



T U L S A

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 26, 2012

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I wanted to give you an update on the situation with the A-F Report Cards being issued to schools by the State Department of Education. I am disappointed to report that yesterday the State Board of Education voted unanimously to certify all of the report cards for all Oklahoma schools. In spite of the protests of 313 school superintendents across the state who objected to the overall average growth measure, State Superintendent Janet Barresi pushed these grades through with no collaboration or input from the experts in our state.

After today, I will no longer talk about the A-F school grading system. It is flawed, and I stand by my earlier comments that these grades are not an accurate representation of the work being done in our schools. There is too much positive activity going on at Tulsa Public Schools and too much work to do to become focused on an arbitrary and capricious grading system. It was decided by Barresi well in advance about how many A's, B's, C's, D's and F's there would be and adjustments were made to the formula to ensure that outcome.

Let me also add that I have received numerous phone calls and emails from parents and teachers after looking at their school's grade. "That's not us; we're better than that," is what they are all saying. And I assure you that is the truth.

I, along with the other dedicated educators at TPS, am fully aware that we have student achievement problems in Tulsa schools. We are working diligently to resolve these issues.

At the same time, we are experiencing many successes at TPS:

- Our Teacher Leader Effectiveness initiative is a nationally-recognized model.
- We are working to insure an **effective teacher in every classroom** and a **great leader in every building**.
- TPS' teacher **evaluation system** has been **adopted by 500 school districts in the state**.
- Our relationship with **Teach for America** has provided students the opportunity for five additional weeks of instruction during the summer, and participation among students has tripled. More importantly, these students on average achieved 75 percent of their performance goals.

- Improvements have been made to establish a **common curriculum** throughout the district.
- The hard work done under Project Schoolhouse is bearing fruit as we are seeing **improved student achievement** at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level and at **Will Rogers College High School**.

As I write this piece early Friday morning, approximately 41,000 students are on their way to school. Dedicated teachers and other school personnel will start another day as they continue to break down the barriers that keep our children from achieving excellence. At the end of the day, we ask that parents be the judge. The work we do in the classroom speaks more loudly than any piece of paper.

We appreciate your child and the deep relationship and support we enjoy from our great TPS parents, teachers and staff. You will be hearing shortly from your child's principal who will communicate more about the school's specific grade.



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*Tulsa Public Schools Superintendent*