



www.LRSD.org

# Little Rock School District

Annual Report 2007-2008

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Little Rock School District  
810 W. Markham St.  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-447-1000  
www.LRSD.org

2007-2008  
Board of Directors:  
Dr. Katherine Mitchell,  
President  
Dianne Curry,  
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Charles Armstrong  
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Robert M. Daugherty  
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Dr. Linda Watson,  
Interim Superintendent

*The vision of the Little Rock School District is to accelerate learning for all students.*

## Our students are academic achievers!

### Central High School produces two Presidential Scholars

**Anne Ye** and **Cyrus Bahrassa**, both seniors at Little Rock Central High School, were named Presidential Scholars. They were the only two students from Arkansas to be so honored in 2008.

Anne achieved the nearly impossible by earning perfect scores on the PSAT, ACT and SAT exams. She also received the Siemens Award for Advanced Placement from the Siemens Foundation and the College Board.

Cyrus, Central's student body president, represented the students of Central High by speaking at the commemoration ceremony of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the desegregation of Central High School. He also was co-captain of the 7-A state champion Quiz Bowl team. 📖



### A Message from the Superintendent

As I begin my second year as Superintendent, I anticipate many positive and productive educational opportunities for all students that will be both challenging as well as rewarding. Even as we are entrenched in a new year, we must take a moment to look back at the accomplishments from last year and summarize the gains we made as a district.

One of the accomplishments of which I am the most proud is the math gains on the state benchmark made by students in grades three through eight and Algebra I. These scores show us that when the district focuses on a goal with 100 percent effort by all, great strides can be made. I was slightly disappointed in the literacy scores which showed a small decline compared to recent years. Thus, we are focusing our efforts on literacy this year while staying the course in math to accelerate learning in all areas. I am committed to providing a quality education for all students that will meet and even exceed state standards.

Test scores are not the only measure of a district's academic success. Each year students in the Little Rock School District win awards and share the spotlight with our outstanding teachers and staff. This past year was no exception as the Little Rock School District continued to lead the state in National Merit Scholars and National Achievement Scholars. The Little Rock School District had 24 teachers earn National Board Certification through our special program which supports teachers in their efforts to excel in their profession. This brings the total number of teachers with National Board Certification to 84 in the Little Rock School District.

As the 2000 bond projects begin to wind down, several large construction projects were completed. The Little Rock School District opened new wings at three locations: Chicot Primary, Forest Heights Middle and Wakefield

(continued on p. 6)

### Fed Challenge team wins national title — again!

Central High School successfully defended its title at the 2008 Fed Challenge national competition in Washington, DC, in May.

Central is the first team to win back-to-back titles since 1988. The Fed Challenge is an economics competition sponsored by the Federal Reserve System.

Central's Fed Challenge team included **Hilary Ledwell** (captain), **Brent Sodman**, **Cameron Zohoori**, **Jack DeLoach**, **Aaron Campbell** and **Farhan Syed** (alternate). The 2007 team captain, **Stuart Shirrell**, served as coach, and **George West** is the team's advisor.

The competition involves presenting an analysis of the current state of the national economy to the Federal Open Market Committee. 📖



### LRSD salutes its National Merit, Achievement scholars

Half of Pulaski County's 2008 National Merit Semifinalists were LRSD students, and Central High School had the largest number of Semifinalists of any school in Arkansas. The LRSD's 2008 National Merit Semifinalists were: **Susan N. Dumond** from Parkview Arts & Science Magnet High School and **Cyrus F. Bahrassa**, **Shoshana L. Berleant**, **Abigail M. Dobson**, **Julia D. Hofheimer**, **Dillon R. Hupp**, **Esther L. Jennings**, **Hilary Ledwell**, **Guo Li**, **Peter Y. Liu**, **Miles A. McCullough**, **Allison K. Schexnayder**, **Brent C. Sodman**, **Anne Z. Ye**, **Zherui Zhang**, **Stephen Q. Zhao**, **Elaine J. Zhou** and **Cameron T. Zohoori** from Little Rock Central High School.

Of the 13 Arkansas students designated as 2008 National Achievement Semifinalists, nearly half were students at Central High School. They are: **Geoffrey Jackson**, **Taylor James-Lightner**, **Jennifer Jeffers**, **Annie Mukunyadzi**, **Sarita Robinson** and **Heather Turner**. 📖







**Stella Cameron** and **Carol Thompson**, Media Specialists at Central High School, received the “Best Media Program” award from the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media.

**Gladys Godfrey** from McClellan Magnet High School and **Mary V. Jacobs** from J.A. Fair Magnet High School received the 2007-08 Arkansas Outstanding JAG Specialist award from National Jobs for America’s Graduates, Inc.

The Central Arkansas Section of the American Chemical Society named **Dr. Beth Maris**, a chemistry teacher at Central High School, its Teacher of the Year.

**Ruthie Walls**, a social studies teacher at Hall High School, was named one of six Polly M. Jackson Master Economics Teachers by Economics Arkansas.

**Barbara Williams**, LRSD’s Coordinator of Instructional Technology, was named Technology Leader of the Year by the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media.

**Lilly Bouie**, Child Nutrition Department Director, was named Commodity Director of the Year by the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

The Central Region of the Arkansas Choral Directors Association named **Scott Whitfield**, choir director at Central High School, recipient of its Senior High Director of the Year Award. **Bennie Carol Wade**, choir director at Dunbar Magnet Middle School, won the Junior High Director of the Year Award.

# Little Rock’s teachers are exemplary

## LRSD Teachers of the Year



**Barbara Ann Griggs** (center in photo above), a Reading First coach at Washington Magnet Elementary, received the Marian G. Lacey Educator of the Year Award at the 2008 Crystal Awards Banquet. The gala event is held annually to honor outstanding teachers in the Little Rock School District.

Special awards also were presented to four other teachers. **Lynn Smith**, an art instructor from Central High School, and **Carolyn Ann Foreman**, choir director at Parkview Magnet High School, tied for High School Teacher of the Year honors. **Trela Cook**, a math teacher at Pulaski Heights Middle School, received Middle School Teacher of the Year honors. **Thelma Watson**, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Fulbright Elementary, was named Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

## Stephens Award winners

Five students and five teachers were named winners of the 2008 Stephens Award, which honors outstanding students and educators every year in Little Rock.

The student winners were:  
**Cyrus Bahrassa**, Central High School;  
**Brent Sodman**, Central High School;  
**Anne Z. Ye**, Central High School;  
**Elaine Zhou**, Central High School; and  
**Cameron Zohoori**, Central High School.

The teacher winners were:  
**Stella Cameron**, Media Specialist at Central High School;  
**Kathleen T. Holladay**, Oral Communications teacher at Central High School;  
**Emily Matson Lewis**, English teacher at Parkview Magnet High School;  
**Stacey McAdoo**, Oral Communications teacher at Central High School; and  
**Alan W. Sharlow**, Band Director at McClellan Magnet High School.

## Ark. School Nurse of the Year

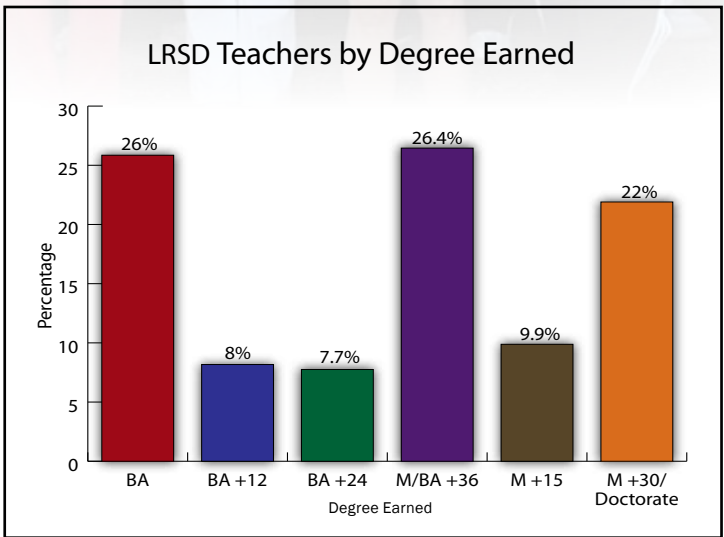
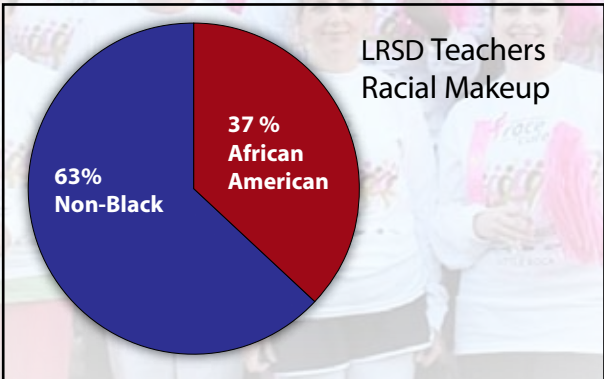
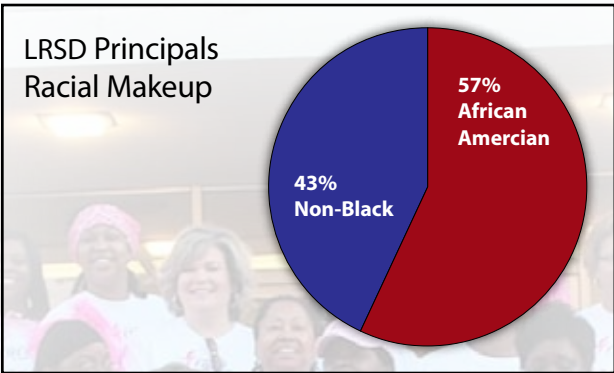


The Arkansas School Nurses Association selected **Doug Harrison**, Chicot Primary School's nurse, to be the Arkansas School Nurse of the Year for 2007-08.

## Teachers earn National Board Certification

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards granted certification to 24 LRSD teachers this year. National Board Certification is a symbol of commitment to excellence in teaching. The teachers who earned National Board Certification this year include:

- Hollace Beard-Hunting**, Mabelvale Middle School;
- Carolyn Blome**, Gibbs Elementary School;
- Cathy Cagle**, J.A. Fair High School;
- Kathleen Church**, Watson Intermediate School;
- Barbara Griggs**, Washington Elementary School;
- Susanne Hughes**, Pulaski Heights Middle School;
- Michelle Jackson**, Hall High School;
- Marilyn James**, Baseline Elementary School;
- Misty Janski**, Geyer Springs Elementary School;
- Mary Lawson**, Brady Elementary School;
- Natasch Lindsey-Acker**, Mann Middle School;
- Esther Luckadue-Jones**, Romine Elementary School;
- Christine Mignot-Bugeya**, Forest Heights Middle School;
- Catherine Morgan**, Gibbs Elementary School;
- Amy Moss**, Booker Elementary School;
- Judith Murray**, Parkview High School;
- Jennifer Nash**, Terry Elementary School;
- Jerri Ramsey**, Rockefeller Elementary School;
- Sondra Strong**, J.A. Fair High School;
- Carol Thompson**, Central High School;
- Dora Wallace**, J.A. Fair High School;
- LaPara Washington**, J.A. Fair High School;
- Barbara Williams**, Director of Instructional Technology; and
- Janice Wolfe**, Booker Elementary School.





# \$13.6 million in grants

The Little Rock School District received \$13,604,459 million in grants in 2007-08. These funds are for programs running the gamut from helping 4-year-old children get the proper start in school to encouraging high school students to prepare for college by taking pre-AP and AP classes to starting or continuing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers at schools, providing much-needed extracurricular programs and services for students and their families.

\$4,795,956 — AR Reading First — Bale, Brady, Chicot, Dodd, Geyer Springs, M.L. King, Mabelvale, McDermott, Meadowcliff, Romine, Stephens, Wakefield, Washington, Watson, Wilson elementaries.

\$2,978,708 — Early Reading First — Chicot (4-year-old program), UAMS Head Start 4-year-old program.

\$1,242,142 — Smaller Learning Communities — Hall High.

\$538,322 — 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC)/Boys & Girls Club — Woodruff Elementary.

\$539,723 — 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC — Dunbar Middle.

\$533,164 — 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC — J.A. Fair High.



\$532,570 — 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC/Junior Achievement — Pulaski Heights Middle.

\$529,205 — 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC/Junior Achievement — Hall High.

\$524,048 — 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC/L.O.V.E. (Let Our Violence End) — Henderson Middle.

\$299,722 — Library Grant — Central High; Dunbar Middle; M.L. King, Franklin, Rockefeller, Stephens, Washington elementaries.

\$285,513 — Math/Science Partnership — Middle School Math Teachers.

\$234,745 — Arkansas Advanced Placement Teacher Training Incentive Program — Parkview High.

\$197,298 — Enhancing Education through Technology — M.L. King Elementary.

\$163,343 — Enhancing Education through Technology — M.L. King Elementary EAST Lab.

\$100,000 — School Improvement Fund — Cloverdale Middle.

\$100,000 — School Improvement Fund — Mabelvale Middle.

\$10,000 — Nike SPARK PE — All elementary and middle schools.

# Volunteers make the difference!

Volunteers in Public Schools (ViPS) was founded in 1972 to provide assistance to teachers and other staff members of the Little Rock School District by promoting volunteerism. ViPS serves as a link between the district and the community while providing patrons and citizens the opportunity to be significantly involved in the education of children.

In 2007-08, over 632,256 hours of volunteer service, valued at \$11,867,449, were contributed to the Little Rock School District. A symbolic check bearing this amount was presented to the LRSD at ViPS' annual volunteer celebration (see photo below where LRSD Superintendent Dr. Linda Watson accepts the "check" from ViPS President Lea Glenns). At that event **Patty Barker** was named winner of the Jane Mendel Award for achieving an exceptional level of volunteer service.

Twenty-seven schools were recognized for special achievements in volunteer hours. The top performing schools were **Booker Arts Magnet** and **Forest Park** elementary schools; **Mann Magnet** and **Pulaski Heights** middle schools and **Central High School**. Outstanding Partners in Education were **Geyer Springs First Baptist Church** and **Little Rock Wastewater Utility**. Winners in the Community Resource Award category were **Mid Town Health Alliance** and **St. Andrew's Church**.



## ViPS Jane Mendel Reading Day

Named in honor of its founder, ViPS' annual Reading Day (photo above) marked its 10-year anniversary this year. ViPS put a volunteer reader in every elementary classroom – all 695 of them – to stress the importance of reading to the children. Reading Day drew participation from Arkansas First Lady **Ginger Beebe**, Little Rock Mayor **Mark Stodola**, author **Grif Stockley**, State Supreme Court Justice **Jim Gunter** and several local television personalities in addition to parents, LRSD staff, local business leaders and many valued members of the community.

## Partners in Education

Business and community organizations in the greater Little Rock area can become a Partner in Education with an elementary or secondary school in the Little Rock School District. Some businesses grant release time to employee volunteers to act as tutors or mentors, develop enrichment programs or provide incentives for student achievements. Schools, in turn, recognize their partners with decorative arts, musical presentations or other mutually agreed-upon activities. Partners in Education is an opportunity for businesses, community organizations and schools to support one another. More than 200 businesses and organizations in the Little Rock area currently have successfully formed partnerships with LRSD schools.



The Child Nutrition Department served an average of 16,530 meals each day. A total of 2.6 million meals were served throughout the school year.

Approximately 64.5 percent of students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

An average of 1,330 elementary students took part in the CARE (before-and-after-school) program each day.

The Gifted & Talented Program served 4,094 students with an enriched curriculum and challenging projects.

**Dr. Dexter Booth**, Assistant Principal at Parkview Magnet High School, was named Administrator of the Year by the Arkansas Association of Student Councils.

**Vicki Gonterman**, International Studies Specialist at Gibbs Magnet Elementary, was named K-8 Social Studies Teacher of the Year by the Arkansas Council for the Social Studies.

Hall High School English teacher **Stacie Thompson** was named Arkansas Central Region Teacher of the Year by the Arkansas Department of Education.

**Gina Devore**, a teacher at M.L. King Magnet Elementary, was named 2007 Arkansas History Teacher of the Year.

**Carolyn Jennings**, an English teacher at J.A. Fair Magnet High School, was selected as one of 24 National Teachers of Excellence by the Secondary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English.





The Little Rock School District operates 30 elementary schools:

Bale  
Baseline  
Booker  
Brady  
Carver  
Chicot  
Dodd  
Forest Park  
Franklin  
Fulbright  
Geyer Springs  
Gibbs  
Jefferson  
M.L. King  
Mabelvale  
McDermott  
Meadowcliff  
Otter Creek  
Pulaski Heights  
Rockefeller  
Romine  
Stephens  
Terry  
Wakefield  
Washington  
Watson  
Western Hills  
Williams  
Wilson  
Woodruff

Seven middle schools:

Cloverdale  
Dunbar  
Forest Heights  
Henderson  
Mabelvale  
Mann  
Pulaski Heights

Five high schools:

Central  
J.A. Fair  
Hall  
McClellan  
Parkview

Two alternative learning centers:

Felder  
Hamilton

Two early childhood centers:

Chicot  
Fair Park

One career-technical center:

Metropolitan

One accelerated learning center:

ACC.

# Construction continues in Little Rock

## Wakefield addition is complete

Not many students can say they are the first to walk into a room, the first to sit at a desk or the first to write on the board. Due to steadily increasing enrollment at Wakefield Elementary, a new addition for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms became necessary to relieve overcrowding, and those young scholars became the first ever in those new classrooms. Additionally, Wakefield's pre-kindergarten classes, which had been relocated to Geyer Springs and Meadowcliff because of the school's overcrowding, now have returned home. The new addition is over 9,000 square feet in size. Construction began in October 2007.

Wakefield now has four classes per grade level (kindergarten through 5) and two pre-k classes. It also boasts a full-service dental clinic, run by UALR Children International, that serves children from five LRSD schools. It is one of only a handful of school-based dental clinics in the country.



## Chicot ECC opens with expanded pre-k program for SWLR

The new Chicot Early Childhood Center (ECC) provides a quality pre-kindergarten program to both three- and four-year-old children in the Southwest Little Rock community. The newly completed ECC building on the campus of Chicot Primary School provides separate facilities for these young students.

The Chicot ECC is modeled after the Fair Park Early Childhood Center in that it is a center entirely focused on the education of pre-kindergarten children, but Chicot offers classes for both three- and four-year-old children.

"We realize that children today need every opportunity available to them to get a jump start on their learning because of the high level of accountability that is placed on them as they get older," said **Dr. Linda Watson**, Superintendent of Schools.

LRSD administrators saw a need for an early childhood education center in the Southwest Little Rock area at the same time that Chicot Elementary was restructured into Chicot Primary School (pre-k through 2<sup>nd</sup> grades only), which made the site selection for the new center a simple task.



## New wing at Forest Heights opens; Phase II of construction project begins



Students at Forest Heights Middle School have become quite accustomed to seeing construction on their campus. Two new classroom buildings and an update of the school's gymnasium and cafeteria will completely modernize the middle school on Evergreen Street, just off University Avenue. Now all of the school's original

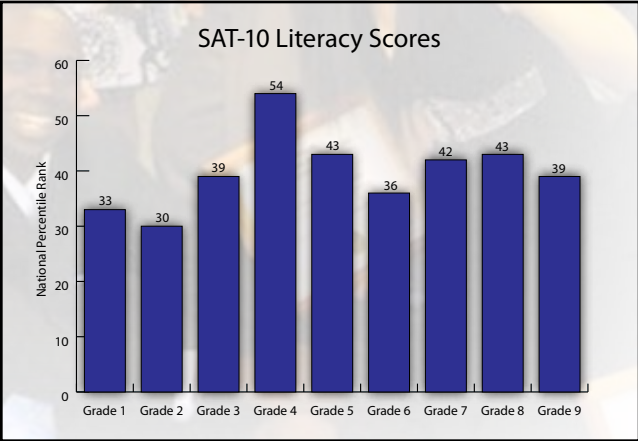
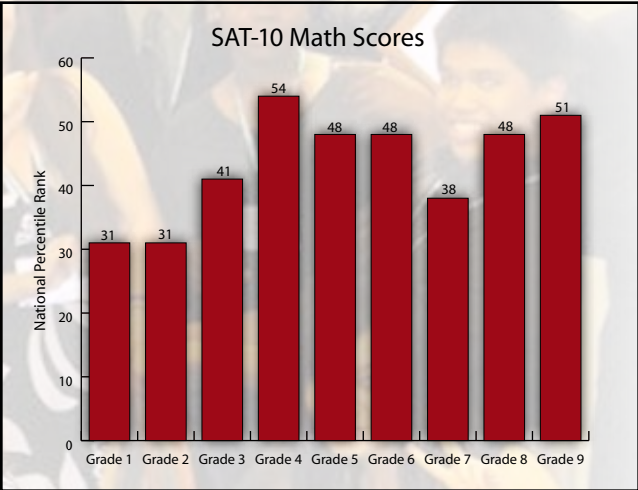
classroom buildings, which dated back to 1954, have been removed and are/will be replaced with new, modern facilities.

The first phase of the construction project, a new classroom wing, was completed and open for students during the second semester. The second phase, which included demolition of an old building, updating the cafeteria and gymnasium and constructing another new classroom wing, began immediately after. The entire project is expected to be complete in spring 2009.

Funding for this project came from the millage increase that was approved by Little Rock voters in 2000.

Forest Heights is changing more than its outward appearance: the school is in the second year of the two-year application process required to become certified as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. IB is an internationally respected program that pushes students to achieve in the arts, global viewpoints, community involvement and other areas. Currently found in only 435 middle schools worldwide, the IB program at Forest Heights will give students an exclusive opportunity to learn and achieve at new levels.

## SAT-10 Standardized Test Scores, By Grade



A "national percentile rank" indicates that students performed as well as or better than that percent of students across the nation who took the same test at the same time.



# 2008 test scores: student improvement

Test scores for the Spring 2008 benchmark (ACTAAP) exams are released to school districts over the summer months. School districts then check the results and analyze the data to better determine the strengths and weaknesses of their students. When teachers arrive back on campus at the beginning of the school year, one of their first tasks is to look at the testing data for their school and determine what they did well last year and what the needs of their students are for the upcoming year.

As an entire district, the curriculum and accountability departments work together to analyze trends in the data. This information provides direction for professional development of teachers, administrators and coaches. The testing data also is used to drive instruction through curriculum maps, which guide teachers as to what skills they are to teach and when to teach them. The data also can be compared to the previous year's scores to show areas of growth or loss.

### Math scores show gains

Little Rock School District officials were excited to see gains in math scores this year, not only among elementary students but also with middle school students and district-wide Algebra I scores.

In **4<sup>th</sup> grade math**, 61 percent of students scored proficient or advanced on the benchmark exam. This is an **11 percent increase** over 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from the previous year. All grade levels in elementary and middle school showed improvement from the previous year; however, **8<sup>th</sup> grade** students showed an **8 percent gain** over last year. The middle school years are usually the most difficult years to show gains, so LRSD administrators were particularly pleased with the efforts of teachers, staff and students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Literacy scores bring mixed reviews


While math scores were impressive, literacy scores showed mixed results. For the most part, literacy scores in the district did decline slightly. However, **4<sup>th</sup> grade** students shone again with a gain of **10 percentage points** over last

year. **Fifth grade students** also showed a gain of **5 percentage points**.

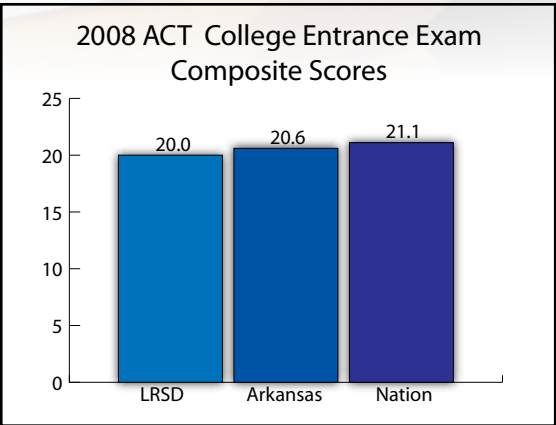
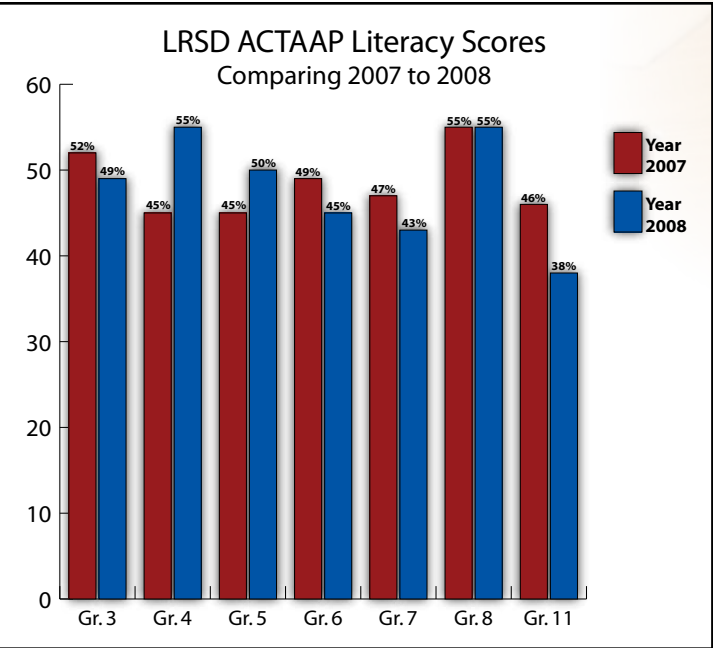
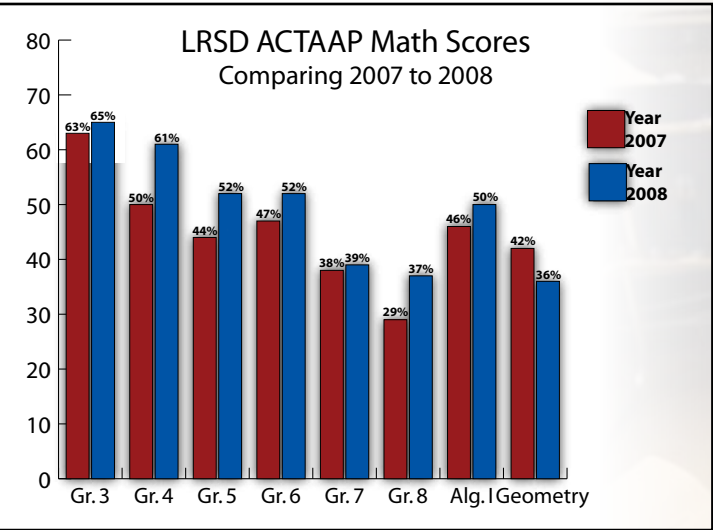
The high school literacy scores showed a disappointing 8 percent decrease across the district. However, scores across the state were down in 11<sup>th</sup> grade literacy. This decline most likely was due to the fact that the testing day was an inclement weather day for many schools, so the test had to be given as a makeup to a large majority of students.

### Target Teach: Is it working?

Target Teach was a new instructional program implemented at three elementary and three middle school campuses for about half of the school year. With only three months of implementation before the benchmark exams were administered in April, it would be unfair to draw conclusions about Target Teach at this point. However, schools like **Woodruff Elementary**, which made a 35 percent gain in 5<sup>th</sup> grade math, has set high expectations for the program once it has been implemented for a full year. Double-digit gains were seen consistently at the elementary schools that piloted Target Teach.

At the middle school level, Target Teach was only piloted in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. **Mabelvale Magnet Middle School** showed a 13 percent gain in math scores at grade six, which is a hopeful sign of improvements to come. 

Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on Spring 2008 ACTAAP (Benchmark) Exam, Broken down by Subpopulations				
	African American	Hispanic	White	Econ. Disad.
Grade 3				
Literacy	40%	35%	79%	37%
Math	56%	55%	90%	54%
Grade 4				
Literacy	46%	46%	79%	43%
Math	53%	62%	82%	52%
Grade 5				
Literacy	41%	38%	76%	40%
Math	43%	55%	78%	43%
Grade 6				
Literacy	35%	31%	79%	33%
Math	41%	58%	82%	41%
Grade 7				
Literacy	35%	32%	76%	32%
Math	30%	29%	73%	27%
Grade 8				
Literacy	47%	39%	84%	44%
Math	28%	29%	70%	26%
End-of-Course Literacy	24%	36%	75%	22%
End-of Course Algebra I	41%	40%	79%	38%
End-of-Course Geometry	25%	40%	70%	24%



The Little Rock School District has 2,346 certified staff members and 4,233 employees in total as of June 30, 2008.

More than 1,200 certified staff members have been with the district for 10 years or more.

LRSD staff logged in 76,929 hours of professional development.

195 teachers hold an ESL (English as a Second Language) endorsement on their Arkansas teaching licenses.

Approximately 1,500 students in the district were classified as English Language Learners.

Students, faculty and administrators in the Little Rock School District have the use of 11,948 computers for work, research, recordkeeping and much more.

In compliance with No Child Left Behind School Improvement stipulations, more than 5,000 transfer option letters were mailed out to LRSD students. 141 transfer applications were received, and 89 students were placed in new schools.

Under NCLB School Improvement guidelines, the LRSD has 3 schools in Year One of School Improvement; 5 schools in Year Two; 5 schools in Year Three; no schools in Year Four; and 11 schools in Year Five. The LRSD is in Year Two of School Improvement.

Attendance Rate: 95.5%. Dropout Rate: 3.7%. Graduation Rate: 74.1%. College Remediation Rate: 60.8%. (2006-07 data)





Total expenditure per pupil: \$9,876.39

Tax rate approved by voters (mills): 46.4 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value

Average teacher salary: \$50,659

First-year teacher salary: \$32,227

The student population reached an all-time high of 26,757.

LRSD students took 4,056 Advanced Placement (AP) Exams.

Parkview Magnet High School (6-A) and Central High School (7-A) both won state championships in their divisions at the Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association state finals.

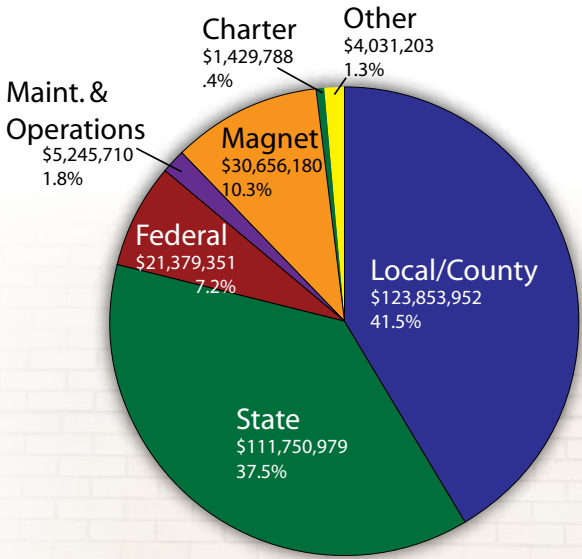
Thirteen students from Central High School presented all of the research projects at the Arkansas Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. Henry Xu, Siteng Ma, Yi Wu, Emily Dodson, Sai Desikan and Intisar Islam won 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> places, respectively.

Nicole Kendall, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Pulaski Heights Middle School, won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the state PTA Reflections literature competition and also received a National Award of Merit.

In memory of Antony: Each of the LRSD's five high schools received an Automatic External Defibrillator, or AED, in memory of Antony Hobbs, a student at Parkview Magnet High School who collapsed and died during a basketball game in January. Arkansas Specialty Orthopaedics and St. Vincent Health System donated the AEDs to the schools as part of a statewide initiative to put AED devices in every Arkansas high school.

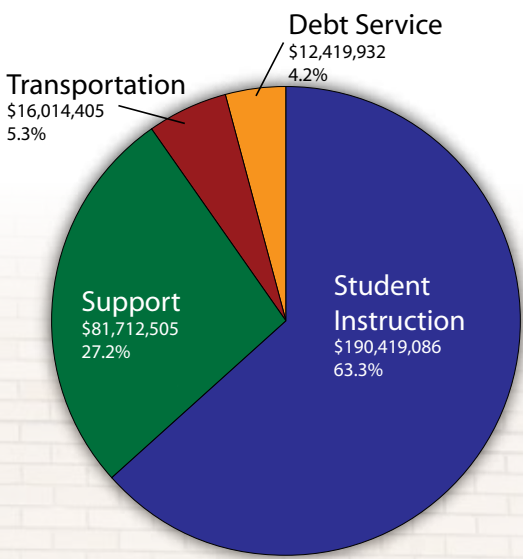
## By the numbers

### Revenue

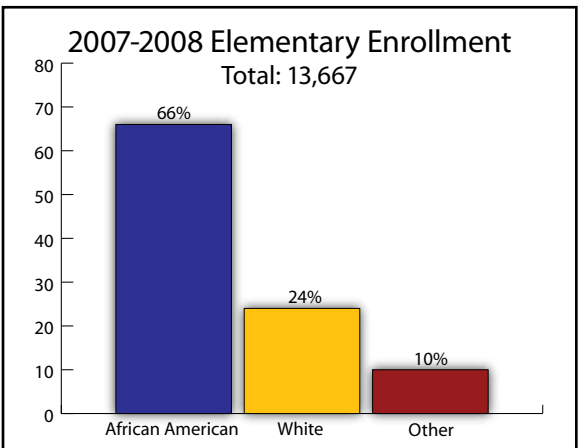
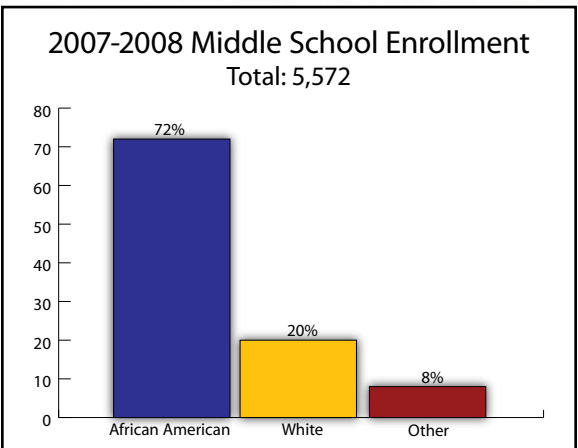
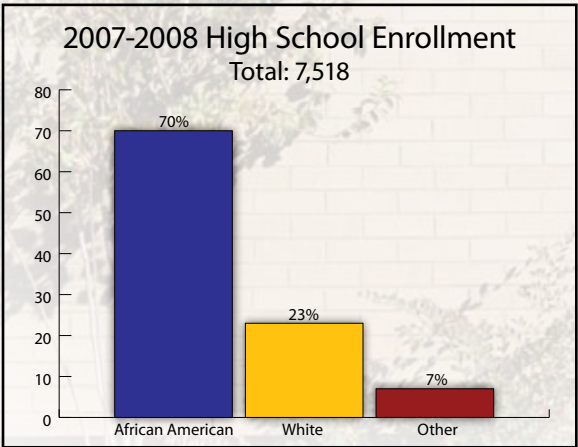
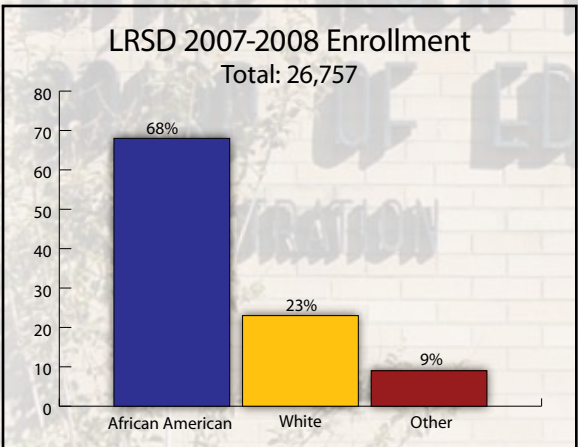


Total Revenue: \$298,347,163

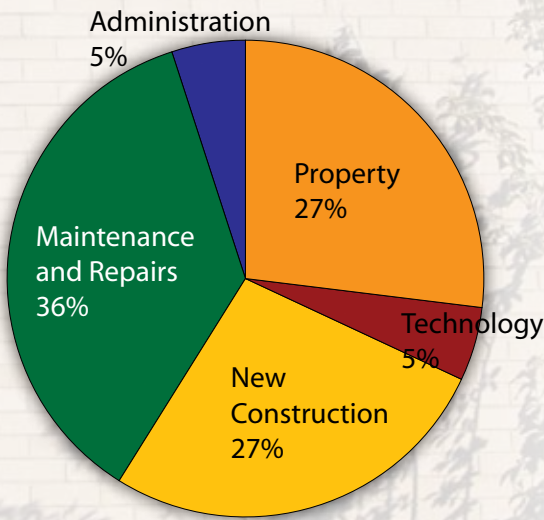
### Expenses



Total Expenses: \$300,565,928



### Distribution of Funds from Bond Issued in 2000



### Message from the Superintendent, continued from p. 1

Elementary schools. These new buildings demonstrate population growth in some areas of Little Rock and also present opportunities for new programs such as the Early Childhood Center at Chicot Primary. Planning for the West Little Rock school began in the spring with input gathered from various sources, and the floor plans and layout for the school are close to completion.

The Little Rock School District works hard each year to remain fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of our city. However, meeting the needs of our students also is a priority which needs to be balanced with our finances. This year the Little Rock School District received over \$13.6 million in grants to provide additional programs to our students, and volunteers provided over 630,000 service hours through the ViPS program. It is so exciting to see community members realize the difference they can make in the lives of our students.

Treasure Island author Robert Louis Stevenson loved adventure and shared it so successfully with his readers. He reflected, "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive." The Little Rock School District definitely is on a journey to achieve academic success for all students and we know we have not arrived yet; however, our path is charted, our course has been plotted, and we will continue to press on to our goal and enjoy each day as an adventure until we all have arrived at our destination: SUCCESS!

Linda Watson



# Environmental awareness

## LRSD's buses go green!

The Little Rock School District retrofitted 65 school buses with Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOCs) that will drastically reduce the amount of harmful emissions released into the atmosphere. All 65 vehicles are buses for special needs children in the district. The newly retrofitted buses will:


- reduce hydrocarbon emissions by 50 percent (4.63 tons per year),
- lower carbon monoxide emissions by 30 percent (9.81 tons per year); and
- reduce particulate matter emissions by 20 percent (0.49 tons per year).

Together with the district's 20 newer buses that already are in compliance with emission standards, all of LRSD's buses for special needs students now meet environmental standards.

The retrofit project cost just over \$59,000, with the LRSD providing \$2,955 of the cost. The remaining money was provided by a grant from the Blue Skyways Collaborative, a 10-state partnership dedicated to finding ways to reduce emissions that negatively impact public health.

The retrofit is part of a concerted effort by the LRSD to implement procedures that not only will save the district money but also will aid in conservation, including:

- a no-idling policy for school buses;
- consolidating field trips when possible;
- installing motion-sensor lights in schools and administration buildings;
- after-hours regulation of heat and air in schools and administration buildings; and
- adhering to walk zones for students who live within designated areas.


In addition, the Little Rock School District is one of the first school districts in the nation to own and operate a diesel-electric hybrid bus. 

*The Little Rock School District initiated a unique recycling program in 2006. Called "Computers for Kids," old computers are refurbished and sold (for about \$35 or \$40) to students who do not already own one. To date, this program has saved 3,306 computers from ending up in landfills and put them in the hands of deserving students.*

## Parkview Chemistry Club's "Green Matter Project"

Parkview Magnet High School's Chemistry Club earned kudos from the environmental community with its "Green Matter Project."

The club members purchased an old school bus and converted it to run on biodiesel fuel (a combination of diesel fuel and used vegetable cooking oil). They retrofitted engine and exhaust system parts to accommodate biodiesel fuel and then began experimenting with fuel formulas. After the bus was painted and ready to go, the students presented it to the school district at a monthly School Board meeting. It is used for field trips and other special occasions.

The Arkansas Wildlife Federation presented the Parkview Chemistry Club with the Youth Conservationist of the Year Award, calling the renovated bus a "pathway for the young people of this nation to get involved and show their personal commitment in reducing carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming." It is the first time in five years that the group has presented this award. 



**When asked why the Chemistry Club students painted the "Green Matter Project" bus black and blue instead of green, club president Waltin Zomaya commented that the green paint "was just hideous."**



The Little Rock PTA Council was honored with many awards at the state PTA convention.

Arkansas PTA Administrator of the Year: **Nancy Rousseau**, Principal, Central High School.

Arkansas PTA Teacher of the Year: **Patricia White Erwin**, Counselor, Pulaski Heights Elementary.

Arkansas PTA Children's Champion: **Deputy Charles Barker**, Carver Magnet Elementary.

Outstanding Council: **Little Rock PTA Council**.

Arkansas PTA Communications Award: **Pulaski Heights Middle School**.

Arkansas PTA Outstanding Unit Award: **Forest Park Elementary**.

Central High School has some of the best high school mathematicians in the country, as demonstrated by its 11<sup>th</sup>-place finish in the 2007 Fall Startup Event, a national mathematics contest administered by National Assessment & Testing.

Parkview Magnet High School placed first at Arkansas Student Congress. The mock congress allows high school and college students to debate student-authored legislation.

**Scout Snowden**, a student in the Gifted & Talented program at Jefferson Elementary, received the Nicholas Green Award for his volunteer work collecting backpacks for homeless children.

## Academic stars shine at Clinton Library



Eighty-seven graduating seniors, all of whom excelled academically in high school and were bound for some of the finest colleges and universities in Arkansas and around the country, were honored at Academic Signing Day in May. Sponsored by the Public Education Foundation of Little Rock, the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce and Twin City Bank, this event recognized students who achieved a cumulative 4.0 GPA, were the valedictorians or salutatorians of their class and/or were identified as National Merit, National Achievement or National Hispanic Scholars.

## We are the champions!



The Hall High School Warriors won the 6-A state men's basketball championship for the 6<sup>th</sup> time in the school's history.

The Central High School men's tennis team won the state championship; the women's team were state runners-up.







Annie Mukunyadzi and Brent Sodman, Central High School seniors, received the Achievement Award in Writing from the National Council of Teachers of English.

Temple Price, a junior at Hall High School, won the statewide 2008 PoetryOutLoudcontest; she also received the Interscholastic Star Student recognition award from the Arkansas Activities Association.

Darrion Coleman, a senior at Parkview Magnet High School, was elected Lieutenant Governor at Arkansas Boys State.

The stock market team from McClellan Magnet High School, consisting of Chansaze Jackson and Morasha McFee, placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the state-wide Stock Market Game administered by Economics Arkansas.

Clara “Livvy” Bailin, a senior at Central High School, won 4<sup>th</sup> place at the International Science and Engineering Fair in Atlanta.

Hilary Ledwell and Robert Shuffield, both seniors at Central High School, became the first Arkansas debate team ever to earn a bid to participate in the National Tournament of Champions.

# Central commemorates 50 years

Nine brave teenagers unknowingly made history in 1957 by refusing to back down under overwhelming pressure and hostility and became the first African-American students to attend the previously all-white Central High School in Little Rock.

On September 25, 2007—50 years to the day after they attended classes at Central High School for the first time—Little Rock and the world paid tribute to the “Little Rock Nine.” All nine were present at the ceremony in which Central High School student body president **Cyrus Bahrassa** called them the “nine bravest high school students ever” and declared that “hate was hate, is hate and will be hate, and it is not the solution to our problems today to pass it on in any way.”

The commemoration ceremony, which was held on the front lawn of the historic 80-year-old school, was televised live locally and covered by media outlets from around the world. It was the culmination of a flurry of activities celebrating civil rights and desegregation, including the release of a commemorative coin and a rare viewing of the Emancipation Proclamation at the Clinton Presidential Library.

In addition to the Little Rock Nine, speakers at the ceremony included former President **Bill Clinton**, Governor **Mike Beebe**, LRSD Board President **Dr. Katherine Mitchell** and Little Rock Mayor **Mark Stodola**. Central High School Principal **Nancy Rousseau** and Little Rock businessman **Virgil Miller** served as co-chairs of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee.

The National Park Service also officially dedicated its new visitor center for the Central High School National



The Little Rock Nine, gathered together once again for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School. From left: Melba Pattillo Beals, Thelma Mothershed Wair (seated), Minnijean Brown Trickey, Elizabeth Eckford, Dr. Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Jefferson Thomas and Ernest Green.

Historic Site on the northeast Corner of Park Street and Daisy Bates Drive. U.S. Rep. **John Lewis** of Georgia was the keynote speaker at the dedication ceremony, and senators **Mark Pryor** and **Blanche Lincoln**; U.S. Rep. **Vic Snyder**; Secretary of the Interior **Dirk Kempthorne**; **Mary A. Bomar**, Director of the National Park Service; and **R. Michael Madell**, Superintendent of the Central High School National Historic Site, were present to open the new 10,000-square-foot facility.

Central High School is the only operating high school in the United States that also is a National Historic Site. It was designated as such in 1998 by then-President Bill Clinton.

At the 50th anniversary ceremony, **Jefferson Thomas**, one of the Little Rock Nine, encouraged all the students currently attending Central. “You can accomplish wonderful, great things in your life,” he said. “Just don’t think little of yourself.”

**Melba Pattillo Beals**, who gained acclaim as a journalist and as author of the book *Warriors Don’t Cry*, also expressed her hopeful outlook for the future. “It is the look in your faces—white, black, green or blue; the determination in the eyes of those of color, and the willingness to move ahead that makes me know we’re going to make it.”



Former President Bill Clinton addressed the audience at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony. “Look what they all did with their lives,” he said of the Little Rock Nine. “They fought for the right to do it. We celebrate the triumph of a struggle today, but we dare not forget what they did with the gift they were given. We all have to do the same.”

Central High School ranked 36<sup>th</sup> in the nation in Newsweek’s annual list of America’s top high schools. It was the highest ranking of all Arkansas high schools and one of only eight schools in the state to make the list.

The testing data obtained for this report was provided by the Arkansas Department of Education. Other data was provided by the Little Rock School District. All data is current as of October 31, 2008.



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