

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

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More summer food for Arkansas children (Editorial by Gov. Beebe, Northeast Arkansas Town Crier)

LITTLE ROCK - Summer has arrived, and this season will help determine the outcome of Arkansas's fight against childhood hunger. Without the meals that had been available to them at school, students must rely on an entirely different system to access adequate and nutritious food. Arkansas, like many other states, is still building a feeding system to address these needs. And while we have made notable progress nationally, we are still not where we want to be.

On an average day last summer, approximately 37,000 low-income children received summer meals. This was a noteworthy increase of 16 percent compared to the previous summer. This growth dwarfed the national average, which was only half a percent. As a result, Arkansas moved up nine spots in the national rankings for summer-meal participation, and now ranks 18th. Still, the number of children we fed last summer represents only a fraction of the children who receive school lunch during the rest of year.

If we can reach more children this summer and in the summers to come, we will be helping to prevent childhood hunger and become eligible for more federal assistance for our feeding programs. As our remarkable progress last summer demonstrates, we have the know-how. Now, we must expand our network of feeding sites.

Two different departments in our State work with summer feeding programs. This year, the Arkansas Department of Education will offer feeding programs in 114 schools across 59 districts.

Meanwhile, the Arkansas Department of Human Services coordinates summer feeding sites in churches, boys and girls clubs, and other nonprofit organizations. These groups can provide volunteers to serve summer meals to children at no cost. The Summer Food Service Program is 100 percent federally funded and covers the cost of up to three nutritious meals and snacks a day for children. Arkansas DHS even provides training and technical assistance to help organizations set up and operate a summer food program. Employees can either volunteer to serve meals or be paid with money left over after food is purchased.

This network of summer feeding sites now stretches throughout 65 Arkansas counties, but that means we still have to find more churches and nonprofits to participate. There are 10 counties - Calhoun, Cleveland, Conway, Grant, Izard, Lafayette, Montgomery, Randolph, Searcy and Stone - that currently are without a single summer feeding site. Four of those counties now have applications pending, but additional participation will only make those startup programs stronger. If you or someone you know is

linked to an organization that could help in one of these counties, please consider joining Arkansas's network of summer feeding.

Thanks to entities like No Kid Hungry, volunteer organizations statewide, and state agencies, Arkansas IS feeding more children, but too many are still left without adequate food. To provide meals to more children, more adults must become involved. Together, we can eliminate childhood hunger and put an entire generation on a clearer path to health and prosperity.

PB board approves upgrade of audio-visual system (Pine Bluff Commercial)

The Pine Bluff School District Board of Directors voted Tuesday evening to accept a bid of \$23,906 from Video Reality of Conway, Ark. to provide a new audio visual system for the administration building board room.

District superintendent Linda Watson said that her administration solicited bids from several vendors in response to board member requests including a \$35,792 bid from Online Technologies Inc. in North Little Rock.

“Our director of technology, Mr. Rodney Riles, recommended the low bid from Video Reality and that is my recommendation to the board,” Watson said before the board vote.

The equipment will include a 36-inch multimedia lectern, smart boards and LED flat-screen displays as well as all required cables, connectors and brackets.

“We need to have this installed before we can install Board Docs, which will allow us to communicate information to the board electronically that can also be viewed by board members on their monitors in the board room,” Watson said.

Board vice president Kenneth Dickson said the technology is needed in the district.

“This will eliminate the need to print up and assemble binders for each board member prior to each monthly board meeting,” Dickson said. “These binders cost a lot of money and the new technology will eliminate the need for them.”

Riles confirmed to Watson that the cost for the Board Docs program will be \$9,000.

“That will be approved at a later time,” Watson said.

SubTeach

In other business the board approved signing a one-year contract with SubTeach.

“We will see how things go for a year and if we like what we see then we can consider signing a multiyear contract,” Watson said of the company that provides substitute teachers for school districts around Arkansas.

Watson recommended SubTeach because the district in the past has had a difficult time finding substitute teachers to cover classes when teachers are absent. Watson said that the PBSB currently pays \$80.63 per substitute per day and SubTeach costs \$84.38 per substitute per day, with SubTeach responsible for workers compensation claims and unemployment benefits. Watson said that because of this SubTeach will create little to no extra cost to the school district.

The board approved several policies on second reading including those pertaining to meeting agendas, tort immunity, nepotism, and board member training.

The board approved classified employee policies on second reading having to do with sick leave and the reduction in force agreement with the school district.

The board approved the revised student handbook on second reading.

Summer meals

Watson announced that the PBSB is providing a free breakfast and lunch to students through the Seamless Summer program.

Food services director Pearl Matlock said that the meals are served to students ages 2 to 18 Monday through Friday at Greenville Elementary in the cafeteria at the front of the building.

“Breakfast is served from 7 a.m. until 8 a.m. and lunch is served from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m.,” Matlock said. “Adults bringing the children who wish to eat will have to pay for their meal. The price for adults is \$1.75 for breakfast and \$3.50 for lunch.”

Grants received

Watson announced that federal programs director Bernice Martin-Russell has secured two federal grants.

“Ms. Martin-Russell has secured two 21st Century grants,” Watson said. “One for Oak Park Elementary and one for Belair Middle at \$500,000 each over five years. They will be administered through the Boys and Girls Club and will provide after school tutoring and a summer program in 2014.”

Personnel action

The board approved a series of personnel actions recommended by Watson including the hiring of certified personnel David Bryce Albertson as an English teacher at Jack Robey Junior High School effective Aug. 8; Dorothy Armstrong as a special education consultant with Student Health and Special Services effective Aug. 19; Abena Asantewaa as a districtwide psychological examiner effective July 1; Monica Bones as a counselor at Belair Middle School effective July 29; Angela Collins as an English teacher at Pine Bluff High School effective Aug. 8; Sheena Earl as a math teacher at Belair effective Aug. 8; and Rachel Scott as lead math teacher at PBHS effective Aug. 8.

The board approved the hiring of classified personnel Cynthia Givens as a security officer at PBHS effective Aug. 19; Ronnie Reynolds as a security officer at PBHS effective Aug. 19; and Bennie Lee Shelton as a security officer at PBHS effective Aug. 19.

The board approved the transfer of certified personnel Sylvia Grady as a math teacher at Southeast Middle School to a math teacher at Belair Middle School effective July 30; and Leondra Williams-Savage as a fourth grade teacher at 34th Elementary to a literacy coach at a location to be determined effective July 30.

The board approved the resignations of classified personnel Linda Ballinger as a custodian with Auxiliary Services effective April 11; Tasha Bass as an instructional aide at Belair effective May 30; Valerie Evans as a media at 34th Elementary effective May 31; Earnest Harris as a security officer at PBHS effective April 12; Sara James as a paraprofessional at Oak Park Elementary effective June 11; and Leslie Johnson as a custodian with auxiliary services effective June 7.

The board approved the resignations of certified personnel Jerry Bayliss as a civics/economics teacher at Jack Robey Junior High effective June 7; Sondra Bray as a fifth grade teacher at Greenville Elementary effective May 31; Emalee Clark as a third grade teacher at Oak Park Elementary effective June 11; Elizabeth Cloninger-Lanehart as a kindergarten teacher at Oak Park Elementary effective May 31; Kimberly Dawson as a second grade teacher at Oak Park Elementary effective May 31; Dona Glaze as a fourth grade teacher at W.T. Cheney Elementary effective June 10; Nathaniel Jackson as a math teacher at Jack Robey effective June 6; Kristy Payne as a kindergarten teacher at Greenville Elementary effective June 10; Taylor Pinckard as a fourth grade teacher at Broadmoor Elementary effective May 31; Irene Rainey as a kindergarten teacher at Oak Park effective May 31; Candace Stark-Wilson as a math coach at Belair effective June 12; Stephen Tomlin as a social studies teacher at Jack Robey effective May 31; Mekenzie Trammel as a math teacher at Belair effective May 31; and Melissa Walsh as an algebra teacher at Jack Robey effective May 31.

The board approved the retirement of classified personnel Dorothy McFadden as a food service assistant effective June 5; and the non-renewal of certified personnel Mandi Foltz as a math teacher at PBHS effective May 31.

School Board Has Vacancies (Booneville Democrat)

A year ago the question was does anyone want a seat on the Booneville School Board? Today the question is are there multiple someones who would like to serve.

When Sam Tabler read a prepared statement announcing his resignation at the close of the June meeting of the Booneville School Board that brought to four the number of seats that are currently available.

Tabler, who had two years remaining on his term, said he had mixed emotions about his resignation.

“I have enjoyed the past eight years of service on this board but at this point I have been presented with some opportunities I feel I need to examine,” said Tabler. “I want to thank the board for the

opportunity to remain a board member during the year I spent in Iraq. The year I spent in Iraq is part of the reason for some of the present opportunities.

“My belief is this is the right time for me to pursue other interests.”

Tabler also noted his youngest son Travis has been accepted at the Arkansas School for Math and Sciences and the Arts; his oldest child Cody is a student at the University of Arkansas; and his wife, Audrey, a Booneville Public School teacher, is currently working towards a doctorate in education.

“I have the utmost confidence that with the staff, faculty, administration and school board the Booneville School District will continue moving forward with the education of district students in the professional manner we have become used to,” said Tabler.

According to his statement, Tabler’s resignation took effect at the end of Tuesday’s regularly scheduled meeting, which was notable because only a quorum of four of seven current members — Tabler, Oliver, Stacey McCollough and Cobb were present; Todd Preston, Mike Farris and Carol Lloyd were absent — were in attendance.

Tabler’s resignation from the board also came just one day after potential school candidates could begin circulating petitions for the annual Sept. 17 school election.

A year ago the petition period ended with nobody throwing their hat in the ring in Booneville, although Bill Oliver, whose term was expiring, made no secret he would not seek re-election after a single five-year term.

Rather than resign or miss three consecutive meetings and be forcibly replaced by the board, Oliver stayed around for a sixth year. Oliver’s seat will again be vacant in the 2013 election for a four-year term.

However, because terms are also expiring for Mike Farris and Bobby Cobb there will be at least four seats open during the election. The seats currently held by Cobb and Farris are for full five-year terms.

Things are a little less complicated in Magazine.

The seat currently held by Robert Curtis will be vacant in Magazine. Curtis was appointed to the board last year after Don Dickens resigned his seat prior to the school hiring his son.

Because the term was due to expire this year the open seat is for a full five-year term.

School board candidacy petitions must contain at least 20 signatures of registered voters who are residents of the school district. Petitions are due in the County Clerk’s office between July 2, and noon on July 9. Ballot positions will be drawn at 1 p.m. on July 9, in the County Clerk’s office.

The annual school election will be held on Sept. 17. Polls will open at 7:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. Early voting will begin on Sept. 10 and end at 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 16.

Anyone otherwise eligible but who has not registered to vote has until Aug. 18 to do so in order to vote in the election.

2 education programs given \$1.3 million (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

An Arkansas program to increase and improve student participation on Advanced Placement exams and another program to hone education leadership skills are the recipients of more than \$1.3 million in grants announced Tuesday by the Walton Family Foundation.

The Bentonville-based foundation awarded \$850,000 to the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science that is based at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and \$457,200 to the Arkansas Tech University Center for Executive Leadership in Russellville for its Leader to Leader program.

Tommie Sue Anthony, president of the nonprofit math and science initiative, said the grant money, combined with state aid of \$925,000 provided earlier this year, not only ensures the organization's future but will enable it to serve additional high schools.

"If we had not received the grant and the money from the state, we were going to close our doors," Anthony said Tuesday. "This allows us to go forward and go forward for another three years."

The initiative was originally established with a \$13.2 million, five-year grant from the Exxon Mobil Corp. to increase the number of Arkansas high school students who earn scores of 3, 4 or 5 on the national College Board's Advanced Placement exams in English, math and science. The program provides support to all students but particularly targets students who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups and/or are from low-income families.

Students who earn those scores are typically awarded college credit hours or are permitted to skip some entry-level courses in college, enabling them to save tuition costs, accelerate college graduation and/or free them to take other courses.

The math and science initiative has provided training for the Advanced Placement courses to teachers and Saturday tutoring sessions for students in nearly 40 high schools, as well as financial incentives to teachers and students for qualifying scores of 3 or better on the student tests.

The initiative will discontinue paying for incentives for many of the original schools in the program, Anthony said, leaving it to local communities to pick up the cost of the incentives if they want to continue them. But, as a result of the new grant and state funding, the initiative will expand its services - including the student and teacher incentives - to seven new schools, Anthony said.

Those additional schools are McClellan, Hall and J.A. Fair high schools in the Little Rock School District; Maumelle High; Robinson High and Sylvan Hills High in the Pulaski County Special School District; and Yellville-Summit High School.

The Walton Family Foundation has previously contributed more than \$2.9 million to the math and science initiative.

The foundation's latest contribution to the Leader to Leader program at Arkansas Tech takes the foundation's contribution to that program to a total of \$2.5 million since 2007.

The program is a one-year, advanced leadership development program that has to date served about 125 school district superintendents and 75 principals.

Participants in the programs are encouraged to consider new solutions to existing problems. That is supported with field trips to other parts of the country, visits to charter schools, specialty schools and universities, and time spent in the schools and districts of other program participants to attain a broader perspective.

"Through programs such as Leader to Leader, faculty from the Arkansas Tech Center for Leadership and Learning are able to provide superintendents and principals from around the state with a valuable forum to share information and learn about innovative methods in school leadership," said Robert Brown, president of Arkansas Tech University. "The work they are doing is helping Arkansas' students achieve greater success in and out of the classroom."

The Walton Family Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the family of the late Sam and Helen Walton, the founders of Wal-Mart.

The foundation grants announced Tuesday are a demonstration of the organization's long-standing commitment to public education in Arkansas and its strategy to increase academic performance, according to a prepared statement released by the foundation.

Kathy Smith, senior program officer for the foundation's Arkansas Education Reform initiative, said the economic health of the state is at stake.

"We believe in preparing students for success with a quality education," Smith said. "When you do, academic expectations grow, graduation rates rise and the standard of living improves. Arkansas has made significant gains in education and we will continue to invest in programs that help raise the academic bar."