

Oxford City Schools  
*Proud of our past*  *Preparing for the future*

# THE NEW LOOK

VOLUME I ISSUE I

WINTER, 2010

## AdvancEd Accreditation Commission Recommends District Accreditation

The Oxford City Schools' rigorous district accreditation application process culminated in a visit from the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review Team. In order to earn and maintain accreditation, school systems must meet the AdvancED standards, collaborate in a process of continuous improvement, and demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review. The Standards Assessment engages the school system in an in-depth assessment wherein the system identifies the data, information, evidence, and documented results that validate it is meeting each standard. This self-assessment helps the system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The Quality Review Team used insights gathered from the Standards Assessment Report and information obtained during an on-site visit to provide feedback to the school system and to make accreditation recommendations. The visiting team noted that the school system is committed to a shared purpose and direction. The system and its schools have clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision: *to be **the** leader in all aspects of education. From the time a child enters kindergarten until graduation we want to provide the best instruction, extra-curricular activities, facilities, and services enabling our students to become productive successful citizens.* The vision is supported by the system, school personnel, and community stakeholders.

The Quality Review Team composed of five educators from other education institutions has filed its report with AdvancED. The Quality Assurance Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the **Oxford City School District be awarded District Accreditation as a quality school system.** The system will receive final status after the national committee reviews all documents and information filed by our system and by the Quality Review Team. We extend our sincere appreciation to the community stakeholders who arranged their schedules to be interviewed by the Review Team. Congratulations OCS!!!

# ALL-STATE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER



**Ms. Karen Phillips named 2009 Alabama All-State School Board Member**

Distinguished service has earned Karen Phillips, a member of the Oxford school board, the Alabama Association of School Boards' highest honor. Phillips has been named a 2009 Alabama All-State School Board Member. She was honored with a plaque and special recognition during AASB's December convention. "Karen exemplifies the highest standards this award sets," said AASB President Florence Bellamy. "She is an excellent school board member. She is committed to doing the job well and serving the interests of all students in Oxford and Alabama."

The All-State School Board Recognition Program, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, commends a select group of past or present school board members across the state who have exhibited exemplary boardmanship. All-State candidates are nominated by their fellow board members and judged by a panel of distinguished former school board members. Winners are proven education/community leaders and activists who are committed to ethical standards and have a rapport with local officials. Karen has actively participated in AASB's School Board Member Academy, an ongoing school for school board members that features four achievement levels. Credit hours are earned by attending training in eight key areas: roles and responsibilities; policy and planning; financial accountability; the optimal learning environment; academic achievement; staff development; board meetings and school law; and community engagement. Phillips attended 15 AASB conferences, earned 65 academy hours, reached the second academy level and has been a voting delegate for the Oxford school board once and an alternate delegate twice at AASB conventions. She has been a board member since 2006.

Phillips has 25 years experience as a social worker, including former service in a county office of the Department of Human Resources and current service with the community-based Health Services Center. She puts that experience to work, exercising a sensitivity toward the needs of disenfranchised students, sharing facts about social issues and using her expertise to link school administrators to community resources for meeting the emotional needs of children and families. She is also actively involved in her community as a member of Betta View Hills Church of Christ and the Coosa Valley unit of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). She is the 2009 state recipient of NASW's Social Worker Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Though Karen's persistence in becoming fluent in all areas of board operations is nothing short of phenomenal, it pales in comparison to the one area I feel she has no peer – her concern and compassion for her fellow man," noted Superintendent Dr. Jeff Goodwin. "Her commitment to children, work ethic, willingness to learn and championing of those who might otherwise have no voice in our community make her a truly special board member."

Phillips' fellow board member Alex Davenport describes her as "an indispensable asset" to the Oxford school system and her community. "The passion she has had for families all her life has directly transferred to her role as a superior school board member. I can personally attest that her contributions to our board discussions and governance decisions have enriched our board policies by considering how they affect *all* students in our system," Davenport stated.

Oxford City Councilman Steven Waits knows Phillips as the conduit for teamwork between the school board and the city council. Waits said the combination of proration, limited funding, and exponential growth in the student population has forced the local school board to "think outside the box and find solutions to meet the ongoing needs of our schools. Mrs. Phillips and the school board have worked with the city council to not only meet those current needs but to begin construction on new state-of-the-art facilities that will meet the needs of the children in our community for years to come."

## ALABAMA A&M BOUND



Justan Banks signs with Alabama A&M

Justan Banks had basketball scholarship offers from six Division 1 schools. On November 18th, he signed a full basketball scholarship to Division 1 Alabama A&M University. Towering seven feet, one inch, Justan plays center for the Oxford High School Yellow Jackets. A Senior this year, he has only played organized basketball for three years. This is a testimony of his hard work on the court, in the weight room, and in the classroom. Justan is currently one of the state's leaders in rebounds and blocks this season. He is averaging twelve rebounds per game and seven blocks per game. Justan also maintains all A's and B's in his coursework. Congratulations, Justan!

## "Jack of All Trades"

The Oxford City School System's Maintenance Department works diligently every day to keep the schools in high-quality working condition. Possessing a repertoire of skill sets; carpentry, electrical, HVAC, horticulture, landscaping, etc., you will find these men with smiles on their faces and tools in their hands... they are the system's "Jack of All Trades".

Thanks, Keith "Soupy" Campbell, Wayne Mitchell, Tony Hubbert, Ben Stephens, Alan Gibbs, Gary Phillips, and Phil Richardson!!!



## WANTED

On Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, the second graders at Oxford Elementary School put on their boots and cowboy hats for their annual "Western Round Up". This event marked the end of their study of deserts and the western expansion. With lots of help from volunteers, the children sang campfire songs with the "Singing Cowboy" (Will Smith), square danced with OHS Key Club members, rode in a hay wagon, listened to "Granny" (Angel Rait) tell folktales, and raced against each other in sack races. The Anniston Museum of Natural History provided many western artifacts for the children to see, and Mr. Dan also brought several animals for the students to pet that are native to the southwest. After taking "WANTED" pictures for the sheriff and eating trail mix, all the children agreed they had a knee-slappin' good time!

**\$\$ REWARD \$\$**  
**LEARNING & FUN**



# Coldwater Builds “Ponds for Kids”



Coldwater Elementary School becomes the third OCS elementary school to construct a self-sustaining “Ponds for Kids”, thanks to generous contributions from the Oxford City Schools Education Foundation, Coosa Valley RC& D, and Representative Steve Hurst. This dynamic outdoor ecosystem was constructed in just **one day** by students, teachers, parents, and community volunteers.



## SPARKS SIGNS WITH JSU

On December 18<sup>th</sup> Taylor Sparks signed an athletic scholarship to Jacksonville State University. Taylor will be playing baseball for the Gamecocks starting next fall. Jim Case, JSU's head baseball coach, stated, “Taylor we are very proud to have you be a part of our baseball program at JSU. We look forward to seeing you pitch for the Gamecocks. We also look forward to you leading Oxford High School back to the State Finals in 2010 and bringing the championship trophy back home.”

Taylor finished his junior year striking out 69 batters in 43 innings of work. Taylor has been a starting pitcher for the Yellow Jackets since his sophomore year. He will be the ace on the hill for his senior year as the team strives to earn another birth to the AHSAA 6A State Finals in 2010.

Taylor's most memorable moment was throwing a two-hit shutout in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the playoffs verses Trussville. He claims, “I still have my senior year left to play. I'd like to lead my team all the way”. Coach Brooks applauds Taylor for his leadership on and off the field.



## GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL



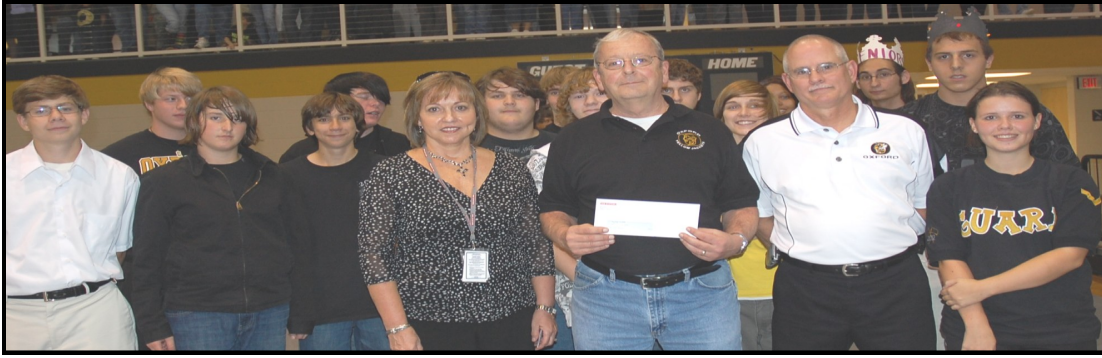
Addie Bunn, a senior at Oxford High School, was nominated and selected to attend the twenty-first third annual Alabama Governor's School held at Samford University in Birmingham.

Funded by the State of Alabama and Samford University, the Governor's School is a ten-day summer residential honors program designed to provide academic, creative, and leadership experiences for a limited number of rising seniors from across the state who have demonstrated exceptional ability in their achievement and high school studies.

The Governor's School theme was “American Vision: World View”. Each student took one morning and one afternoon seminar that focused on challenging and expanding his or her world view. Some of the courses included modern learning systems; research science; medicine; fine arts; web design; among others. In addition, students had the opportunity to meet business, academic, and political leaders from Alabama and beyond.

Congratulations, Addie!

## Robotics... "Team Omega"



BAE presents \$15,000 check to "Team Omega", OHS FIRST Robotics team

This year Oxford High School has added a new program to its curriculum, Foundations of Engineering. Foundations of Engineering is designed to give students an overview of the engineering profession and fundamental skills used in general engineering. As an enhancement to the Foundations of Engineering program and at the encouragement of BAE Systems, Oxford students have formed a robotics team, "TEAM OMEGA" that will participate as part of **FIRST** Robotics.

**FIRST** (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a Robotics Competition whose mission is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, technology, and math skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership. Developing professionalism, cooperation, and teamwork are also primary goals of FIRST.

At the **FIRST** kickoff in January, the 2010 game will be released. Team Omega will have six weeks to design, build and program its robot before it is shipped to a holding area for the Regional competition. On March 4-6, the students will compete against teams from Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida at the Peachtree Regional in Duluth, Georgia. The National Championship will be held in April 2010 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia.

On October 29, 2009 at the Oxford High School Yellow Jackets pep rally, Mary Banks, BAE Systems Anniston's FIRST coordinator presented Robert Howell, STEM/Engineering teacher/FIRST Advisor and "Team Omega" with a grant check in the amount of \$15,000 to help defray the costs associated with the robot and the competitions. Mr. Howell and the team, as well as the Oxford administration, faculty, and students very much appreciate BAE Systems for their support of the FIRST Robotics program and teams throughout the United States.

## Can you spell fertilizer or ounce?

The Calhoun County Spelling Bee will be held at Anniston Middle School on January 27, 2010. Oxford Elementary, DeArmanville Elementary, and C.E. Hanna school winners will join other area school winners in grades 4 through 8 from Calhoun County, Anniston City, Jacksonville City, Donoho, and Sacred Heart to compete for the opportunity to advance to the State Spelling Bee.



Winners are: Lexi Bearden, Bobby Love (DES); Emmanuel Webb, Carsen Reynolds (OES); Corey Waldon, Juwan Henderson (CEH)

## "Drop Dead Juliet"



Having performed plays for their peers and parents for four straight years, Oxford High theater students decided this fall to see how their dramatic skills matched with those of other schools, and entered the district level competition of the Trumbauer Festival, Alabama's high school theater competition program.



Oxford prepared a one-act play and performed it before judges and an audience of their peers from other competing schools such as Mountain Brook, Homewood, Hoover, and Thompson (the host school). The play Oxford performed, called Drop Dead Juliet is a comic parody of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* written by Allison Williams.

To their amazement, Oxford's play was named *Best in Show* and its leading actress, Lindsay Shedrick, was named *Best Actress* in a One Act play. Two of its leading actors, Will Oswald and Kyle Holland, were named to the All Star Cast.

"We went there to get experience, and we ended up winning," Oswald said.

More importantly, Oxford students said they met and interacted with students from other schools who were as excited about theater as they are, and who received them warmly and gave them great encouragement, even though they were new to dramatic competition.

"The other schools were really friendly toward us and supportive of us," Shedrick said.

The unexpected success has been a real confidence-booster for the Oxford theater program, and students are already eagerly planning for next year's competition, OHS theater teacher Debbie Tyson says. "We've really gotten ourselves plugged in to the statewide high school theater scene," Mrs. Tyson says. "It's exciting, as well as offering us a big challenge."

Oxford's group found that out when, as a district winner, it then performed its play at the state-level Trumbauer Festival competition at Troy University the first week in December. The winning entry was a one-act version of the Broadway musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, performed by Huntsville High School.

"They were amazing, and so were lots of the other plays," said senior Joanna Hopper, a crew member for the Oxford play. "We'll really have to step it up to compete on that level."

## Heisman Award Recipients



Caylen McCall and Taylor Sparks

Two Oxford High School seniors, Caylen McCall and Taylor Sparks, were nominated by Oxford High School and have been recognized by the Wendy's *High School Heisman Award Program* for their scholarship, athletics, and citizenship. Their participation in community service, athletic accomplishments, and academic performance, made them eligible for this prestigious Award Program. Caylen, a star volleyball player, and Taylor, a baseball champion, will proceed to the state level, where 20 students will be chosen as "State Finalists" and receive the Wendy's *High School Bronze Medal*. Trey Holliday, principal of Oxford High School, states, "These are two fine students who have made an impression on the administration, the faculty, and their coaches, and they are deserving of this recognition. We are all very proud of them!"

## OHS Writers Take 2nd Place



Oxford High School was one of 23 Alabama high schools that competed in the 2009 Writer's Bowl at Jacksonville State University. The Yellow Jackets brought five teams of six students each—making the Oxford contingent one of the largest at the contest. “Each year we take more teams than most of the other schools,” said OHS English teacher Angela Dickert, longtime sponsor of the Oxford High Writing Team. “There is a great love of writing in Oxford High students, which says something about the teachers they have had throughout their school years.”



One Oxford team garnered two prizes: 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the Prose competition and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place Overall Team for the combined scores of its prose and poetry entries. Oxford's prizewinning team called itself the Spawns of Shakespeare and consisted of Andie Knott (captain), Nikki Roll, Scott Moore, Nabila Haque, Madison Thomas, and Calvin Baker.

Finishing in second place in two categories among 55 teams was an impressive achievement, Mrs. Dickert said, and better than an Oxford team has finished in several years. “I felt as if we would place because we have so many gifted writers this year,” Mrs. Dickert said. But there was another factor among this year's writers, she said. Each team consists of two seniors, two juniors, and two sophomores—who often are no more than acquaintances—which makes the ability to work together as a team as important a factor for success as writing talent. This year's teams got along well, had fun, and kept the creative energy flowing, she said.

“It gives you experience in collaboration,” Spawns captain Andie Knott said of the writer's bowl. “Most of the time we write on our own, but when you have lot's of contributions, you get more ideas and more creativity, and a point of view you've never had before.” Miss Knott says her team's high finish at the competition gave her a “good feeling.”

Oxford students who participated were: Candace Davis, Will Oswalt, Shekinah Surles, Breanna Webb, Kayla Spurling, Bradley Langlois, Kayla Sherman, Joanna Hopper, Brittney Poore, Gina Pauluzzi, Chandler McCracken, Chris Clowers, Emily Ireland, Micah Burns, Erik Midkiff, Carlee Paris, Kacie Oglesby, Maranda Surret , Lauren Parkhurst, Conner Kimbrell, Kelcie Pugh, Kiley Heflin, and Bianca Lomax.

## “Saluts de Noel”



The OMS Exploratory French class studied French winter holidays in December learning about such customs as French children setting out their shoes on December 6 in hopes that Saint Nicolas would drop some treats in them. Saint Nicolas was a real person who lived around 300 AD. He was the bishop of Myra and was known for doing good deeds anonymously for those in his community. The students also brought in traditional European goodies such as a Good Works Cake and homemade marzipan and learned traditional carols in French that were sung around the building as each class went caroling on the last day of school before the winter holiday.

*Saluts de Noel!*

## Red Ribbon Winners

C.E. Hanna received the first-place trophy for the 2009 “Red Ribbon School Participation Contest” sponsored by the Agency for Substance Abuse Prevention. More than 25 schools throughout the Calhoun and Cleburne Counties participated in the competition. Oxford Elementary School received the third-place trophy.



### STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Oxford City Board of Education that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, disability, sex, religion, creed, national origin or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment.