

# District Annual Education Report (AER) Cover Letter

August 17, 2010

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2009-2010 educational progress for the Athens Area Schools and our schools. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and some requirements of state laws; however, our staff is available to help you understand this information. Please contact Walter Dubbeld (729-5427 ex. 230) for help if you need assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following web site

<http://www.athensk12.org/> or you may review a copy in the principal's office at your child's school.

The report contains the following information:

## **Student Assessment Data– Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), Michigan Merit Exam (MME), and Michigan's Alternative Assessment Program (MI-Access)**

- Presents achievement data for English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 to 8 (MEAP), for grade 11 (MME) and science for grades 5 and 8 compared to targets for all students as well as sub-groups of students
- Provides achievement data for English language arts, mathematics and science for students with significant disabilities (MI-Access) compared to targets for all students with disabilities as well as subgroups of students
- Helps readers understand achievement progress within schools and compare these to district and state achievement

## **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – Detail Data and Status**

Provides information from assessments, graduation and attendance rates and AYP status in relation to four criteria:

- The district must test 95% of students in total and in each required subgroup
- The district must attain achievement goals in English language arts and mathematics or reduce the percentage of students in the non-proficient category of achievement significantly ("safe harbor") annually
- The district must attain achievement goals for each subgroup that has at least 30 students in the group
- The district must meet or exceed the other academic indicators set by the state: graduation rate for high schools and attendance rate for elementary and middle schools

## **Teacher Quality Data**

- Identifies teacher qualifications at district and school levels
- Reports percentage of core academic classes taught by teachers not considered highly qualified to teach such classes

**NAEP Data (National Assessment of Educational Progress)**

- Provides state results of the national assessment in mathematics and reading every other year in grades 4 and 8
- Cannot be compared with MEAP results for grades 4 and 8 because there are no national standards.

For 2009-2010, Athens Area Schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English language arts and mathematics. All schools in the district also made AYP. None of our schools were identified for school improvement, corrective action or restructuring.

Athens Area Schools was the only district in the county to have all of its school buildings place in the top 30% in the Michigan Department of Education's new Top-to-Bottom rankings of the state's schools. The rankings are based on student achievement in mathematics and language arts, and annual growth. Congratulations to our students and teachers on another standard set in Athens!

Sincerely,  
Richard Franklin,  
Superintendent

*Where teachers teach and children learn!*

## **Organizational Profile**

The Athens Area School District serves children and families from the villages of Athens and East Leroy, and the townships of Athens, Burlington, Leonidas, Leroy, Newton, Sherwood, and Wakeshma. Our District boundaries encompass farmland, small communities, and natural surroundings within a short driving distance of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. We are a group of communities rich with time and talent; willing and able to demonstrate a strong commitment to educating our children.

The District has an Elementary School located in East Leroy and this past year we served around 260 students, grades kindergarten through fourth (4<sup>th</sup>). We also offered a developmental kindergarten classroom and provided a Michigan School Readiness Program for children four years of age. Our Middle School and High School are located in the village of Athens. The Middle School had an enrollment of around 200 students, grades fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) through eighth (8<sup>th</sup>). The High School had an enrollment of around 200 students, grades ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) through twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>).

We offer a comprehensive program of academic study, fine arts, interscholastic athletics and other extra-curricular activities. We have maintained the distinction of being accredited at the high school through the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since 1999. We continue to create more opportunities for academic excellence through our strong relationships with the Battle Creek Math and Science Center, the Calhoun Area Technology Center, the Kellogg Community College, and the Michigan Virtual High School. We invite you to read further and learn more about this “little pocket of excellence south of Battle Creek”.

## **Organizational Culture**

The following organizational framework was created through the staff and supported by the Athens Board of Education:

Our Vision Statement for our District:

**The Athens Area Schools are committed to providing a quality education for all students within a respectful, caring environment. Our schools strive to be a family-friendly place where people want to send their children to learn and where students are excited and motivated to achieve excellence. We are dedicated to helping young people become independent, well-rounded, contributing members of society. It is our hope and passion to see that our students are prepared for the world, have the tools and skills necessary to succeed in life, and are challenged in becoming confident leaders for tomorrow.**

Our Core Mission for the schools:

**The Athens Area Schools are dedicated to helping all students achieve their full academic and human potential.**

Our Strategic Goals related to our core mission:

- **Our students will meet, or exceed, proficiency standards as measured by the state’s standardized assessment in the core content areas of science, social studies, English/language arts, and mathematics.**
- **Our students will successfully complete their secondary education.**
- **Our students will progress to post-secondary education and/or training after graduating from the Athens Area Schools.**

Please note the targeted benchmarks for each strategic goal will be set on an annual basis until we can accomplish 100% of our core mission.

Our Guiding Principles for the teaching, learning, and work environment for both staff and students are:

1. **We always act in the best interest of those we serve.**
2. **No one has the right to harm others.**
3. **Everyone has a responsibility to help.**

### Teaching and Support Staff

The Athens Area Schools had 40 professional educators teaching across our District this past year. We also had 13 paraprofessionals assisting our students in the educational process, and 32 support staff seeing to it that our students were transported safely, fed healthy and nutritious meals, and were able to learn in a clean, orderly, and functional school environment. Our administrative team and building secretarial staff included 8 more dedicated professionals striving for excellence in education.

Federal oversight and accountability placed on schools through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation required every school district in America document how their teachers met the standards to be recognized as Highly Qualified. An audit completed by the Michigan Department of Education found that all of our teachers in the Athens School District (or 100%) met the federal standards for being Highly Qualified to teach their assignments. 100% of our teachers hold a valid teacher certification with the state of Michigan.

### Curriculum

The Athens Area Schools is a proud participant of the National Science Foundation’s Research PROM/SE Grant to study instructional techniques, curriculum coherence, and student outcomes for science and mathematics. This is a five-year effort to take a deep dive into just how we are teaching our students in these content areas and what changes can be made so our students can become some of the highest achievers in science and mathematics. All children in our District grades 3-12 were tested on the TIMSS Math and Science tests, and then re-tested to demonstrate the impact PROM/SE has had on our student achievement and teaching mathematics. The data collected will go far in helping us provide the best instruction we possibly can in these subject areas. The project is guided by Michigan State University and a large collaborative with Calhoun, Ingham and St. Clair Counties in Michigan and Cleveland and Cincinnati in Ohio. Our math curriculum in grades K-6 called “Everyday Math”, is research based and provides elementary students with a great foundation in mathematics.

The Michigan Merit Core Curriculum and the State’s graduation requirements require rigorous academic requirements for this years juniors. Although the Athens Board of Education and teaching staff adopted new graduation requirements one year earlier that matched the new state requirements, each class hereafter must meet these increased standards for Michigan.

The high school provides dual enrollment opportunities through Kellogg Community College as well as opportunities to attend the Calhoun Area Career Center and the Battle Creek Area Math and Science Center.

We continue to provide all day/every day Kindergarten and believe such a program has had significant impact on our children's readiness to learn and their subsequent academic growth. We also provided other support programs to aid in our students' development; Jump into Kindergarten for incoming kindergarten students, Math Summer Institute for grades 7-9, Summer School for grades 1-6, and before and after school Tutoring, and GAP services.

### **Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities**

Our interscholastic sports program continues to move forward in a very positive and constructive direction. Athens offers student athletes the opportunity to compete in the following sports: Football, Cross Country, Basketball, Wrestling, Volleyball, Track and Field, Baseball, Softball and Equestrian. We had a very busy year with extra-curricular activities offered through the schools in Athens. The following activities were provided through the year: Chess Club, Student Council, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Camp, Environmental Club, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Greenfield Village Trip, Math Olympiad, National Honor Society, Quiz Bowl, Youth Advisory Committee, STAND and SADD, High School Cheer Club, Science Olympiad, Spanish Club, Varsity Club, Middle School Vocals, Yearbook, Youth in Government, Destination Imagination, and Junior and Senior Follies. It is also important to note that many of our teachers and support staff were involved with our students in extra-curricular activities and/or interscholastic sports throughout the year.

### **District Technology**

This past year we continued to build upon our solid foundation in the use of technology across the District and in the educational process for students. We are participating in the Computers for Learning Program offered through the United States military and federal government. This program has supported our efforts to upgrade every computer in the district. We have 5 instructional computer labs in the district. We operate both at the network and user levels on Novell, Linux using Open Source technologies free from proprietary systems. We have one of the only Linux 64 bit servers operating in a school network environment. Our curriculum for computer technology meets all of the Michigan Educational Technology Standards for learning, and many of these benchmarks are achieved by the time our students finish the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We adopted the Moodle applications and Renaissance Place across K-12; along with a keyboarding program that begins in early elementary through eighth grade that tracks a student's personal skill development.

### **Parental Involvement**

The Athens Area Schools begin each year with an Open House designed to introduce and orient parents to our staff and facilities. At the beginning of each sports season, a Parent Night is held to introduce the coaching staff and Athletic Director and to review the athletic handbook or other rules/regulations pertaining to student athletes. Twice each year the schools provide Parent/Teacher Conferences to update parents on their child's academic progress and to address any concerns parents may have with their child's school experiences. Over 90% of parents attend these conferences. We also have a large number of parents using our Parent Connect web-based system to monitor attendance, grades, and nutrition. Both the elementary and middle schools provide regular newsletters home to parents, and the high school uses email to communicate weekly updates to

parents. In addition to our district website, the elementary and middle school both have websites to provide information to parents.

Aside from these regular opportunities for input, parents are encouraged to drop in to our school offices at any time. Our Board of Education holds a Business Session the third Monday of each month. Parents and community members are welcome to provide “public comments” at the appropriate times during the agenda and can participate extensively in the work session topics as they are discussed by the Board.

We also have a standing Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Education, the Athletic Boosters Club, a Band Boosters Club, and a School Safety Standing Committee that have parent participation. East Leroy Elementary has a longstanding Parent/Teacher/Student Organization (PTSO) made up of concerned parents wishing to have a more formal and positive influence on our schools. We also have Motor Moms and Dads offered at the elementary school strictly through parent volunteers to provide activities that enhance gross, fine and visual motor skill development. There were a number of opportunities for parents to volunteer in special projects around our District last year. We cannot adequately express our appreciation for all of the parents and community members who volunteered their time and talents so selflessly to help our schools and students.

### **Student Achievement**

Our core mission is really student achievement, plain and simple. Although we are often given many tasks and priorities by the state and federal government and by our own communities, our main purpose is to educate our students and help them reach their fullest human potential. Toward that end, we will review our strategic goals and the related data from our performance last year.

**Our students will meet, or exceed, proficiency standards as measured by the state’s standardized assessment in the core content areas of science, social studies, English/language arts (reading and writing), and mathematics.**

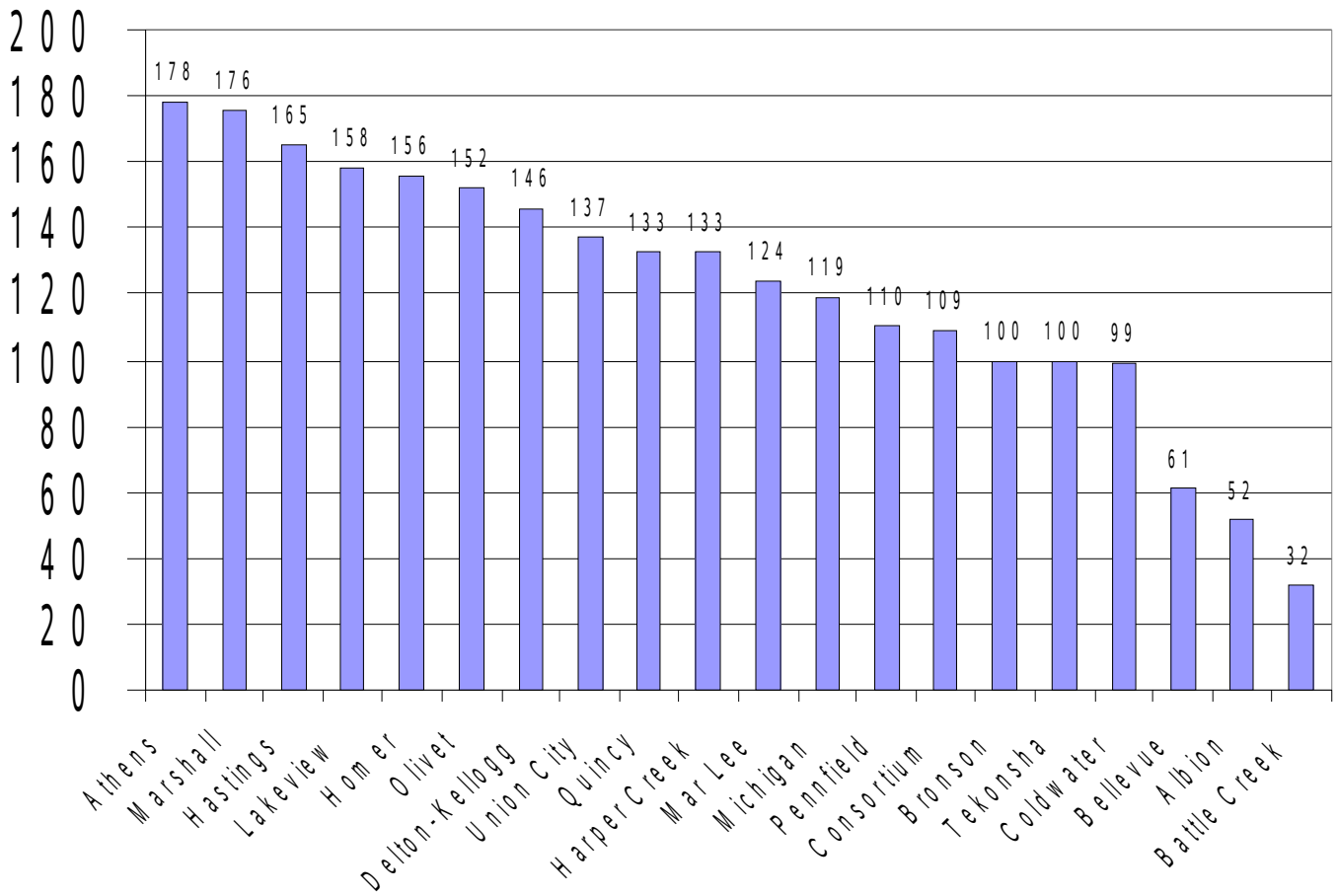
One way of measuring this goal is by the state’s standardized assessment scores on the MEAP for grades 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, & 9<sup>th</sup>, and the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The following table is a comparison of the 2009/2010 MEAP scores for Athens students to the state average. The scores actually represent the percentage of students that met or exceeded the proficiency standard for each content area.

# 2009 MEAP Scores in Comparison with the State

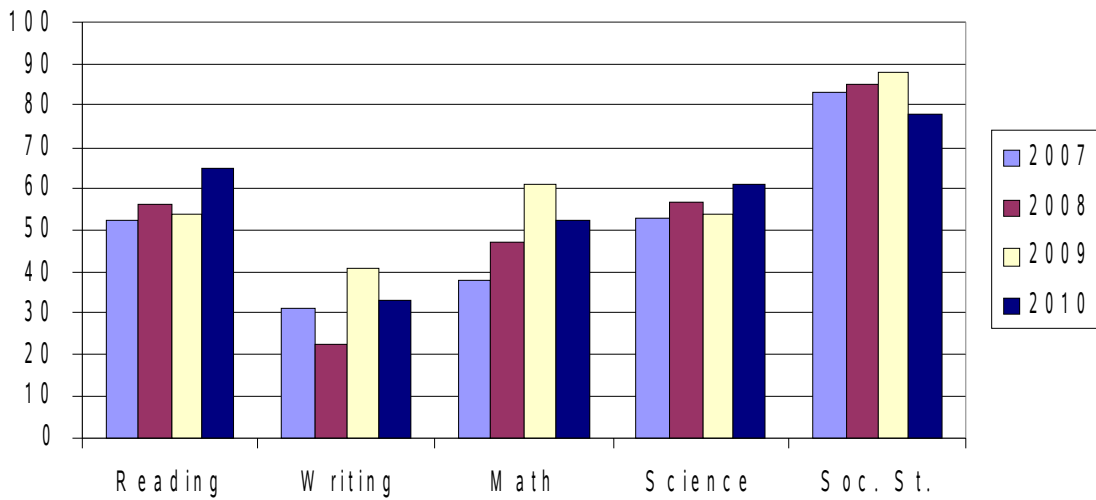
\* score was better than last year's score

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Athens %proficient</b>	<b>State %proficient</b>	<b>Ranking in State</b>
<b>Reading</b>	Third	95*	90*	above
	Fourth	92*	84*	above
	Fifth	93*	85*	above
	Sixth	86*	88*	below
	Seventh	80	82*	below
	Eighth	92*	83*	above
<b>Math</b>	Third	90	95*	below
	Fourth	96*	92*	above
	Fifth	82	79*	above
	Sixth	91*	82*	above
	Seventh	84	82	above
	Eighth	79	70	above
<b>Science</b>	Fifth	93*	81	above
	Eighth	83*	76	above
<b>Social St.</b>	Sixth	79*	73	above
	Ninth	87*	71	above

# MEAP Quality Points for 2009



## Michigan Merit Exam Athens High School



Besides the standardized testing administered by the state, we offer numerous other assessments to determine the needs of the students. At the elementary level, there are Reading assessments such as DIBELs and MLPP. The math program has additional assessments and the science kits have pre and post tests. Teachers also use a variety of formative and summative assessments in both the elementary and high school. The high school has end-of-course exams which are given to all students.

Another way of considering how our District is meeting its responsibilities for student achievement is to use the Michigan Department of Education’s Ed YES Report Card. In this report, the school is assessed on 90 different data points to determine if we met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on student achievement and what our school building’s composite grade should be for the year. In the school year ending 2010, all three of our schools met AYP. Our Elementary School received a grade of A, our Middle School received a grade of A, and our High School received a grade of B.

When reviewing such data from the state and federal level on student academic performance, we also look closely at our special needs population. Each year the Michigan Department of Education performs an audit of 40 requirements from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These requirements range in nature from official documentation and planning, time lines and legal actions, to student achievement and graduation. Our determination rating was a 1 overall; which is the best rating possible for a district indicating that we met all such requirements.

## List of Schools in District - Athens Area Schools

<i>School</i>	<i>Grade s Tested</i>	<i>Ed Yes! Grade 2009- 2010</i>	<i>School AYP Status 2009-2010</i>	<i>School Phase 2009- 2010</i>
<i>Athens High School</i>	11	B	Met AYP	0
<i>Athens Middle School (inactive)</i>	5 - 8	A	Met AYP	0
<i>East Leroy Elementary School</i>	3 - 5	A	Met AYP	0

### Highlights and Student Successes

One of the unique attributes of this school district and this community is our focus on community service. We share the value that contributing the well being of others is a worthy service and a legitimate outgrowth of a strong education. The Athens Board of Education requires that every student must provide and substantiate 40 hours of community service between their junior and senior year to graduate from Athens High School. Along with their time and talents, all of our students across the district raised money for national, state, and local causes (Red Cross Blood Drive, Soup-r-Bowl for Food Banks, St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, Leukemia Foundation, Salvation Army). What a great effort from our students and a great lesson in philanthropy!

Our high school students have been participating in the Youth in Government program for many years now, and each year our students distinguish themselves as leaders among their peers. Four students from Athens went to Lansing for the 2nd youth in government conference and came

home winners. All were delegates in the prestigious National Issues Forum.

Two of them were superb committee chairs & had their proposals make it all the way to General Assembly. Another was also able to have his proposals pass into general assembly. Only 12 in the state move into this assembly.

After both conferences, the Athens delegation came home with 16 awards, leadership positions, or had their proposals or bills signed by the youth governor. That is packing in lots of excellence from our delegation of only 17 students!

The Youth in Government delegates earned the following honors:

4. The #1 bill at the state conference as best written and most actively debated. This bill also passed through 8 of the 9 legislatures and was signed by the youth governor.
5. Outstanding Senator
6. Lieutenant Governor - also did double duty by being a Governor candidate for next year. He lost in the closest race in MI YIG history.
7. 2 Committee Chairs
8. Speaker of the House
9. Secretary of the Senate

We had 9 awards or leadership positions with only 14 students attending. This is with all sized schools. Athens Area Schools is one of the smallest districts that participates in YIG.

Another way we demonstrated quality writing outside of the classroom was the high school newspaper, "The Echo". This newspaper has a student editorial board, and is a completely student-run newspaper covering school and community local news. The circulation increased this past year to 1,300 copies printed per month, and has become a newspaper the whole community has grown to appreciate and count on for local news.

This school year, professional learning teams met once every three weeks to review data, identify growth edges where we can improve instruction, and better support our students to achieve excellence. This requires a shared belief that all children can and will learn; that being public and transparent about how we teach is critical to improving instruction; that data-driven decision making is fundamental to school improvement. We have a completed District Improvement Plan, and a completed improvement plan for each building. These plans will be revised as needed. Technology will play a big role in the success of this effort so that teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders will have easy and timely access to information to improve learning.

The budget, and the state's economy, continues to present challenges for public schools. We continue to be good stewards of the public dollar and the public trust, making needed improvements across our three campuses and upholding this District as one that the community and our students can be proud of. The move to two campuses is being made for the 2010-2011 school year. East Leroy Elementary will house Pre-Kdg. through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Athens High School will house 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Even with the reductions we have had to make in spending, personnel, and programs, we have maintained a high level of quality in all that we offer. We will continue to be a "Small, but Strong" district providing the best in a quality education for the students we serve.

For more information, please go to the following link (<http://aer.data4ss.org/Default.aspx>) and use the tabs on the side of the page. There is much more detailed information available here.