



### **TPSD Receives Second-Straight MDA A Rating**

**TUPELO, Miss.** — For the second year in a row, the Tupelo Public School District received an A-ranking from the Mississippi Department of Education’s accountability model.

In total, six schools received A’s, while five earned B’s to go along with one C.

“I am very proud of our administrative team, our support staff, our teachers and our students,” sixth-year superintendent Dr. Rob Picou said. “MDE’s accountability rating represents a collective effort, including our amazing and supportive community that supports and trusts us with the sacred responsibility of educating and caring for their children.

“However, the accountability rating is just one measurable indicator among many that define an excellent school district. I think we all agree that TPSD is bigger than any letter grade, even when that letter grade is an A.”

Schools earning A’s were Lawhon, Lawndale, Parkway, Pierce Street, Rankin and Tupelo High School. Earning B’s were ECEC, Carver, Joyner, Thomas Street and Tupelo Middle School, while Milam earned a C.

The 2022-23 grades are based on how students performed during the 2022-23 school year and how much progress they made since the 2021-22 school year.

“The Board of Trustees of Tupelo Public Schools is proud our faculty and students have earned an A-rating for the district,” board president Sherry Davis said. “A ratings are a great mark of progress, and we would like to thank all parents, students, teachers and school principals who worked so hard to make the district successful every day of the year. Our district provides students with many opportunities in art, music and athletics that wires our students' brains for creativity and long-term understanding. I congratulate everyone, and we look forward to celebrating with the entire community very soon.”

As a district, TPSD was one of 57 across the state to receive an A, while 326 schools earned an A — including the six in TPSD.

“If you observe our culture and people, you’ll find numerous indicators that highlight why Tupelo High School excels,” second-year principal Dr. Melissa Thomas said. “While an A-rating is

one such measure, it's just one piece of evidence showcasing the dedication of our parents, teachers and students. I hold high expectations, and I deeply appreciate the efforts made to meet each and every one of them."

Mississippi's school grading system considers many indicators, including how well students perform on Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) tests, whether students are showing improvement on those tests from year to year, and whether students are graduating within four years. The system also factors in performance on the ACT, among other college and career indicators, and how well schools are helping English learners and the lowest-achieving students make progress toward proficiency.

### **Additional Quotes**

"There are several factors that contribute to the success of our school and school district. We have a very supportive board and innovative, forward-thinking district personnel. We are blessed with great teachers here who not only teach but love our school and will go above and beyond to do extra things to support our students. Their hard work makes a big difference." — Dr. Anthony Golding, Pierce Street Elementary Principal

"We are so excited to celebrate the success of our students, teachers, assistants and interventionist in their achievement of being an A-rated school. Lawhon is a special place full of special students and teachers who give everything it takes to be successful every single day. We are proud of them and will continue to work and build on our foundation of success." — Wesley McCullough, Lawhon Principal

"Education is a journey, and at Rankin Elementary, we ensure that every step we take is a step towards excellence. We're not just an A-rated school; we're a beacon of educational achievement." — Dr. Heather Cartwright, Rankin Principal

"It's the hard work of the students and the staff that's the most rewarding! We have a lot of great people that have supported us and who are always rooting for our success. To them, I say Thank you!" — Carmen Gary, Parkway Elementary Principal

"Robert Collier said, 'Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.' Our success is a direct reflection of the daily investments made by our staff, students and parents to show up, buy in and give effort toward achieving the goals we've set for ourselves. At Lawndale, the A stands for All In." — Talina Knight, Lawndale Principal

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