

# BRADLEY COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

## WARREN SCHOOL DISTRICT MET WITH BCEDC BOARD

Andrew Tolbert, the superintendent of Warren School District and Marilyn Johnson, the incoming superintendent of Warren School District presented an update to the BCEDC Board at the April 29th Board Meeting. Mr. Tolbert provided a general informational overview of the school district and Ms. Johnson discussed the Strategic Design information.

Mr. Tolbert advised the Board that Warren School District's total employment is 288. WSD has 152 employees that are licensed and of these 152 employees, 142 are classroom teachers. He advised that there are 136 non-teaching employees. Also, discussed was the employee demographics. He stated that 79% of employees are female, 21% male. He also explained that 67 or 23% of employees have their Masters, 28 or 10% have their Bachelors plus additional credits in pursuit of their Masters. He also stated that 43 or 15% of the employees live outside of Bradley County.

Mr. Tolbert discussed the employee benefit package offered by the WSD. Life insurance policies are carried on all licensed and classified employees. Warren is the only school district in the state that provides a lifetime \$10,000 life insurance policy to all retired employees, after 10 years of service. Warren School District also provides vision, dental, and

pays a \$150.00 match for health insurance.

Mr. Tolbert advised the Board that the starting salaries for beginning (no experience) teachers is \$31,000, which is competitive for this area. Beginning teachers with a Masters degree is \$34,484.

WSD is governed by 7 board of directors, elected by zones. The district covers 227 square miles and 50% of students are transported. The school district has 14 bus routes and 24 buses for 6 school sites. The district has the ABC site, which is Pre-K for ages 3-4 years and has 140 students. Mr. Tolbert stated that most school districts only have 4 yr olds in Pre-K but Warren tries to include 3 yr olds as well. Also included in WSD is East Side New Vision Charter, which has 531 students in grades K-3. Brunson New Vision Charter has 257 students in grades 4-5. The Middle School has grades 6-8 with 362 students. Warren High School has grades 9-12 with 422 students. A total of 1702 students but the district is only funded for 1565 students. Pre-K is not funded. SEACBEC is also in the school district and has students from Pre-K to Adult Ed. They also have an area Vo-Tech which takes students from Warren, Woodlawn and Hermitage.

Mr. Tolbert explained the demographics of the district's students as 46% White, 34% African-American, and 20% Hispanic. He stated that 74% of students are on free or reduced lunch.

Also discussed was the physical conditions of all the educational sites. Mr. Tolbert advised that all sites are in good condition. The high school will have a new HVAC system next year and a new roof in the 2014-2015 school year. Mr. Tolbert stated that \$92 million has been given to schools statewide and of that money WSD has been allotted \$800,000 for the HVAC system and \$400,000 for the plumbing and bathrooms at East Side. He explained that this state money is match money. Based on the Wealth Index the state will pay 64% of the project and the school district will pay 34% of the project, up to the \$800,000 and the \$400,000 amounts.

Mr. Tolbert discussed the school districts revenue break down. The district receives \$2.7 million in local taxes and \$7.8 million in state funds. Therefore the operating funds are about \$10,643,000. The district also has restricted operating money of about \$3.1 million. This money has to be spent on specific things. In addition there is about another \$2.2 million for other specific expenditures. WSD has a total budget of about \$16 million and of that about \$10.5 million is used for operating expenses.

Mr. Tolbert discussed how School Choice affects the district. He explained that whoever has transferred may stay where they are. Going forward a school cannot lose more than 3% of its students to Choice, for Warren that is about 46 children. A family counts as one student. Race is not a consideration in School Choice. (continued on pg 2)

BCEDC can help your business in such areas as:

- Land and building acquisitions
- Financial packaging
- Demographic and economic data
- Incentive packaging
- Workforce training
- Plant expansions
- Entrepreneurial and small business development

**BCEDC**

Is also affiliated with:

- Southeast Arkansas Cornerstone Coalition
- Southeast Arkansas Regional Intermodal Authority
- Arkansas Heavy Equipment Training Program
- TEAMUP/WAGE-Southeast Arkansas Community Based
- Arkansas Small Business and Technology Dev. Ctr. @UAM

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Marilyn Johnson discussed Warren School Districts, Strategic Design. She quoted the WSD Mission Statement *"We are deeply committed to providing every child a safe, positive, environment for learning skills necessary to live productively in a global society."* Ms. Johnson stated that the Strategic Design defines things and puts them in place. An example of this is Core Values which are the principles that guides behavior and governs how to work together.

Ms. Johnson explained that also established were Core Believes and Guiding Principles. She stated that students can and should take ownership in their learning. Also that students know their learning goals and they are challenged, engaged and active in reaching these goals. The individual learning goals are matched to each student's developmental learning levels. This is not time based but demonstration based learning. Ms. Johnson explained that in the Strategic Design, learning and advancement are based on the accomplishment of individual students not on group accomplishments. Students advance

through learning levels as they demonstrate proficiency.

Ms. Johnson discussed the district's vision for instruction. The district utilizes customized instruction to meet the unique learning needs of each student to prepare them for a global society.

She discussed the districts vision statement for the curriculum. It is a guaranteed and viable curriculum. One vision statement states that learning opportunities are available 24-7. This is made possible thanks to grants received by the Charter Schools. WSD is working toward every student having internet access at home. Through technology it is possible to customize learning.

The last vision statement Ms. Johnson discussed was for stakeholder partnerships. This is how the community will support student learning such as mentoring, shadowing and apprenticeships.

**Mr. Tolbert and Ms. Johnson stated that this new system is not teaching different information but teaching differently.**

## HOW CAN BCEDC HELP

### BCEDC Mission Statement

To enhance and sustain the economic climate of Bradley County by increasing the employment opportunities for the residents of the county

## BCEDC

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## JOB FAIR PARTICAPATION

BCEDC and UAM-ASBTDC jointly participated in the Bradley County Chamber of Commerce Job Fair on 4/25/13. Many people visited the BCEDC table and discussed their ideas and concerns about starting their own business.

Lindsay Henry from the UAM-ASBTDC office explained to each potential client that her office offers **FREE** confidential business consulting to new and existing businesses. The UAM Small Business and Technology Development Center can assist with loan proposals, business plans, market research, money management, marketing, and government contracting requirements.

Ms. Henry meets with clients in the BCEDC office from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the third Tuesday every month.

**Some interested people from the Job Fair have made an appointment. You can too. Call BCEDC at 870-226-3760.**

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

Economic development and education are strong partners. To attract or retain industries a communities workforce must be a trained job ready workforce. Arkansas Economic Development Commission has stated that when a new industry is deciding on a location it is being compared globally. Therefore, its workforce must be trained to compete globally, as well.

### Prospect Readiness Education Program (PREP)

AEDC held a PREP training session at the BCEDC office with city officials, county officials, local and regional business leaders. AEDC explained to the attendees what industries are looking for in a location. AEDC stressed a trained workforce, quality of life, incentive package, knowledge of available sites and confidentiality. AEDC left a 25 page questionnaire to be completed on the Spec Building to prepare us for when the next prospect visits.

## BCEDC

### MEMBERSHIP

Call or come by our office to pick-up membership information.

## PLEASE MEET

### AT

## MOLLY'S

**Every Monday at 7:00 am**

This is a public forum meeting. BCEDC wants to hear what's happening with Bradley County businesses and how we can assist.

The economic growth of Bradley County relies on everybody's input. **YOURS !!!**