

**Oklahoma State Department of Education**  
**Sandy Garrett, State Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
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**EMBARGOED NEWS RELEASE**

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**State Superintendent Sandy Garrett, State Board of Education  
Approve Competitive Teacher Bonuses**

OKLAHOMA CITY - State Superintendent Sandy Garrett said qualified teachers in 74 Oklahoma schools will be receiving bonus checks this semester. The bonuses are made possible through a state program that rewards teachers based on their schools' Academic Performance Index (API) scores.

The bonus program is called the Oklahoma Academic Achievement Award (AAA) program and, per law, it defines "qualified employees" as all certified personnel, including principals, counselors and librarians, who were employed at a winning school for at least one-half of the school year from which the student test data used for the awards was provided. Contingent on funds being available, the bonuses will range from \$500 to \$3,000.

"We've had a record number of teachers and a record number of schools qualify for the AAA bonuses this year," Garrett said, indicating teachers in 63 schools qualified for the bonuses last year. "It proves that positive incentives work in spurring both teams of teachers and students to reach higher. As we continue to raise academic standards, that is our recipe for success and the exciting dynamic we want occurring in Oklahoma schools."

API scores annually are calculated on a scale ranging from 0 to 1500 for each public school. For elementary schools, the score is derived from results on state achievement tests and attendance rates. For secondary sites, dropout and graduation rates are also factors, as well as ACT scores and participation, Advanced Placement credit and college remediation rates in reading and mathematics.

The AAA program rewards teachers working in schools with perfect API scores based on regular education students; the Top 4 Highest API scores (based on all students, including special education and English as a Second Language) in five different groups based on school size; and the Top 4 Most-Improved API scores in the same five groups. The five group sizes are:

- Group 1: 0 to 135 students
- Group 2: 136 to 235 students
- Group 3: 236 to 345 students
- Group 4: 346 to 505 students
- Group 5: 506 or more students

Each teacher working in a school that placed first in each group or who work in a school with a perfect API score will receive a non restricted \$3,000 bonus, contingent on funds being available. The bonus for each teacher in second-place schools is \$2,000, third place is \$1,000 and fourth place is \$500.

The State Board of Education approved a supplementary budget request in the amount of \$2.2 million to be able to pay out the AAA bonuses this semester as prescribed in law. The Legislature appropriated nearly \$2.6 million last year for the program but an estimated \$4.8 million is needed to fully fund the program this year.

The 2009 AAA schools are posted with this news release at <[www.sde.state.ok.us](http://www.sde.state.ok.us)>.

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