



# CANEY VALLEY SCHOOLS

**Steven D. Cantrell, Ed.D., Superintendent**

*P.O. Box 410  
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918.536.2500*

**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

You may have received a recent letter from the Oklahoma State Department of Education discussing student meal funding and administrative costs in our Oklahoma schools. I wanted to reach out to you and tell you the **reality of what is really going on at Caney Valley.**

**We would love for all of our students to eat for free every day.**

The first sentence of the Caney Valley Public Schools Mission Statement states that our primary goal is “To provide a safe and secure positive learning environment...” This includes making sure that all students have the opportunity for a quality breakfast and lunch. It is important to note that **ALL STUDENTS** currently eat breakfast for **FREE** at both campuses. In addition, almost 60% of our students already qualify for Free and/or Reduced lunches through the USDA School Lunch Program (SLP).

We have researched utilizing the USDA Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program to allow all of our students to eat for free every day. The cost of this program to cover the 40% of students not on Free or Reduced lunches, however, would be well over \$75,000.00 extra for the district. This amount covers the cost of an extra teacher for our students. It is important to note that **if you and your family need assistance paying for lunches, PLEASE fill out the Free and Reduced Application available from your child’s building office.**

**If you are not on Free and/or Reduced Lunch, we need you to pay for the lunches.**

For the 2024-25 school year the Caney Valley district has almost \$24,000.00 in unpaid debt to our Child Nutrition Program. With this \$24,000.00 we could have hired one extra tutor to assist with our students. If your child has a debt, you will be contacted again about setting up a payment plan to begin paying your child’s lunch debt down. Again, **we want ALL children to eat lunch. We will never turn a student away from eating lunch, no matter how much they owe.** Our school is a family, and we will do everything we can to help you and your children, but this \$24,000.00 could have been used to hire an additional tutor for all of our children. Again, the first step is to **fill out the Free and/or Reduced Lunch Application if you need assistance!**

**We spend responsibly at Caney Valley!**

According to the State Department of Education’s own report ran today, we had \$9,731,055.19 in expenditures for the 2024-25 school year. Of that amount, \$353,579.00



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was spent on “Administrative Costs.” That is 3.63% of the budget for the year. It is also well below the 7% cap required by Oklahoma Law. Our focus will always be on our students first and foremost.

## **We are already audited every year.**

Our district has a contract with Patten and Odem CPAs, PLLC to perform an annual audit of our school every year. The last audit was for the 2024 school year. Later this year they will audit our school for the 2025 school year. Each year our school has received a “CLEAN” audit finding. This means that money was spent the way it was supposed to, and that there was no mismanagement in accounting practices. In addition, The State Department of Education reviewed our audit, and on March 25<sup>th</sup> confirmed that our audit was closed successfully and that Caney Valley received an “A” audit and was clean (No Errors).

## **We don’t need Rhetoric or Headlines!**

We encourage accountability and transparency. We spend a lot of money. We know that. But, every penny we encumber, is spent on making the educational experience of our students at Caney Valley **BETTER!** We work tirelessly to ensure that ALL of our students receive the same quality instruction that our larger, wealthier districts provide. We may do it, with donated items, or outside the box thinking, but I am proud of the education we are providing our students. And, we will continue to strive to do better tomorrow than we did today!

Caney Valley Parents, I ask that you stand with us. For some reason, our State Superintendent is determined to take our State backwards. I am beginning my 34<sup>th</sup> year in education, and the quality of instruction is better than I have ever witnessed. Parents, patrons, students, and staff of Caney Valley I encourage you to embrace the past, but “Don’t Look Back!” Look to the here and now and to the future, because great things are happening in our communities!

  
Steven D. Cantrell, Ed.D.  
Superintendent