

Watson Chapel State Board of Education Report  
Submitted by: Sheila Whitlow, Associate Deputy Commissioner  
April 2024

## Academics

- **Master Schedules**
  - K-5 Master Schedules are complete and include both a daily Teacher Planning Period AND a daily 25 minute Collaborative Team Meeting (CTM) time. Classes will be self-contained in Grades K-4 and departmentalized in Grade 5.
  - Master schedules for junior high and senior high are currently drafted, but many classes have open staff that have not yet been committed and recent discussions around moving athletics back into the school day will impact the current plans.
  - Rising 6th-10th grade students are currently making course selections in collaboration with school counselors, school teachers, and parents with May 21, 2024 as the scheduled date for rising juniors and seniors to complete course selection.
- **Proposed CTE Career Pathways** (\* Denotes High Demand/High Wage)
  - **Business** (Marketing Business Enterprise; Digital Marketing; Retail Business)
  - **Army JROTC**
  - **Family and Consumer Science** (Pre-Educator Non-CTA Track\*; Food Production, Management & Services; Human & Social Services; Nutrition Science & Dietetics; Consumer Services)
  - **Trade and Industry** (Advertising & Graphic Design Technology; Automotive Service Technology\*; Welding\*; Criminal Justice\*)
- **Student Success Plans**
  - 8th grade students are completing plans within the Arkansas College and Career Planning System with assistance from the counselor
  - High school students are updating student success plans during PRIDE time with support from advisory teachers and counselors
- **Transcripts**
  - District reports that junior and senior transcripts are up-to-date and accurate
  - All juniors and seniors who have failed classes are entered into credit recovery
  - Next step is to review transcripts for sophomores and freshmen for accuracy and alignment to student success plans.

## Human Capital

- **Recruitment and Retention**
  - The return of letters of intent continues to be an issue for the district as reported last month and is creating a challenge for the administrators who are attempting to finalize plans for the upcoming school year.
  - As recommended, an exit survey was created and sent to each known exiting employee.
  - The district has been posting known and expected open positions on AAEEA jobsite and school district website. A button labeled “Join Our Team” has been placed on the homepage of the district’s website.
- **Teacher Quality and Licensure Update on Current Staff**
  - Melissa Jacks and a team from DESE Office of Professional Licensure met with staff last month to assist with licensure identification and reviewing progress toward meeting licensure requirements for staff on waivers or alternate licensure plans. Data for the percentage of staff currently serving in licensed roles who are not fully licensed is provided below:
    - Edgewood Elem (Grades K-1) 33%

- Coleman Elementary (Grades 2-5) 46%
  - WC Jr. High (Grades 6-8) 61%
  - WC Sr. High (Grades 9-12) 31%
- **Teacher Evaluation Processes**
    - Andy Sullivan from DESE Office of Educator Effectiveness along with members of OCSS met with the building principals throughout the district to support them in streamlining the educator evaluation process using the Educator Evaluation System (EES).
    - Building principals received tips and suggestions on how to conduct quality observations in an efficient manner.
    - Positive feedback and reception was provided by the building principals on the training.

## **Student Support**

- **Special Education**
  - Direct support has been provided and coordination with Easter Seals has been organized. However, there is concern that adequate progress has not been made in this area. Onsite state support staff have expressed on-going concern regarding special education services. A request has been made for the DESE Office of Special Education to conduct an on-site monitoring visit.
- **Dyslexia**
  - The District currently employs a Dyslexia Specialist/Coordinator, one licensed dyslexia interventionist, and several instructional paraprofessionals who provide dyslexia intervention services.
  - The Barton Reading and Spelling System is the dyslexia intervention program.
  - There two additional positions to fill: instructional paraprofessionals.
  - The district reported that the general district practice: within thirty (30) days of receiving permission from the parent/guardian, the Dyslexia Specialist/Coordinator conducts a Level 2 screening assessment and holds a conference with parent/guardian to discuss results and determine placement in services if needed.
  - Of the 79 students initially identified for consideration for dyslexia services in January/February:
    - 31 student referral packets have been completed;
    - 20 student referral packets have been scheduled for conferences or are awaiting permission to screen/serve from parents;
    - 28 student referral packets have not been returned to Dyslexia services for processing;
  - Two new students were placed in services the week of April 1-5, 2024.

## **Watson Chapel State Support**

- **District**
  - Sheila Whitlow (OCSS) provides leadership support to Superintendent Tom Wilson and Assistant Superintendent Dee Davis;
  - Dr. Chris Barnes (OCSS) provides leadership support to Assistant Superintendent Dee Davis and district personnel in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability;
  - Julie Amstutz (OCSS) provides leadership support to Special Education Director Suzette Anderson and district special education program personnel;
  - Dr. Michael Watson (OCSS) provides leadership support to district and school personnel in the areas of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) in academic and behavioral intervention.
- **Edgewood Elementary School (Grades K-1)**
  - Russ Sherrill (DESE) provides leadership support to Principal Edgar Cooper.
- **Coleman Elementary School (Grades 2-5)**
  - Sarah Inman (Bailey Group) provides leadership support to Principal Marcia Merritt.
- **Watson Chapel Jr. High School (Grades 6-8)**
  - Cortney Jackson (Bailey Group) provides leadership support to Principal Jeremy Vincent.
- **Watson Chapel Sr. High School (Grades 9-12)**
  - Cortney Jackson (Bailey Group) provides leadership support to Principal Henry Webb and Asst. Principal Forte.