



Baldwyn Public Schools
"Home of the Bearcats"

Jason McKay, Superintendent
Raymond Craven, Assistant Superintendent
www.baldwynschools.com

107 West Main Street
Baldwyn, MS 38824
662-365-1000

PRESS RELEASE

By Demi Roberts,
Baldwyn Schools District Media Coordinator
robertsd@baldwynschools.com
662-706-7000

BALDWYN SCHOOLS' GRADUATION RATES SHOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT

May 4, 2016 (BALDWYN, MS) Recently the Mississippi Department of Education released its 2015 four-year graduation rates reports. Baldwyn Schools has moved up in ranks and increased its graduation rate percentage in comparison to previous ratings and other schools across the state.

The 2015 four-year graduation rate percentage for Baldwyn Schools is 83.2 percent which is an increase of 24.1 percent from 2014. The state average graduation rate is 78.4 percent for 2015. "We have been working collectively as a staff at BHS and as a district to make sure that students have every opportunity to succeed and that they are encouraged and pushed along their high school career," Baldwyn High School principal Jeff Palmer said.

MDE graduation ratings include students who graduate with a regular diploma at the end of their high school education. It is based on a four-year plan of 9th-12th grade. Therefore, BHS offers multiple ways for students to be monitored and remediated throughout the four-year course of high school.

The first step the BHS staff takes is with ninth grade students.

"We make sure each ninth grader has a four-year plan for their class schedule to graduate on time. We also track their eighth grade testing scores and make sure they are in the appropriate level of classes when beginning ninth grade based on their academic performance abilities," Principal Palmer noted.

Throughout the four-year course of high school students are also given opportunities to have after-school tutoring through the district's 21st Century CCLC tutoring grant program. While enrolled in state testing classes including Biology I, Algebra I, English II, and U.S. History,

students are also instructed in a boot camp test practice session, and some students are offered one-on-one remedial time with added certified teachers throughout the course of the class. “Our remedial teachers help our students and our state testing teachers out tremendously along with our academic coach who is also on staff at the high school,” Principal Palmer added. “These additional staff members provide extra support for the teachers and give additional learning time for our students.”

As junior and seniors at BHS, students are offered multiple opportunities to visit with college recruiters who visit the BHS campus and are able to attend field trips to the local junior colleges and universities. The BHS counselor meets with each student at BHS each school year to plan their high school schedule. Upon entering eleventh and twelfth grade at BHS, students begin making a college/career plan and goals to achieve upon graduation.

“All of our students have the opportunity to visit and learn about a college campus in the northeast Mississippi area. They also have the chance to hear from various college recruiters who visit our campus frequently along with attending a career day at a local college each year,” Principal Palmer stated. “This is an incentive for the majority of our students to succeed in high school, graduate, and begin their career journey.”

In addition to preparing for college, BHS requires a daily ACT preparatory class that every student is enrolled in. Students practice taking ACT tests, learn strategies to meet time limits and answer correctly, and gain an understanding of the role ACT has in the college world. If and when some students get behind in the four-year course of graduating high school, the Baldwin School District does offer alternative graduation district plans. These alternative plans are contingent upon the student’s state testing performance as well as their overall academic abilities.

Computer programs as well as academic coaches monitor all students’ academic progress each nine weeks and identify at-risk students. BHS staff then prepare short-term and long-term academic goals and plans for each of these students until academic goals are met. “Our main goal is for our district to have a systematic plan in place for every student that enters kindergarten so that student has every opportunity to walk across the stage at their graduation to receive their diploma,” Superintendent Jason McKay said. “A student’s graduation is a positive for the student, the parent, the school, and the community. We will continue to create every opportunity to serve students, to meet goals, and to better our community.”