

April 2014

What was significant about March 31, 2014? The answer is nothing yet but let's wait and see. Many school districts closed on that day so their teachers, parents and students could attend a rally in support of public education at the state capitol that morning. In Guthrie, we kept our schools open but each school site could send two teachers to represent their building. Any additional attendees were allowed to use a personal day to attend. The Citizens for Quality Education funded the cost of substitute teachers for the delegation so no tax dollars were used. When our staff arrived they were met with over 25,000 other supporters for public education from all parts of Oklahoma. The focus of the rally was to issue the plea to our state legislature that more funds are needed for public schools. A question I've heard is, "How much is enough?" A fact to be mindful of: Since 2008, Oklahoma has cut per student funding more than any other state in the U. S. at 22.8%.

In an effort to bring this to a more local level, you have heard me talk about our growth in student population for Guthrie Public Schools often in this column. With that growth, if GPS were currently funded at levels prior to the economic downturn, we would have an additional \$1.3 million dollars in our school budget for this year alone. Fortunately, past fiscal decisions placed our school district in a healthy financial position. This has been done with mostly a very lean and frugal annual budget and careful planning. It is truly my hope that the days ahead are brighter financially for all school districts in this state.

As Guthrie Public Schools continues to plan for the future, we want to keep our community informed of the business side of our district. Our Board of Education meetings are of course open to the public. You may not be aware that soon after the meeting, video of the meeting is posted on our website. For over a year, we have placed the full meeting packet of materials online as well. You can download all documents pertaining to the meeting including monthly financial reports and any contracts being considered by the Board of Education for that meeting. The videos and agendas may be found on our website at <http://www.guthrie.k12.ok.us/Page/19> . The most recent video is of the special meeting held on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The central topic discussed that evening was the ongoing formulation of a District Long Range Plan. Also, at the top of the screen anywhere on our website you can select a school to see the upcoming activities for that building. This will allow you to also be informed of the outstanding accomplishments of our students and staff.

There are three important dates I want to remind you about. Baccalaureate Service will be on Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the High School Gymnasium. High School graduation is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at Jelsma Stadium. And last but not least...the last day of school is Friday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>.