

ARROWPOINT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF BROKEN ARROW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Brandon Chitty

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{ a message from the }

SUPERINTENDENT

The spring months always seem incredibly busy which can make it challenging to keep up with the new bills and laws occurring at the state legislature. I'd like to take a few moments to bring you up to speed on several key decisions and important pieces of information.

First, the Jenks and Union districts have won a battle in their challenge to the constitutionality of the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship for Students with Disabilities law. The judge hearing the case ruled in favor of the districts, citing the law to be unconstitutional. While the decision will likely be appealed, I'm hopeful that the Oklahoma Supreme Court will uphold this ruling. It funnels much needed resources away from school districts, giving away public funds to private institutions.

Second, there are several new initiatives and programs coming to Oklahoma school districts. You may be familiar with the term, Common Core State Standards, because many states, including Oklahoma, are aligning their curriculum to meet these new standards. While we are still striving to fully understand the implications of this shift, I believe that Broken Arrow teachers are already delivering quality instruction. Our district is leading the state in the understanding, planning and implementation of these new standards, and I view it as an opportunity to refine what we are already doing well.

Third, a new state-wide grading system has been created by the State Department of Education to assign grades to all school sites and school districts. Earlier this year, our state was one of several states to receive a waiver from the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, which also included a new grading system. While proponents of this new A-F system claim it will be easier for parents to understand, educators across the state have serious concerns in how the scores will be tabulated. The new system is more rigid than the one it replaced, and utilizes a bell curve as the model for assigning grades to districts. It seems the State Department has simply replaced one flawed model for another, so my goal for Broken Arrow Public Schools is to make high-quality teaching the goal of every decision. If we take care of students by putting highly qualified teachers in every classroom equipped with the technology and resources they need to be effective, our grade on the A-F scale will take care of itself.

This leads me to my final point, which is directly related to performance on state tests. We are continuing to gather more information about the State Department's takeover of low-performing schools. While our district does not have a school on this new list, one of our neighbors, Tulsa Public Schools has a school on this list. At first, communications on this issue from the State Superintendent were very hostile, but after public outcry from educators and parents, the term "partnership" is being used in place of takeover. The details of this process have yet to be defined, but we will watch closely and do our best to learn from our colleagues as they navigate this issue.

If you are not already, I encourage you to become involved in learning about these and other issues that threaten public education in our state. The Parent Legislative Action Committee can assist you in this, and for more information, simply click on "PLAC" under the "Take Action" tab on our website.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jarod Mendenhall, Superintendent of Schools

Safety First

New LobbyGuard technology allows for better monitoring of school site guests

Several Broken Arrow campuses will soon feature a new visitor check-in system in their lobbies. Known as LobbyGuard, this kiosk system enables school staff members to more closely monitor the visitors coming and going from school grounds.

“Our campus was one of the few that was able to pilot the LobbyGuard Program, and I am very pleased that the system is now being implemented in all schools,” said Childers Middle School Principal Liz Burns. “The students rely on us to keep them safe while they are at school, and this system is just one more tool we can use to maintain a secure environment.”

LobbyGuard performs an instant background check on all visitors by scanning their driver’s license. The information on the driver’s license is compared to that on national sex offender databases, but schools can also enter a customized list of names if there are specific, known individuals who should not be on campus. If there is a match, the system sends an immediate alert to school and law enforcement personnel.

“Anyone visiting our schools will need to have their driver’s license with them when they arrive,” Burns said. “This will likely take a bit of getting used to for our parents and volunteers, but the system does have some time-saving options for our frequent visitors.”

Frequent Visitor Keytags offer visitors a faster and more convenient way to sign-in. Once issued, visitors simply need to scan the bar code on the keytag for an instant sign-in. The keytags will be available for purchase from the schools for a small fee.

The LobbyGuard system also provides schools with an easy way to track volunteer hours.

“We have hundreds of volunteers at our sites every year, and they log thousands of hours of service,” said Volunteer Coordinator Jo McCord. “When our volunteers sign in using LobbyGuard, the system can automatically track their volunteer hours and print up-to-date reports at the push of a button.”

The accurate logging of volunteer hours will be critical in the future, because the new A-F grading system being used by the State Department of Education factors in volunteer hours in determining a school’s overall grade.

“Our volunteers already do so much for our schools, but with this new grading system they can also play a huge role in making sure Broken Arrow achieves the highest grades possible in the State’s new grading system,” said McCord.

Twenty-five LobbyGuard systems were purchased with funds from the 2009 bond issue, and 12 of these systems will be placed in school sites by the end of May. The remaining systems will be in place by August.

“School staff will still interact with our volunteers as they arrive at our schools, but this system just adds an extra layer of security that I think we can all feel good about,” said Burns.



WANT TO
LEARN MORE?



Scan this QR code with
your smartphone and
check out the
LobbyGuard website!



Brandon Chitty bows his head in disbelief as his portfolio essay is read moments before his announcement as the BAPS 2012 District Teacher of the Year.



INNOVATION

CHITTY NAMED BAPS 2012 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Amidst cheers from his friends and family in the audience, Centennial science teacher Brandon Chitty was named the 2012 Broken Arrow Public Schools Teacher of the Year.

“When Dr. Mendenhall said that he was going to read a passage from the 2012 Teacher of the Year’s body of work, I think we were all on the edge of our seat waiting for the first words,” Chitty said. “Just as he got out the second word I knew it was from my writings. I was in absolute shock.”

Chitty was one of 11 finalists selected from the pool of 25 Site Teacher of the Year Candidates. Typically, only 10 finalists are selected, but a tie for 10th place this year resulted in 11 finalists being named. Joining Chitty on stage were: Marla Watts from South Intermediate, Heather Goodenough from Haskell, Chris Nichols from Arrow Springs, Teri Overton from Indian Springs, Lindsay Little from Lynn Wood, Catherine Graham from Oak Crest, Abby

Weyen from Park Lane, Amanda Stone from Rhoades, Rachel Ellis from Spring Creek, and Diana Snow from Wolf Creek.

Chitty has been teaching at Centennial Middle School for five years and is the first Broken Arrow teacher to pilot a paperless classroom.

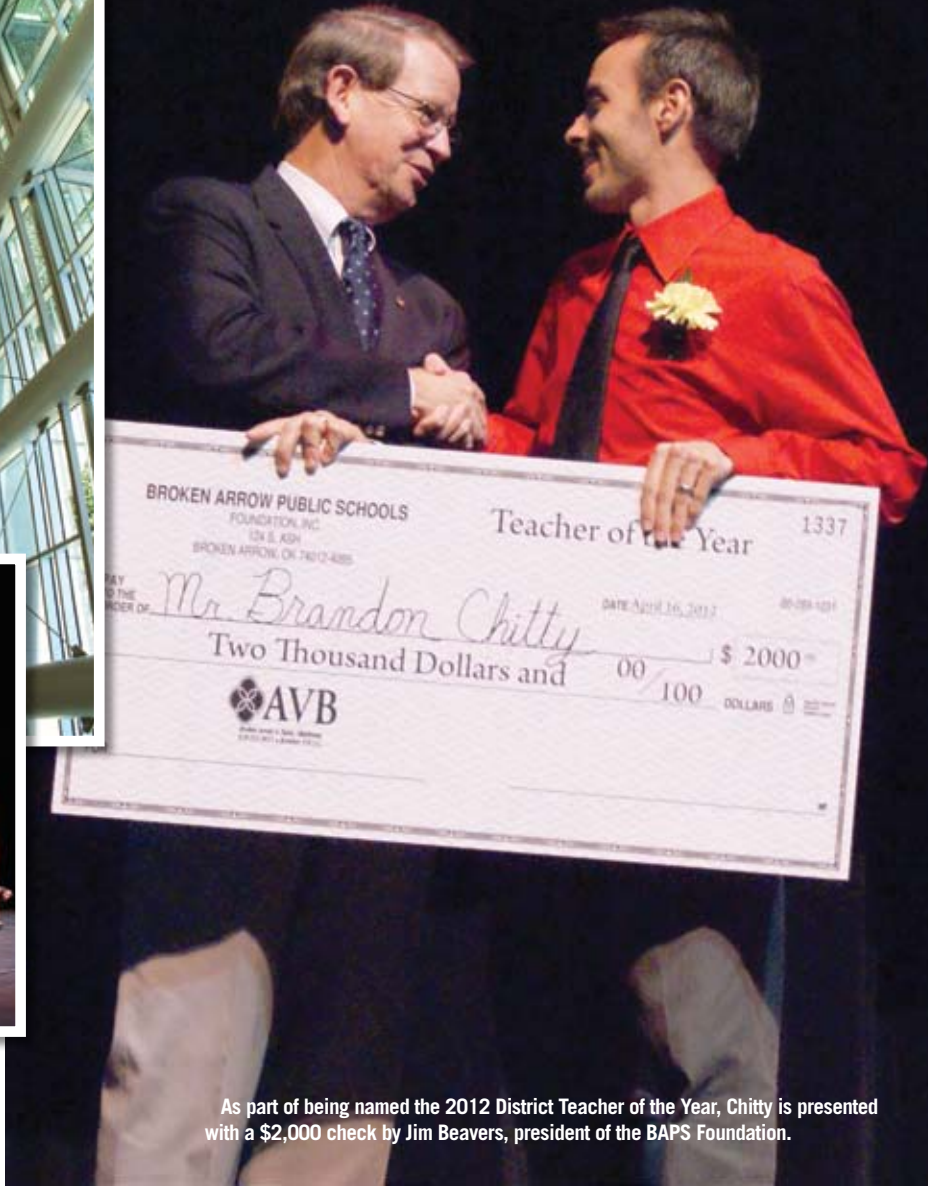
“Being a teacher that went from a traditional classroom to a 21st century classroom I was nervous about the ability to fully educate the students completely digitally, but after implementing this for a year I have seen nothing but higher student learning and engagement,” said Chitty. “Students come into my class with absolutely no supplies - they sit at their desk and log in to their laptop where they have access to multiple Google educational concepts that can be accessed from any internet connection.”

After being nominated as the Centennial Site Teacher of the Year by his peers, Chitty and the other 24 candidates went through an evaluation



Chitty receives sage advice from outgoing District Teacher of the Year Kylla Leeburg.

and interview process to determine the 2012 District Teacher of the Year. The Professional Development Committee, a group composed of teachers, administrators, and both current and previous Teachers of the Year, met to evaluate each candidate’s portfolio and conduct an



A first for the Teacher of the Year event, this year's pool of finalists was narrowed to the Top 11 site teachers instead of 10. Site finalists and their families and friends were honored before the ceremony with an elegant dinner in the Performing Arts Center grand lobby.

As part of being named the 2012 District Teacher of the Year, Chitty is presented with a \$2,000 check by Jim Beavers, president of the BAPS Foundation.

interview. Each candidate was scored on the various portions of the process, and after all the scores were tallied, Chitty came out on top.

“Brandon’s energy and passion about teaching and learning were evident in every stage of the Teacher of the Year process,” said Director of Professional Development Diana Beaulieu. “When describing his classroom, Mr. Chitty described a classroom that is highly engaging and interactive for every student every minute of the class period. He is a fantastic communicator who willingly shares ideas and strategies with his colleagues and serves as a motivator to many of us.”

As the 2012 District Teacher of the Year, Chitty received several gifts, including a \$2,000 check from the Broken Arrow Public Schools Foundation, and the opportunity to drive the Teacher of the Year car – a black Ford Escape provided by Matthews Ford.

Chitty will represent Broken Arrow Public

Schools in the State Teacher of the Year competition, the results of which will be announced later this year at the Oklahoma State Fair. Broken Arrow has produced several State Teachers of the Year, and Chitty is looking to bring that honor back to BA.

“I want nothing else but to share my vision, ideas and passion for education,” said Chitty. “Coming out on top at the state level would be the ultimate platform to share my educational philosophy and motivate educators to get excited about the 21st century classroom. “There are amazing educators that fill our schools, and I would be honored to be a representative of the level of excellence that Broken Arrow exudes.”

In addition to the naming of the District Teacher of the Year, patrons and nominees were treated to an amazing performance by Country Lane Primary first grade student Anna Herrera, along with the BAHS Jazz Band.





UNDERCONSTRUCTION

New projects shape the future

In a school district, the summer months are typically slow without much activity, but that will not be the case this summer in Broken Arrow. Thanks to a \$295 million bond issue passed in 2009, construction is taking place at nearly every site in the district.

“Nineteen of our 25 school sites will be under construction this summer, so my staff and I are not planning on a relaxing summer vacation,” said Broken Arrow Public Schools Chief Operating Officer Michelle Bergwall. “All the hard work is worth it though when our students and staff see their new facilities. When the little ones tell me, ‘It’s better than I imagined,’ it’s all worth it.”

During or shortly after Spring Break, several

sites were able to move in to newly constructed spaces. At Lynn Wood Elementary, students and staff are already enjoying a new media center and 22 new classrooms. The portable buildings that once housed classrooms were demolished, and in their place a new gymnasium is being built.

Arrowhead, Spring Creek, and Leisure Park Elementaries have also opened and occupied new media centers and classroom spaces, and additional building remodels will take place throughout the summer. The work at these three sites will be complete in time for the new school year. At Vandever Elementary, new classrooms, a media center and a gymnasium are currently under construction, some of which will be ready



Students at Lynn Wood Elementary move into their newly-constructed wing complete with new classrooms and a Media Center. Inset, students welcome and cheer on the new arrivals with signs of congratulations.

CONSTRUCTION

of Broken Arrow Schools



New elementary school named Highland Park

A name was finally chosen for the new elementary being built at 91st and Oneta Road: Highland Park Elementary.

“The name is a combination of geographic elements,” said Karla Dyess, the current Park Lane Elementary Principal. “Highland’ comes from the name of the nearby development called The Highlands, and ‘Park’ is taken from the current name of Park Lane Elementary school, which will be transformed into a Pre-K Center once this new elementary is opened.”

During the past few months, Dyess has chaired a naming committee composed of students, parents, teachers and administrators from Park Lane. Committee members asked for names from the community, and all ideas were collected and discussed. Committee member then narrowed the options down to five names which were presented to the board in February.

The five names presented to the board for consideration were: Freedom Park, William “Bill” Rampey, Rachel Scott, Highland Park, and Ronald Reagan. After deliberation, the Board of Education unanimously voted to approve Highland Park as the name for the new elementary.

Highland Park Elementary will open in August 2012.



Arrowhead Elementary



Leisure Park Elementary



Spring Creek Elementary



South Intermediate High School

for move-in during April, and the rest will be completed by August. And, after many months of construction, students and staff will return to Rhoades Elementary in August to find a new gym, cafeteria, kitchen and a renovated media center, music and art room.

The steel package at the new elementary on 91st and Oneta was completed in early April, and the site is progressing on a rapid pace, scheduled for completion by the start of school in August. Floor plans for the new middle school on that same property are being finalized, and construction on that facility will begin this summer. Later this spring, construction will begin on the two new elementaries that will replace the current Westwood and Indian Springs, both of which will be completed prior to the start of the 2013-2014 school year.

The construction at South Intermediate – additional classrooms and fine arts spaces –

continues to move along on schedule and will wrap up in time for the 2012-2013 school year. Construction of the addition to the Senior High will begin this summer and is expected to be completed in 18 months. This project will add new classrooms, a media center, science labs, fine arts spaces including a new band room, and more to the front façade of the current building.

“Other projects currently in some stage of construction include the four new Pre-K Centers, and renovations at Country Lane, Centennial, Wolf Creek and Oliver,” Bergwall said. “There are a lot of steps that must take place before the actual construction can begin, and of course, there are always unforeseen delays. Overall though, I am pleased with the pace of construction we are maintaining throughout the district, and I think a number of people will be pleasantly surprised with the progress when they return in August.”





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