- June
 - Update provided; special audit requested
- July
 - Accreditation with Probation – Modified to include state intervention, with conditions
 - District board of education: until a court order is received, will not recognize authority of the State
- August
 - Court order received – District board of education must comply with State authority, orders and directives, including the July 12 modified conditions of Accredited with Probation
 - OSDE team assigned to Western Heights – opening school and begin needs assessment

School Opening

- Aug. 18 – first time in 17 months with exception of a 2-week period in late 2020-21
- Staff
 - 35% reduction in prior 2 years; low morale; impasse
 - Staff meetings, engagement, return of site control
 - Professional Development – Trauma, career planning and student opportunities, Response to Intervention (RTI), online learning, data analysis
 - Positions vacant: 51 (16 certified, 35 non-certified/support)
- Facilities maintenance
 - Nonworking and leaking HVAC units; mold
 - Current: mold caused by air flow issue has been rectified; carpets replaced; sanitized rooms; air quality tests performed; fire sprinkler system is fully operational
- Transportation
 - 2 buses passed inspection; need 17 to operate
 - Current: 5 new buses, inspections completed and passed with current fleet, recruiting drivers
- Family and student engagement
 - Community meetings – strategic investments and needs
 - Student enrollment up 10% from end of last year; 98% in-person instruction; concurrent enrollment, alternative education and technology center participation are all increased

Continuing Challenges

- Effects of COVID-19 and very little in person interaction and no extra curricular activities last year.
- Learning slide has been detected in early grades.
- 2020: 3 of 4 elementary schools did not have a 4th grade student score proficient on statewide assessments
- Social and emotional needs must be met before advances can be made academically.
- Staff to meet the needs of students
 - Ex: Bilingual employee at every site for in-person and phone communication.

Employee Relations

- Western Heights Education Association has agreed, in principle, to the negotiated agreement, for the first time in two years, with no increase in the salary schedule.
- This was unanimously approved by the certified staff.
- In an effort to recruit and retain quality staff, we recommend offering:
 - \$2,000 retention stipend to certified personnel,
 - \$1,000 to support personnel, and
 - \$500 signing incentive for all new employees coming to the district during these uncertain times.
- This has been tabled by the Western Heights board of education by a vote of 4-1 at the September 13, 2021 board meeting.