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Challenges, from p19

Louisiana which are based upon a matrix of calculations and multipliers that weigh student scores on accountability tests, attendance and drop-outs.

School officials identified errors in the state's scoring process that incorrectly and adversely affected Livingston Parish's overall score and indicated the parish had a significant increase in dropouts. As it turned out, one of the parish's high schools that houses grades 10-12 on its campus was being calculated as having a 9-12 grade configuration.

"Of course there was no ninth grade class at that school, which caused the state's formula to calculate an entire ninth grade class as dropouts," Spear said. "Livingston Parish has always been fortunate to be a top 10 school system. Our teachers and administrators work hard to provide each child with a quality education and take pride in being one of the best. This acknowledged correction by the state means a lot to them and it says a lot about the effort they put forth each day," Spear said.

Three new schools – Juban Parc Elementary and Juban Parc Middle School, located off Juban Road, southeast of Denham Springs, and Southfork Elementary in Walker – are ready to accept students when the new school year opens August 6. A new Live Oak High School has been approved by the school board and is in the final planning stages. Spear anticipates that school will be ready for occupancy in about two years.

The Parent Portal program was introduced at Live Oak High School last fall and is now fully implemented in all schools. Spear said, "About 75-80 percent of all parents are using the portal which allows them to access their children's grades, attendance records and homework assignments.

The Family Resource Center at the Livingston Parish Literacy and Technology Center has also been "overwhelmingly successful," said Spear. "Families can check out education materials such as books, ACT testing software, videos, games and flashcards – all free of charge. Family workshops are also held from time to time."

Spear estimates the total enrollment at parish public schools for the 2010-11 school year will be around 24,500, saying, "We never know for sure what the pupil count will be, but we usually gain 300-500 students each year. We always plan for an increase so we'll be prepared. Despite our immense challenges, we're looking forward to another successful year."

Tap into education resources at Literacy Center



Family Resource Center

The 2010-11 school year will mark the second year of the Livingston Parish Public Schools' Family Resource Center at the Literacy and Technology Center near Walker.

The center was created to provide resources that will assist and support families with their children's education by providing free educational materials to parents of children in Livingston Parish Public Schools. This loaning library includes videos, books, games, flashcards, electronic games and resources, special needs information and ACT prep materials. The center also offers a variety of workshops throughout the school year.

See Literacy Center, p20