

**Minutes  
Lawrence County School District  
Annual Public Meeting  
November 15, 2022**

**The Lawrence County School District met Tuesday, November 15, 2022 for the Annual Public Meeting.**

**At 6:45p.m. President Clay Sloan called the meeting to order.**

**The first item was the Superintendent's Report, which was given by Superintendent Terry Belcher, who gave a general update for the school, enrollment totals, discussed goals, and accreditation status.**

**Superintendent Belcher gave the Walnut Ridge Elementary report. At the annual public meeting, he discussed the goals for the elementary school, the accreditation status, and the test scores results.**

**Superintendent Belcher gave the Walnut Ridge High School report. At the annual public meeting, he discussed the goals for the high school, the accreditation status, and proposals for the upcoming year.**

**Superintendent Belcher gave the Federal and State Categorical Funding Report.**

**At 7:10 p.m. Joe Penn moved the meeting adjourned. Pat Roby seconded the motion. The motion received unanimous approval.**

**Brittany Farmer,  
Secretary**

## Lawrence County School District Annual Report to the Public 2022

### District Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Lawrence County School District to develop the ability of all students by motivating, challenging, and fostering independent education. To accomplish this mission, the Lawrence County School District will ensure a positive educational environment that enhances learning, fosters growth, and provides opportunities for all students and faculty to exceed and excel beyond the educational setting.

### Schools

The Lawrence County School District is home to 973 students and 131 staff members. The Walnut Ridge Elementary serves students in grades kindergarten through the sixth grade. Walnut Ridge High serves students in grades seven through twelve. The Lawrence County School District strives to support the schools in administering academic and extracurricular programs that aim at benefiting all students. District personnel accept the responsibility that ALL students can learn and the faculty and staff will continue to work diligently to accomplish that endeavor in order to develop future productive citizens of our communities.

Arkansas schools continue to ensure high quality instruction and instructional leadership through the implementation of the [Teacher Excellence and Support System](#) (TESS) that defines a system to support high quality classroom instruction and effective teaching and leading in Arkansas's schools. The teacher evaluation system provides school districts a transparent and consistent teacher evaluation system that ensures effective teaching and promotes professional learning.

### Annual Public Meeting

The Lawrence County School District held a public meeting on November 15, 2022 at 6:30p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress toward accomplishing district program goals, creating opportunities for excellence, accreditation standards, and school objectives for the 2023-2024 school year. Principals gave an overview of programs in each school. All parents and patrons were encouraged to attend.

### Walnut Ridge Elementary School 2022 Public Report

The Walnut Ridge Elementary School is in full compliance with the Arkansas Department of Education accreditation state standards. The faculty and staff remain committed to the school mission while developing the abilities of each student through the implementation of motivating, challenging, and independent learning within a safe and positive school environment.

New personnel for the 2022-23 school year include: Sarah Rogers, Second grade teacher; Ali Carey, Fourth grade teacher; Michelle Smelser, 2 – 4 SpEd Teacher; Shelley Milgrim, 2 – 4 SpEd Aide; Natalie Wilson, SpEd Aide; Chrissy Debow, K – 2 Custodian; Jennifer Smith, Kindergarten Instructional Aide; Rebeccah Shipman, First grade Instructional Aide; Cheryl Englert, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Instructional Aide; Zoe Davis, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Instructional Aide; Penny Sloan, K – 4 Counselor; Makayla Durham 5<sup>th</sup> grade Literacy Teacher; Marcia Martin, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Literacy teacher; Tashena Tate, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Math teacher; Megan Cole, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math teacher; Kristy Bateman, Reading Interventionist; and Angela Brady, Math Interventionist.

The Walnut Ridge Elementary School consists of students in Kindergarten through Sixth grade. Classrooms for Kindergarten through Fourth graders are located in the Ben R. Bush building. ABC Preschool classrooms are located across the street from the Elementary. Classrooms for Fifth and Sixth students are located in the Middle School building. Enrollment reported on at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, 2021-2022 school year, and on November 8, 2022, are:

Students Enrolled	August 2021	August 2022	November 2022
ABC Preschool, (ages 3 – 5)	57	58	60
Kindergarten	77	70	80
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	68	89	88
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	63	71	72
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	73	69	73
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	63	73	75
5 <sup>th</sup> grade	67	66	65
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	79	67	71
<b>Total Enrolled</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>584</b>

Fifth and Sixth grade students have the opportunity to participate in intramural basketball. Third grade through Sixth grade boys may participate in football. Fourth grade through Sixth grade girls may participate in volleyball. Third grade through Sixth grade girls may participate in cheerleading. All of activities are part of the Walnut Ridge Elementary Booster Club program under the direction of the Walnut Ridge Public School Athletic Director. Learning extends at Walnut Ridge Elementary School through a variety of additional activities available to students. The Lawrence County Spelling Bee, Chess Tournaments, Quiz Bowl, and Elementary Field Day are some of the opportunities. Kindergarten through Eighth graders participated in the One School, One Book which provides excellent involvement between the school, parents, and community.

The Walnut Ridge Elementary Before and After School Program remains a growing part of our service to students and their families. The Walnut Ridge Elementary Summer Program met the essentials of over 50 students. The average Before and After School Program daily attendance is between 18-20 students. Our school is committed to serving the child-care needs of our parents and community between 6 am and 6 pm, Monday through Friday.

Two Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled for the school year. The first parent-teacher conference occurs at the end of the mid nine week's period. The second conference follows at the end of the third nine weeks. Mid-term progress reports are sent home to parents five weeks into each quarter. Scheduling of individual conferences transpire as deemed necessary.

Student Recognition is a very important part of Walnut Ridge Elementary. Students receive quarterly awards for Honor Roll and Perfect Attendance. Faculty are encouraged to let the students make a "brag call" to the parents to share their child's growth and achievement. End of year awards will be presented fourth quarter. Mrs. Penny Sloan, WRES K – 4 Counselor, will focused on character education through the incorporation of monthly character awards and in class presentations.

The Walnut Ridge School implements PLC learning communities meeting school wide with expectations that all students learn at high levels. The administration and faculty works diligently to obtain professional development that will foster student growth and provide an enhanced learning environment. All professional development alignment coincides with the district ACSIP Plan and meets the requirements mandated by the state. Teachers continue to grow professionally through active involvement in professional organizations and the state mandated TESS evaluation system. Professional Development will focus on Literacy, Data, and Mathematics. The Walnut Ridge Elementary certified teaching staff receives 60 hours of staff development during the school year.

Bobcat Builder, a Summer Learning program to address the academic needs of at-risk students identified by RTI data collected throughout the school year. The goal of the program was to lessen (or close) their learning gap by addressing grade-level literacy skills using research-based enrichment activities which promote growth in phonetic features.

The Parent Center provides academic prescriptions for home learning reinforcement. We also offer After-school and In-school Tutoring through the remediation and enrichment small group opportunities with instructional aides trained in interventions for students who need additional academic instruction. Our Reading staff assists teachers through the implementation of small intervention groups for students in Kindergarten through Sixth grade.

Walnut Ridge Elementary faculty and staff will continue to work with the students, parents, and community to meet the needs of all students. Walnut Ridge Elementary strives to make our school a true learning environment that promotes the belief that all students can learn. Researched base teaching strategies and techniques help support fundamental growth for our students. Administrators, teachers, and parents working together can make a positive difference in student achievement and educational quality, thereby initiating a “School of Choice”.

Students at Walnut Ridge Elementary take the state required assessments annually. This includes iStation Assessment for grades Kindergarten through Second graders and the ACT Aspire Assessment for Third through Sixth graders. Students with academic deficiencies obtain opportunities for improvement within the Bobcat Block that provides multiple interventions through small group instruction. Instructional Aides and Interventionists facilitate effective interventions during non-core instructional time periods.

**Spring 2022, iStation Test Results**  
*Students tested and Tier Level Percentages in Reading and Mathematics*

Grade	Content	# Tested	On or Above Grade Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Kindergarten	Reading	79	19.72%	15.49%	22.54%	21.13%	21.3%
	Math	79	37.97%	17.72%	26.58%	10.13%	7.59%
First	Reading	71	19.72%	15.49%	22.54%	21.13%	21.3%
	Math	71	30.99%	36.62%	16.9%	70.4%	8.45%
Second	Reading	63	20.25%	27.85%	20.25%	21.52%	10.13%
	Math	63	34.92%	17.46%	20.63%	15.87%	11.11%

**Spring 2022 ACT Aspire Test Results**  
*Percentage of Students meeting or exceeding ACT Readiness Benchmarks.*  
*National Percentage of students meeting or exceeding ACT Readiness Benchmarks.*

Grades & Subjects		# tested	(2021) → 2022 Ready or Exceeding %	2022 % State
Third	English	76	(no data) → 47.4%	62.1%
	Reading	76	(no data) → 21.1%	35.0%
	Science	76	(no data) → 22.4%	31.2%
	Math	76	(no data) → 38.2%	52.4%
Fourth	English	66	(50.0%) → 56.1%	62.4%
	Reading	66	(29.7%) → 37.9%	41.9%
	Science	66	(23.4%) → 37.9%	40.8%
	Math	66	(21.9%) → 42.4%	42.0%
Fifth	English	63	(57.9%) → 68.3%	65.9%
	Reading	63	(28.9%) → 31.7%	34.3%
	Science	63	(26.3%) → 30.2%	36.9%
	Math	63	(21.1%) → 36.5%	40.7%
Sixth	English	73	(73.5%) → 54.8%	65.5%
	Reading	73	(30.1%) → 37.0%	42.4%
	Science	73	(27.7%) → 37.0%	40.9
	Math	73	(30.1%) → 34.2%	45.6%

Students in grades three through sixth were recognized for exhibiting best practices while taking the ACT Aspire as well as their achievement based on the final results in the grade-level subjects of Reading, English, Math, and/or Science. Celebrations were scaffolded based on the level of academic achievement.

## **Walnut Ridge High School 2022 Public Report**

Walnut Ridge High School meets the Standards for Accreditation as established and set forth by the Arkansas Department of Education.

The faculty and administration are involved in an ongoing effort to accomplish goals of the school's mission statement. Workshops and training to obtain the highest level of services for our students and faculty are provided. The professional development hours are based on the requirements found within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Rules, board policies, student achievement data, and the District and School-level improvement plans. Specifically, professional development activities are designed to increase student academic performance. Two key focuses of professional development at WRHS are the improvement of reading scores and the continued development of a Professional Learning Community. In 2022, WRHS earned a letter grade of "C" on the ESSA school report card. Efforts are ongoing to improve our school letter grade with a focused effort on improving student attendance

At Walnut Ridge High School, 27 faculty members provide instruction in a broad spectrum of subjects ranging from special education and basic skills to Advanced Placement courses. WRHS offers seven Advanced Placement courses. A smart core curriculum and a core curriculum are offered that benefit both the college bound student and those students who will be entering the workforce after graduation. Students may also become a "Completer" by completing a course of study in one of four career and technical pathways at WRHS: Agriculture, Business, Jr. Firefighter, and Criminal Justice. Students are allowed to pursue a course of study that will enable them to attend the Northeast Arkansas Career and Technical Center in Jonesboro which offers 13 technical programs or the Black River Career and Technical Center in Pocahontas which offers 9 technical programs. Walnut Ridge High School also offers courses in academic and CTE subjects totaling 18 concurrent credit hours through Black River Technical College taught on our campus that allows students who qualify academically to receive college credit in those courses. BRTC has also allowed our students to take online courses through their campus at the reduced rate for any course not offered on our campus. With new legislation, the lottery scholarship will now pay for up to six hours of concurrent credit in both the junior and senior years of high school, as long as students complete the courses with a grade of "C" or better.

In 2018-19 WRHS added an EAST (Education Accelerated through Service and Technology) program. The EAST Initiative is a high tech project-based program that requires students to problem solve and create while encouraging them to be active in the community.

Walnut Ridge High School students participate in a variety of nationally sponsored activities that include FFA, FBLA, Key Club, National Honor Society, Student Council, and a number of school sponsored clubs. WRHS students have excelled both at the state and national level in such competitions as Quiz Bowl and FBLA. Students are also involved in community activities with Key Club, Ralph Joseph Leadership, and Red Cross. Walnut Ridge High School students attended Boys and Girls State sponsored by the American Legion.

Students are given the opportunity to attend an ACT summer program hosted by Walnut Ridge High. The preparation course offered during the summer months gives many students a significant increase in scores as a result of their participation. ACT help sessions are also sponsored throughout the school year in the week before a scheduled test.

Students may participate in a host of extracurricular activities that enhance the learning process. Athletic programs include football, volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, track and field,

golf, the “Alleycats” dance team, and trap shooting team. An active cheerleading squad, band, and choir compete in a host of local, state, and national events. Individual clubs and organizations meet a diverse range of student needs.

Alternative Education is located on the Walnut Ridge High School campus and serves students in grades 9-12. This program serves students for behavioral issues, attendance issues and academic issues. WRHS teachers teach most courses. Students may also take electives in their field of interest or attend the Jonesboro Career and Technical Center or BRTC Secondary Center to learn skills for specific trades.

Technology continues to be an important component of the educational process. Every classroom has Internet accessibility and the high school library has sixteen computers available for student research and projects. The high school has three computer labs. One of the labs is used for classroom instruction in the business department. One lab is used for students to take online college classes and for students to earn lost credits through Credit Recovery. The other is a general lab adjacent to the Library used for a variety of educational needs. All three labs were upgraded with new computers in 2022. In 2020-21, WRHS purchased a new laptop computer for every student in the high school and is now an official one-to-one school. Additionally, WRHS utilizes Microsoft OneDrive to enhance online and traditional learning.

Students at Walnut Ridge High take the state-required assessments annually. ACT Aspire became the state-mandated test for grades 3-10 in 2015-16 and is being replaced after this school year. The chart below describes the results of the ACT Aspire test:

### 2021-22 Walnut Ridge High School ACT Aspire Subject Proficiency

	9th	10 <sup>th</sup>
English	56.5%	59.2%
Math	17.4%	19.7%
Science	37.7%	30.3%
Reading	37.7%	22.4%

### 2021-22 ACT College Admission Exam---State-Tested 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

	2021 WRHS
Number Tested	66
English	19.4
Mathematics	17
Reading	18.9
Science	18.8
Composite	18.7

## 2021-22 Advanced Placement Tests/ Scores of 3 or higher

AP Course	# Taking Exam	3	4	5
Biology	2	0	0	0
English Lang./Comp	32	3	0	0
U.S. Government	11	2	1	0
Calculus AB	0	0	0	0
World History	42	1	0	0
English Lit./Comp.	17	3	0	0
U.S. History	39	2	0	0

## Lawrence County School District Graduation, Drop-Out, Remediation Rate

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Graduation Rate*	85.0	90.6	90.3	93.0	91.7
Drop-out Rate	1.45	1.20	0.75	0.69	2.71
College Remediation Rate	60.3	50.9	61.3	79.7	62.3

\* \*State Goal for Graduation Rate is 85%

Walnut Ridge High School is committed to excellence in education. The mission of Walnut Ridge High School is to enable all students and faculty an opportunity to exceed and excel. We recognize that the responsibility of a solid educational foundation lies with the students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and community. Our mission is to develop the abilities of each student by maintaining an educational setting that enhances learning, fosters growth, and ensures development.

### Alternative Learning Environment

The Lawrence County School District continues to advance its Alternative Learning Environment program. The CATS (Creating A Thriving Student) Program is located in the Walnut Ridge High School and serves students 9-12. This program serves students who are at risk for not graduating, who have behavioral issues, and who have attendance issues. Students may earn credits in English, Social Science, Science, Math and various electives. Core courses in English, Math, Science and Social Science are taught by accredited on-campus faculty. For electives, students may take on-campus and completer courses in Agriculture, Business or Consumer Science. Students who meet the proper criteria may also attend the Jonesboro Service Center or Black River Technical Center to learn skills for vocational trades.

### Parent Center

The Walnut Ridge School Parent Center is committed to providing materials and services to assist parents in improving their child's academic achievement. We continue to encourage and support active parental involvement in a variety of ways including but not limited to volunteering.

Informational packets are prepared in the center and will be posted on our website and made available during parent/teacher conferences. Packets consist of useful information including but not limited to school calendar, contact information, parental involvement plan, volunteer opportunities, parenting tips in areas such as homework, health and nutrition, and projected parent involvement activities planned for the school year.

The Parent Center is using the app Remind to provide communication between the school and parents in a regular and meaningful manner for the elementary school. Remind announcements are posted on the school website, and can be available in paper form. The school website is another method for parents to communicate or be informed in a regular and meaningful manner. Parents are encouraged to visit the website at [www.bobcats.k12.ar.us](http://www.bobcats.k12.ar.us) to check their child's progress, assignments, and activities.

Parent Center surveys will be sent home annually and are available to download on the parent center page on the school website. Results from the surveys will be used to better understand the needs of the parents. Parent meeting topics and material suggestions are also compiled from the surveys.

Volunteerism is supported and encouraged at Walnut Ridge School. Volunteer surveys are sent home annually and are also available to download on the school website. Instructional volunteers are trained through the center each year. Faculty members receive a volunteer resource book which is updated yearly from the survey results. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of this useful resource.

The parent center provides resources and materials free of charge. The center is available daily and is located near the middle level building. It is coordinated by Lindsey Romine and facilitated by Dyan Heard. Mrs. Romine may be reached at 870-819-0443 and Mrs. Heard at 870-819-0441 or both at [www.bobcats.k12.ar.us](http://www.bobcats.k12.ar.us). The Walnut Ridge Elementary School encourages all parents to utilize this valuable asset.

### **Gifted and Talented Program**

The Lawrence County School District's gifted and talented program provides students with various program options such as Whole Group Enrichment, Resource Room, Pre-Advanced Placement, and Advanced Placement Courses.

Kindergarten through second grade are served through Whole Group Enrichment by the coordinator for 30 minutes per week.

Students in the third through sixth grade are provided services in the resource room for 150 minutes per week by the coordinator.

Students in the fifth through tenth grade are served through Advanced courses such as Civics, English, Economics, Math, Physical Science, Biology, and Algebra II, by a certified teacher for 250 minutes per week.

Students in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade are provided services through Advanced Placement courses such as Biology, Calculus, U.S. History, World History, American Government, English Language, and English Literature and Composition by a certified teacher for 250 minutes per week.

All seventh through twelfth grade students have the opportunity to meet with the coordinator on the third Monday of the month from 8:00 a.m. until 8:45 a.m.

Identified students also have the opportunity to participate in outside learning opportunities such as quiz bowl, chess competitions, NEAC Business Expo, U.S. Space Camp, Story Store, Bioscience Institute, Stock Market Game, and Project Fair. Additional field trips are arranged when appropriate.

Referrals for the gifted and talented program are accepted throughout the year. Please feel free to access Tonda Brand's website page for more information or contact her at 819-0439.



### **District Technology**

Our server for our security cameras system was replaced and we have greatly increased the number of cameras on campus to help improve security. This included adding cameras for the new gymnasium and ballfields and better coverage of our hallways and common outside areas. A total of 57 new desktop computers have been purchased for the teachers on campus to help better support their use of technology in the classrooms. All of our buses have new camera systems installed along with a new server for viewing and archiving the footage. Due to a grant that we received, we are currently replacing 28 desktops in the Middle School computer lab. We installed 19 new Smart Boards and 2 large-screen TVs to replace the older projector systems in Elementary and Middle Schools. Added 60 additional student laptops have been added in the Middle School to be able to facilitate having a cart in each room. We no longer have to rely on the students to keep up with their devices throughout the day and return them to their homeroom at the end of the day.

The sound system in the Community Center has been replaced with a more modern system to make better use of the auditorium for the band and choral concerts as well as for presentations and the hosting of speakers and training events.

We have applied and been approved for a network re-wire project through E-Rate. This will replace the wiring in the remainder of the Upper Elementary building including relocation of the switches from the old data rack location as well as re-wiring the South High School wings including both the Computer Lab and the Business Lab. This is scheduled for early summer of 2023.

### **Capital Improvements**

- PCs in middle level lab
- Student Laptops 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades
- New Cameras
- Bus Cameras
- Purchase of Student Desks and Tables
- Various Doors Replaced
- Replaced Ceiling Tiles
- New Copiers
- Purchase of iPads
- Buses
- Teacher Laptops
- Smart Board Computers

### **Federal and State Categorical Funding**

The Lawrence County School District receives federal monies and state categorical monies to supplement educational programs. The District receives Title I, Title II-A, Title IV-A, Title V (state), Carl Perkins, **Enhanced Student Achievement** (ESA), English Language Learners (ELL), Professional Development (PD), and Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) funding. All funds (except Carl Perkins) are administered through the LCSD School Improvement Plans.

Title I funds are utilized for Walnut Ridge Elementary (grades K-6). Funds are used to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities for teachers and students. Literacy, math, and science are targeted areas of improvement, with an emphasis on Literacy, The Parent Center is funded using Title I funds.

Title II-A funds are used to help with professional development in the elementary grades. Title II-A funds are transferred to Title I to help with expenses in the Title I budget.

Title IV-A funds are transferred to Title I to help with expenses in the Title I budget.

Title VI (state) funds are used to help provide a resource security officer for the district.

Carl Perkins funds are specifically used in the Vocational Department. Business, Agriculture, and Fire/ Criminal Justice classes provide supplemental activities with Carl Perkins funds. Funds are also used to provide teachers with professional development opportunities and travel expenses.

**Enhanced Student Achievement (ESA)** funds are geared at increasing student academic performance in math, literacy, science, and social studies. Positions paid with **ESA** funds: **MS Reading Paraprofessional, MS Dyslexia/Reading Interventionist, MS Math Interventionist,** School Nurse, Security Resource Officer, MS Guidance Counselor, Technology Lab teacher in HS, Librarian in ES, Before and After School Tutoring, Summer School at the high school, and others. ESA monies are used for software, materials, and supplies for math, literacy, science, and social studies. Since our district and schools' state and/or federal accountability status is Coordinated Support for Reading, ESA monies will be prioritized for literacy.

Professional Development funds allow teachers to attend various trainings throughout the year. Teachers are also afforded the opportunity to attend meetings that address best practices in their respective academic field and that pertain to their Professional Growth Plan.

Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) funds assist in the establishment of the Alternative School located on the Walnut Ridge campus. Part of the salary of the ALE Coordinator is paid with ALE funds.

The Lawrence County School District does not have a soda contract.

Equity The Lawrence County School District Equity Coordinator is Amy Privett. You may reach Ms. Privett at 870-886-6697.

Homeless Jennifer Roark is our homeless liaison.