



CITY OF PINE BLUFF EDUCATION STUDY

Research, Evidence and Innovative Education Reforms

Background: Call to Action and Strategy

- In June 2018, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sponsored a community meeting regarding a potential school consolidation.
- Per NAACP’s request, Go Forward Pine Bluff (GFPB) fulfilled its commitment to facilitate a study regarding the current and projected future state the school districts in Pine Bluff: Dollarway School District, Pine Bluff School District and Watson Chapel School District.
- GFPB assembled a committee comprised of community leaders and education stakeholders to help guide the study.
- The committee, in partnership with the lead consultants, accessed information from the Arkansas Department of Education to analyze additional pertinent academic sources to conduct the study.
- The overall goal was to create a research-based and data driven report with suggested solutions to the current educational landscape.

Academics: ACT Aspire K-12 Scores

During the 2019-20 school year, each of the three districts had less than 25% of its students (K-12) meet or exceed expectations on the annual ACT Aspire exam in Literacy, Math, or Science.

Subject	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	Arkansas
Literacy	12%	16%	22%	45%
Math	10%	15%	21%	47%
Science	10%	11%	19%	40%

ACT Aspire K-12 Literacy, Math, and Science scores by district, 2018-2019

Academics: ACT Composite Scores

All three school districts have seen a steady decline in ACT Composite scores since 2014 with a small increase by all three districts during the 2018-19 school year.

Year	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	Arkansas
2019	15.76	15.90	17.44	19.68

ACT Composite Scores by District and by year, 2018-2019



Academics: Graduation Rates

All three school districts have seen a fluctuation in graduation rates since 2014 and all fell below the state average during 2019-18.

Year	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	Arkansas
2019	76%	68%	81%	88%

Graduation Rates by district and by year, 2018-19

Enrollment

Steady decline since 2015 for all three districts with the city of Pine Bluff losing over 22% of its student population. The Pine Bluff School District has seen the largest decrease, nearly 27%, in students since the 2015-16 school year. As of the 2019-20 school year, the White Hall School District has the highest student enrollment in Jefferson County.

Year	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	City-Wide	White Hall
2015-16	1211	3920	2591	7722	2780
2016-17	1075	3828	2540	7443	2754
2017-18	958	3509	2560	7027	2849
2018-19	929	3067	2388	6384	2941
2019-20	925	2865	2214	6004	2969
% Change	-23.6%	-26.9%	-14.5%	-22.24%	6.7%

Annual enrollment for all school districts, by school year 2015-2020

Enrollment: Reasons for Dropout or Withdrawal

The number of dropouts/withdrawals have increased and plateaued since the 2013-14 school year with a slight decline within the Pine Bluff School District between (2017 – 2019).

Alcohol nor drugs, economic hardships, nor failing grades were reasons cited for dropout or withdrawals for any student at any of the three districts between school years 2013-14 through 2018-19.

Enrollment in another school (61%) and **Enrollment in another school out of state (12%)** were cited as reasons for dropout/withdrawal. **Other** was listed for **18%** of reasons for dropout/withdrawal and **Suspensions/Expulsion and Incarceration made up 3% of all reasons.**



Teachers: Personnel and Salaries

The city of Pine Bluff has experienced a decrease in their teacher workforce by over 22% since the 2013-14 school year. The Pine Bluff School District has seen the largest decrease in number of teachers, a 32% decline since the 2013-14 school year which aligns with the enrollment decline.

Year	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	City-Wide
2014	109	314	196	619
2016	96	267	188	551
2018	95	242	192	529
2020	93	213	174	480
% Change	-14.6%	-32.1%	-11.2%	-22.4%

Number of Teachers per Every Two Years, SY 2013-14 through SY 2019-20

The starting salary for teachers in Jefferson County is at least \$3,000 above the state’s recommended minimum of \$32,800.

DISTRICT	Dollarway SD	Watson Chapel SD	Pine Bluff SD	White Hall SD	State Recommended Minimum
BA	\$35,500	\$36,500	\$36,000	\$39,000	\$32,800
MA	\$39,500	\$40,300	\$38,700	\$40,799	\$37,450
Highest	\$55,500	\$56,775	\$60,325	\$59,401	\$44,950

Starting teacher salaries by district, 2019-20 ([ADE, 2020](#))



Teachers: Teacher Quality and Attrition (Turnover)

The percentage of inexperienced teachers has increased in both the Dollarway and Pine Bluff School Districts and is higher than the state average. All three districts have exceeded the state average for inexperienced teachers during one of the most recent school years.

Year	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	Arkansas
2018-2019	18.3%	15.5%	18.4%	17.6%
2019-2020	24.2%	21.2%	13.6%	14.9%

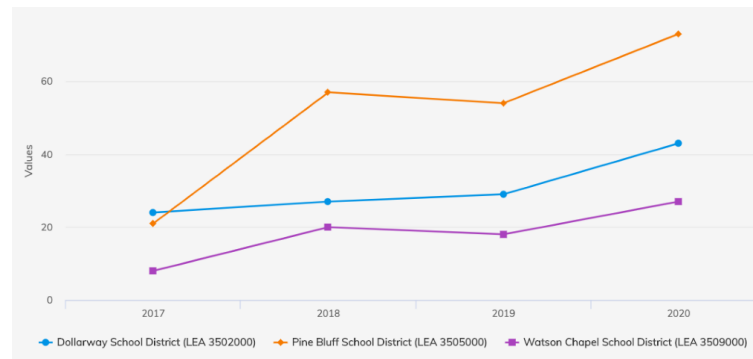
Percent Inexperienced (3 or less years of teaching), 2017-2020

Year	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	Statewide
2018-2019	39.0%	32.8%	29.0%	20.7%
2019-2020	32.3%	37.5%	31.0%	18.6%

Percent Attrition (Turnover), 2017-2020

Teachers: Licensure Waivers

All three districts have seen an increase in the number of teachers using waivers over the past four years. Although the number of teachers has declined since school year 2016-17, the total number of teachers using waivers or licensure exceptions throughout the city has increased by 169.8%, resulting in a decline in overall quality. The Dollarway School District has nearly doubled its number of teachers using waivers while both the Pine Bluff and Watson Chapel School Districts have both more than tripled the number of teachers using waivers.




Number of Teacher Waivers Administered to each School District, 2016-17 through 2019-20




Revenue and Expenditures Analysis

Dollarway School District Financials, 2014 - 2020




Year	Beginning Balance	Revenue	Expenditures	Ending Balance
FY 20	\$ 1,518,897	\$ 9,250,438.41	\$ 10,352,624.45	\$ 416,711.74
FY 19	\$ 2,210,642.58	\$ 11,056,339.56	\$ 11,748,084.36	\$ 1,518,897.78
FY 18	\$ 3,220,642.58	\$ 11,040,150.36	\$ 12,049,607.78	\$ 2,210,642.58
FY 17	\$ 3,220,100.00	\$ 10,751,689.89	\$ 10,741,589.89	\$ 3,220,100.00
FY 16	\$ 3,208,012.33	\$ 11,525,811.41	\$ 11,523,823.74	\$ 3,210,000.00
FY 15	\$ 3,979,774.85	\$ 11,104,617.12	\$ 11,896,212.86	\$ 3,208,012.33
FY 14	\$ 3,886,102.00	\$ 11,138,510.52	\$ 11,044,837.70	\$ 3,979,774.85

Pine Bluff School District Financials, 2014 - 2020



Year	Beginning Balance	Revenue	Expenditures	Ending Balance
FY 20	\$ 3,752,228	\$ 30,969,239.11	\$ 29,377,786.01	\$ 5,343,682.08
FY 19	\$ 3,608,178.39	\$ 32,428,378.00	\$ 32,284,327.41	\$ 3,752,228.98
FY 18	\$ 5,823,598.59	\$ 34,429,985.10	\$ 36,645,405.30	\$ 3,608,178.39
FY 17	\$ 5,823,598.59	\$ 35,332,035.06	\$ 34,910,292.80	\$ 5,823,598.59
FY 16	\$ 6,092,739.61	\$ 35,773,761.52	\$ 36,464,644.80	\$ 5,401,856.33
FY 15	\$ 6,905,341.75	\$ 37,758,526.02	\$ 38,571,128.16	\$ 6,092,739.61
FY 14	\$ 11,001,305.10	\$ 37,662,231.97	\$ 41,758,195.38	\$ 6,905,341.75

Watson Chapel School District Financials, 2014 - 2020

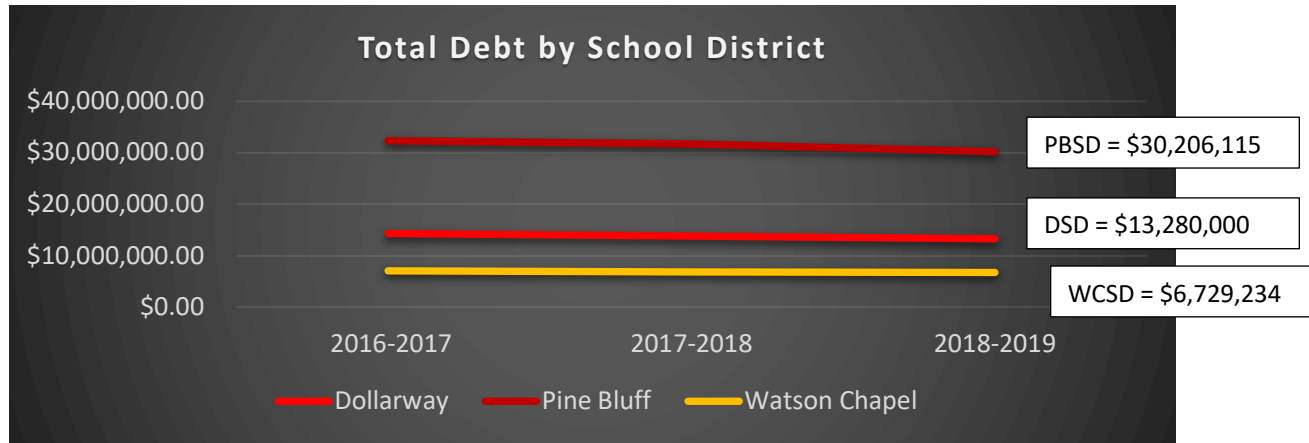


Year	Beginning Balance	Revenue	Expenditures	Ending Balance
FY 20	\$ 3,535,928	\$ 18,321,454.30	\$ 17,284,260.08	\$ 4,573,122.51
FY 19	\$ 3,641,675.93	\$ 19,171,918.49	\$ 19,277,666.13	\$ 3,535,928.29
FY 18	\$ 7,004,632.51	\$ 18,611,380.34	\$ 21,974,336.92	\$ 3,641,675.93
FY 17	\$ 9,322,159.93	\$ 18,872,792.43	\$ 21,190,319.85	\$ 7,004,632.51
FY 16	\$ 8,027,267.42	\$ 19,493,335.39	\$ 18,198,442.88	\$ 9,322,159.93
FY 15	\$ 6,227,559.57	\$ 20,406,909.10	\$ 18,607,201.25	\$ 8,027,267.42
FY 14	\$ 6,105,748.00	\$ 20,071,503.34	\$ 19,949,692.55	\$ 6,227,559.57



Debt Analysis

All three districts experienced a combined \$50,215,349 in debt during the 2018-19 school year. A total of \$2,184,369 was spent on debt payments during the 2018-19 academic year by the three school districts.



Total Debt by District over 3 academic years

Year	Dollarway SD	Pine Bluff SD	Watson Chapel SD	Total
2018-2019	\$570,000	\$1,451,401	\$162,968	\$2,184,369

Debt Payments by District (2018-19)



Innovative Education Reforms

1. Governance

- Governance/School Board; Transition School Board
 - Appointed or appointed and elected
 - Board representation from corporate sector partnerships
 - Representation from Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/ Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
 - Representation from public at large
 - New district boundary coextensive with the City of Pine Bluff
- Proven leadership and training at the Superintendent and building Principal levels for addressing
 - Financial distress to financial solvency
 - Academic distress to academic excellence
 - Dynamic school culture and climate

2. Academics

- Hybrid calendar (12-month formal and informal student engagement system)
 - Four days of formal instruction
 - Wednesday is reserved recovery, advancement and analysis day (students and teachers)
- Elementary Education (Single Gender within one building and Co-education model)/Community Schools
 - Academy for Language Arts
 - Magnet STEM Education (project lead the way model)
 - School for performing Arts
- Single Gender and Co-education middle schools with advance track curriculum/Community Schools
- Diverse secondary education offering with local industry influence
 - Dollarway School for TEAAM (UAPB, SEARK and Arts and Science Center)
- Trade, Engineering, Arts, Agriculture and Mathematics
 - Pine Bluff High School of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (Financial, EAST and Business Partners)
 - Watson Chapel School of Biological and Health Sciences
- ACT Prep resources for schools under academic distress (ADE request)
- Reallocation of teachers and funding to close gaps in student learning and increase mastery for all student
- Renovation of all academic facilities to accommodate new curriculum and branding strategies

3. Enrollment

- Market new academic priorities that aim to increase student learning outcomes at all levels
- Strategic recruitment efforts of students, teachers and administrators



4. Family Engagement

- Family Engagement Director
 - SparkPoint Center for family engagement place making (resources provided while learning about student achievements
 - Examples of Services: Banking and Financial resources, Bill Payment Center, Career Development, Benefits Screening and Enrollment, and Laundry

5. School Culture and Climate

- City-wide mentoring initiative (middle schools)
- Informal Learning/Clubs (e.g. NSBE Jr., PLTW, Educators Rising)
- Diversification of Courses (e.g. EAST)
- School, Business, Community and University Partnerships
- Behavior Modification Evaluation
- Transition Juvenile Detention Center to a community impact boarding school
- Expand the number of new athletic programs (i.e. swimming and rowing)
- School Bookstore for paraphernalia
- 100-hour volunteer/capstone project (grades 9-12) requirement for graduation
- 100 Hours of TEDTalk attendance as a graduation requirement

6. Teachers

- Compensation/Salaries
 - Teacher pay increase efforts
 - Real property code enforcement
 - Reallocation of personnel budgets
 - Create a teacher endowment fund
 - Performance bonus for teachers
- Quality and Waivers
 - Praxis support for teachers
 - Informal Settings (weekends, holiday/spring/summer breaks)
 - Improve Virtual Learning Options and Curriculum
 - 1240 Waiver designation policy whereby waivers are reserved for field or developing field experts
 - UAPB/SEARK Professors
 - Parachute Teachers to replace substitutes
 - UAPB School of Education Student Teachers



7. Revenue and Expenditures

- Increase Revenue through innovative avenues (i.e. federal grants, sponsorships, etc.)
- Establish school boundary coextensive with city limits
- Lower costs and reallocation of largest expenditures
- Refinance bonded indebtedness for lower rates
- Private gifts, philanthropy, private investment, via tax credits
- Elimination of redundant personnel and stabilize enrollment decline
- Sell/utilize vacant properties
- Improve property tax collection via code enforcement and recruitment of new business

8. School Level Reforms

- School Bookstores
- School Human Resource Department
- College Registration & Application
 - Student Raw Data
 - Creates programs for parents
 - Manage, plan, coordinate, and direct the administrative functions of an organization
 - Oversee the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of new staff
 - Strategic Planning
 - School district employee accountability plans and monitoring
- Increase School Counselor number and activity
 - Social & Emotional Development
 - Disciplinary actions
 - College Registration & Application
 - Handles Absences & Volunteer Hours

9. District Level Reforms

- District-wide Family and Community Engagement Training
- Accountability Team
- Hire a dedicated grant writer to increase funds for unique/innovative courses
- Hire a dedicated development officer



10. Accountability and Implementation

- ****Team of stakeholders to ensure recommendations are initiated and completed.****
- Retired Teachers Association
- External Evaluators / Accountability Team
- Hire personnel to transition schools according to final plan

11. Athletics

- Adequate administrative structure and staff
 - NCAA clearing house position
 - Fundraiser and sponsorship personnel
 - Alumni Affairs
- One team for each Arkansas Athletic Association sport
- Expansion of NCAA compliant sports
 - [List of Arkansas Sports](#)
 - Rowing, etc.
- Construction of concentrated state of the art facilities
 - Football, Basketball, Softball, Baseball, Cheer, Band, Choir, Swimming, and Sports Hall of Fame

12. Extra-Curricular Activities

- Partner with Pine Bluff Parks and Recreation to establish intramural sports for grades 3-7
- Debate Club
- Chess Club
- Robotics club
- Partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club (get national level funding)
- Key Club
- News Paper (Digital) Section for Various Campuses
- 4-H
- Gaming competitions
- Health Clubs
- Habitat for Humanity
- Etcetera
- Extra-Curricular Challenges