

Owasso schools make mark in ratings

By Sara Plummer World Staff Writer

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Striving with perfection has left some Owasso school administrators eager for more.

Five out of the seven elementary schools in Owasso scored above 1400 on the Academic Performance Index, which takes into account a school's standardized test scores and attendance rating.

Test scores make up 90 percent of the API score, and attendance is the other 10 percent. The highest API score is 1500.

All of our staff is working equally hard to reach that brass ring, which is the 1500 API score," said Clark Ogilvie, Owasso's superintendent. Once you get to the mountaintop, it's hard to stay there. Perhaps, that's a bigger challenge than getting there."

The two highest-scoring schools were Northeast Elementary, with a 1493 API score, and Hayward Smith Elementary, with 1483.

According to the Oklahoma State Department of Education, only 10 percent of the state's elementary schools scored a 1412 and above.

Needless to say, we're thrilled. It's quite an accomplishment," Ogilvie said.

The principals of the schools were just as happy.

I was just astonished. ... I expected the high 1300s. I didn't expect to be (in) the 1400s," said Michelle Aston, Northeast Elementary principal.

I knew the students worked hard, parents worked hard, and teachers worked hard. Then my amazement disappeared."

Ron Hughes, principal of Hayward Smith Elementary, said he was just as pleased.

It kind of like winning the lottery. ... It looks like you're doing something right, and we are," he said. "It takes parents working with us, teachers who are committed and students who are here."

Hughes said focused teachers and supportive parents make Hayward Smith and other Owasso schools successful.

One thing we hear is people moving here for the schools," he said. "They expect their kids to do well."

Hughes, Aston and Ogilvie said another reason for the higher test scores is the practice of mapping curriculum.

Schools look at the areas in which students scored highest and lowest. The curriculum for the school year is then mapped out so teachers address the areas that need work.

Before (curriculum mapping), it was like going on vacation without a map," Aston said. "It lets teachers know where they need to be and what they need to teach each week."

Hughes said it allows teachers to address weaknesses and capitalize on strengths.

It's the same thing coaches do ... look at the weaknesses and address them," he said.

Ogilvie said the mapping procedure also keeps teachers from repeating subjects and areas that were taught the previous year.

Everyone is aware of what everyone else is teaching. We make sure the content we teach, (the students) are going to see it on a test," he said. Right, wrong or indifferent, to the public, (test scores) are our Friday night. That's how we'll be judged by the public."

Hughes said he is proud of his school's score, but that number doesn't mean his school is better than others that didn't score as high.

Recognition of schools that do well is great ... but the lack of recognition of other schools can be hard. It hurts morale, and sometimes it's beyond their control," he said.

Aston and Hughes aren't taking their high score for granted.

You hope to maintain it. There are a lot of factors," Aston said. "Those tests take place during one week of the entire year. We could easily be in the 1300s again."

Hughes agrees.

Next year, it could be someone else. It's not a magic bullet. It's not something our teachers are doing that other schools don't do," he said. "We do the best job of educating our kids that we can. I want to maintain what we are doing, which is doing our best."

API SCORES

	'03-04	'04-05
Catoosa		
Cherokee	1224	1344
Helen Paul	1003	1327
J.W. Shaw	1016	1351
Collinsville		
Herald	1167	1322
Wilson	1137	1301
Dwasso		
Ator	1077	1381
Smith	1384	1487
Mills	1300	1414
Bailey	1341	1470
Barnes	1275	1360
Northeast	1352	1493
Hodson	1341	1470
Fulsa		
Cooper	949	1260
Disney	646	846
Cerr	1066	951
Peary	1166	1317
Sandburg	687	872

Union

3oevers 1199 1350

3riarglen 1071 1211

3oy Clark 953 1202

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3erdigris 1234 1421