

Biloxi Public Schools: One exciting year after another

By Dr. Paul A. Tisdale
Superintendent, Biloxi Public Schools



The Biloxi Public School District has just completed a significant year of accomplishment, and another exciting year lies ahead.

Our student enrollment continues to increase although our enrollment is still 20 percent down from

the pre-Katrina student enrollment of 6,100. As more housing returns, particularly with the Hope VI development established in east Biloxi and Keesler Air Force Base's 1,063 housing units, we will continue to witness a steady increase in enrollment.

The district received two national awards last year: Biloxi High School was designated a National Blue Ribbon School; the district's first school to be so honored, and Pamela Manners, principal at Biloxi High School, was one of six school principals to receive national recognition.

Biloxi High School was recognized for dramatic gains in state proficiency assessments despite having more than 40 percent of its students considered "at-risk" and from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The award, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, is one of the most prestigious educational honors in the country and recognizes schools for helping students achieve at very high levels and for making significant progress in closing the achievement gap.

Manners, a 20-year educator with Biloxi schools, was one of six principals in the country to receive the Terrel H. Bell Award, an honor named for the former Secretary of Education and presented to school leaders who have played a vital role in overcoming difficult and challenging circumstances.

The awards validate our belief that Biloxi High School offers a quality education for students who embrace learning and as well as those students who are most challenging to teach. It's a testament to the hard work by teachers, support staff, and administrators on that campus. We are extremely proud of them all.

I also note that these honors would not have possible without supportive parents, a community that values education, and a school board committed to providing a quality education for all students.

Exciting opportunities on the horizon

Construction of an addition to Biloxi High School to accommodate 500 ninth grade students on that campus is expected to begin in the near future. The \$14 million expansion, which may be in place for the 2009-10 school year, will provide more academic and extracurricular opportunities for ninth grade students.

The move will permit seventh grade students to move to Biloxi Junior High School's campus, sixth grade students to move to what is now Michel 7th Grade School, and create space for pre-kindergarten classes at each of our seven elementary schools.

Offering pre-kindergarten classes, which the state permits but does not fund, will save young parents thousands of dollars in daycare expenses and give our youngest citizens a head start on a first rate education... with no tax increase!



Proposed Addition – Biloxi High School

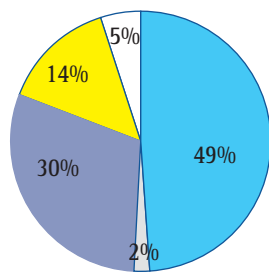
Rendering courtesy of Guild Hardy Architects

Other news and notes

- In 2007, the auditorium at Biloxi Junior High School, a thousand-seat facility used frequently by community groups, was renovated. Among the improvements to the auditorium, originally constructed in 1960, are new theater seating, handicapped seating areas, new stage flooring, new lighting, and sound system.
- Sandra Higgins, in her 18th year of teaching at Beauvoir Elementary School, has been named the Biloxi Public School's Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Higgins partnered with high school seniors and obtained snacks from local restaurants to launch an after-school mathematics tutoring program that saw her class score some of the highest math scores in the state. She's been an innovator throughout her successful career.

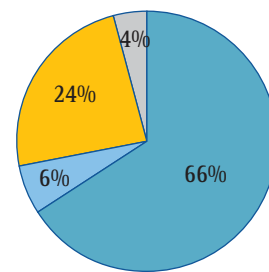
By the numbers

FY '07-08 Budgeted General Fund Revenues



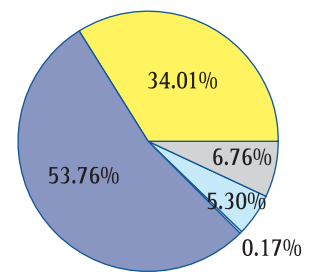
- Local - Ad Valorem
- Local - Gaming
- Local - Other
- State Funding
- Federal Funding

FY '07-08 Budgeted General Fund Expenditures



- Instruction
- School Admin
- Instructional Support
- District Admin

Demographics as of 3-26-07



- Caucasian
- African American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Native American

Assessment / Tax Levy

School Assessment/Tax Levy (mills)	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
Bay-Waveland School District	57.00	N/A	44.50	44.00	44.00	44.00	N/A	44.00
Biloxi School District	30.93	31.43	35.18	36.68	38.03	38.03	38.03	38.03
Gulfport School District	52.73	53.74	54.85	57.85	57.85	57.85	57.85	57.85
Hancock County School District	50.38	50.38	47.64	47.64	47.64	47.64	47.64	47.64
Harrison County School District	38.16	39.88	45.48	46.04	44.15	42.56	40.79	39.68
Jackson County School District	55.31	55.32	59.49	54.54	55.01	55.22	55.21	53.23
Long Beach School District	53.14	55.22	55.59	60.52	63.70	59.75	59.75	59.75
Moss Point School District	72.20	72.20	69.90	75.70	79.73	78.73	71.13	64.62
Ocean Springs School District	75.52	71.88	62.22	62.53	62.10	62.38	62.10	61.38
Pascagoula School District	51.94	52.94	51.64	51.64	52.39	52.39	52.39	52.39
Pass Christian School District	48.10	48.10	51.60	53.59	54.69	54.69	54.69	54.69

Student Enrollment

Pre-Katrina	School	Oct 05	Jan 06	May 06	Aug 06	Jan 07	Jan 08
437	Beauvoir (K-6)	219	308	306	314	313	315
368	Gorenflo (K-6)	84	140	170	152	146	150
532	Jeff Davis (K-6)	185	324	354	360	361	361
316	Lopez (K-6)	119	169	195	180	189	199
327	Nichols (K-6)	69	133	155	149	138	182
843	North Bay (K-6)	572	705	774	815	810	800
631	Popp's Ferry (K-6)	329	472	484	527	562	585
488	Michel (7)	266	356	384	358	361	399
982	Biloxi Jr. High (8-9)	535	723	740	798	796	774
1201	Biloxi High (10-12)	789	951	964	1019	987	1027
6125	Total	3167	4281	4526	4672	4663	4792

The Biloxi school district has a new information source, an easy-to-use web site at www.biloxischools.net

