

## **PRESS RELEASE - October 9, 2007**

### **Students Make NCLB History for District**

For the first time since the federal government implemented No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, Tulsa Public Schools has accomplished a rare feat for an urban school district. Preliminary accountability results from the Oklahoma Department of Education indicate across-the-board academic improvements, and the first-ever report that the district is making Adequate Yearly Progress.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) represents the annual academic performance targets in reading and math that schools must reach to be considered on track for full proficiency by the 2013-14 school year. The numbers are compiled using the Academic Performance Index.

“It’s gratifying to see us moving closer to our goal as a district,” said Dr. Michael Zolkoski, Superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools. “Making AYP for the first time is encouraging, but we can’t stop here,” he said. “We have many more benchmarks to achieve on our journey to excellence.”

New figures indicate significant growth in virtually all academic categories. In one instance, students achieved a stunning increase of more than 7,000 percent over the last five years. In math, regular education students boast gains of nearly 50 percent compared to 2002. Those same students improved their reading scores by almost 43 percent.

“The teachers and administrators are to be commended for staying the course to bring about these improvements,” said Dr. Mary Guinn, Chief Academic Officer for the district. “We are showing results from the long-term plan that was designed and implemented during the 2004 school year.”

The Oklahoma District Accountability Data Report was divided into a dozen categories. Tulsa Public Schools students increased performance in every single area, with the most significant gains from students on Individual Education Plans (127 percent in math, 370 percent in reading). Progress for minority and economically disadvantaged students also exploded. African-American students, for example, increased their math scores by more than 80 percent and reading scores by more than 54 percent. Hispanic students saw their math scores improve 70 percent and their reading scores nearly 50 percent. Students classified as economically disadvantaged pumped up their reading scores by more than 65 percent and math by 51 percent.

“This is huge,” said Roberta Ellis, Tulsa Public Schools’ Director of Federal Programs. “It is unusual for an urban school district of this size to meet all of the performance criteria under No Child Left Behind. We’re certainly on the right track.”

NCLB was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2002. The law requires states to develop criterion-based assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in certain grades. NCLB mandates that each state "...establish a timeline for adequate yearly progress. The timeline shall ensure that not later than 12 years after the 2001-2002 school year, all students in each group...will meet or exceed the state's standards."

Schools and districts failing to achieve AYP on two consecutive years are placed in the school improvement status.