

First in class: Oxford School District tops annual state rankings

By **Davis McCool**
editor-in-chief

The recently released 2016 Mississippi Department of Education Accountability Report had Oxford School District at the top of the state district rankings for the first time in history. The report, which is released annually, has the district up twelve spots from last year, which had OSD at No. 13 in total points according to the 2015 report.

Oxford Schools 'Points' & State Rank

Oxford High
792 | **A** | #7*
*1,000 point scale out of 240 high schools

Oxford Middle
490 | **A** | #18

Oxford Intermediate
454 | **B** | #68

Della Davidson
543 | **A** | #2

Oxford Elementary
532 | **A** | #5
*700 point scale

Oxford High School also received some positive news, as it came in at No. 7 in the high school rankings, up five spots from last year.

"We're really excited to be number one in the state of Mississippi," OHS principal Bradley Roberson said. "Oxford is known for winning state championships in athletics and academic competitions, among other things, but this is a state championship that we can all be proud of as the Charger family. That goes for every student, parent, teacher, and Oxford

stakeholder in the community."

The report, which takes in a multitude of state tests, growth, and other factors including graduation rate, calculates a score out of 1,000 total points for high schools, and a score out of 700 for other schools. To calculate a district's score, all of the schools in a district are averaged together.

"The 2016 Mississippi Statewide Accountability System assigns a performance rating of A, B, C, D, and F for each school and district based on established criteria regarding student achievement, individual student growth, graduation rate, and participation rate," the report reads.

"We had the information before it came out, but anytime we are ranked number one in the state, there's a tremendous amount of excitement," Superintendent Brian Harvey said. "We celebrated behind the scenes all we could. It was a great day, and we celebrated accordingly."

Though the news was certainly a positive after the recent release of Oxford's large achievement gap, Roberson and Harvey both agree that all the work is not done.

"It means that one, I feel like overall, we're doing a good job," Roberson said. "I didn't say a great job, just because I still think we have room to grow. Our ultimate goal is to be able to meet the needs of all of our kids, because that's what best benefits our community as a whole. So we're going to celebrate, we obviously want to celebrate the successes that we have, but we don't want to become complacent; we want to continue being better."

Harvey also cited the district's low achievement gap, as well as lauded the district's students and teachers.

"It starts with the students," Harvey said. "The students have to perform, and in order for that to happen, the

teachers have to do a great job preparing the students to be successful, but we have to get better. There's always areas for improvement. We have one of the largest achievement gaps in the state, and we believe the gap is based on proficiency."

While the district is currently tasked with correcting the large achievement gap, Roberson is also focused on increasing AP course involvement and ACT scores to help combat the gap.

OSD recently recieved its first No. 1 state ranking in history. Here's how the rest of the list shaped out:

		Points
#1	OXFORD SD	745
#2	Long Beach SD	744
#3	Forrest County Ag HS	729
#4	Ocean Springs SD	707
#5	Jackson Co SD	689
#6	Petal SD	687
#7	Rankin Co SD	684
#8	Union Public SD	681
#9	Pass Christian Public SD/ Desoto Co SD	678

* According to the Mississippi Department of Education

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- Principal Bradley Roberson

