

MAKING THE GRADE?

The new school year is officially underway, as August 24th saw students and staff members making their way back to school. At about the same time that the school year was getting underway, the Ohio Department of Education was releasing Local Report Card (LRC) information for all schools and school districts across Ohio.

As your Superintendent of Schools for the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District, I view our 2009 LRC data as a mixed bag of news. So, let's begin with the good news. The AC/OVSD is rated "Excellent" for the second consecutive year, and for the second time in the history of the LRC designations. Our school district met 20 indicators out of 30—the most indicators that we have ever met. Two of our buildings were rated "Excellent," North Adams Elementary and West Union High School. Three other buildings were rated "Effective," North Adams High School, Peebles Elementary, and Peebles High School. West Union Elementary was rated as "Continuous Improvement."

Now, let's dig deeper into the data to see what is below the surface. It's really in the numbers. WUHS was rated as Excellent even though they met but 13 of 19 indicators. Why? Because, WUHS met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with its subgroup populations (economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities). WUHS was also benefitted by meeting something called the "Value Added Growth Calculation (VAGC)." Exactly what is this? The growth calculation is a formula that determines whether or not students have attained more than one year's average growth for two consecutive years. NAHS and PHS were rated as Effective even though those buildings

earned 16 out of 19, and 17 out of 19 indicators respectively. Why? In the case of PHS, that building did meet AYP. However, it did not benefit from the VAGC. NAHS did not meet AYP, and also did not benefit from the VAGC.

At the elementary level, NAE met 8 of 12 indicators, met AYP, and also benefitted from the VAGC. PE (7 of 12 indicators) and WUE (5 of 12 indicators) did not meet AYP with their subgroup populations, and neither school benefitted from the VAGC formula. In the case of both of these buildings, and especially WUE, it is especially crucial that AYP be met the next two years.

I am afraid that AYP is going to be the hook that snares many schools and school districts in the coming years. As we approach 2014, all schools and districts are required to meet AYP with their student subgroup populations according to the Federal No Child Left Behind Law. So, as we approach 2014, the percentages that schools are required to meet in order to be in full compliance with the law will keep inching upward toward 100%. This is why we see schools with nearly perfect report cards being rated at levels lower than “Excellent.” While we are pleased and proud to be rated as an “Excellent” school district again this year, our “homework” assignment is on the blackboard, so to speak. Please feel free to talk with your building principal if you have questions about your particular school’s report card information.

BUILDING/RENOVATION PROJECT UPDATE

The renovation work at our three high schools and the CTC will be continuing as we start a new school year. We still have technology work to be completed in all four buildings, along with upgrading of the round rooms in the high schools, construction of security vestibules in all high schools and the CTC, and major parking lot work to be done at NAHS, WUHS, and the CTC. So, it will be a busy fall at these sites as projects wrap up and punch lists are reviewed.

As for the progress on the new elementary buildings, work continues to move forward. All buildings now have permanent electric power, water, and, in most cases, sewer. The next big milestone will be the start-up of the HVAC systems, along with the final “buttoning up” of the buildings. The new buildings are still scheduled to be turned over to the district in early December, with our move into the new facilities to follow shortly thereafter. Dedication ceremonies are tentatively scheduled for Saturday, December 12, 2009. More information will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions about this article, please feel free to call me at 544-5586.

Thank you.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent