



## Union Public Schools

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### **Cathy Burden, Ph.D.** **Superintendent of Union Public Schools**

The district's motto "Working to form a more perfect Union" was selected by Superintendent Dr. Cathy Burden to inspire a constant focus on excellence. During her 19-year tenure, Union Public Schools has been recognized as a premier school district dynamically evolving to provide educational and co-curricular opportunities for a growing student population in the Union communities of Tulsa and Broken Arrow. She retired in June 2013.

Dr. Burden has been a psychologist and educator for 41 years and has received numerous awards including the 2013 Medal of Excellence in Administration from the prestigious Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, the Dream Catcher Award from the Community Service Council, Oklahoma State Superintendent of the Year, Oklahoma State Administrator of the Year, the University of Oklahoma's Career Educator of the Year Award and one of the nation's most Tech-Savvy Superintendents of the Year Award. She has been recognized as a "difference maker" by the OU College of Education, the Journal Record Woman of the Year program, Tulsa People and the Broken Arrow Ledger. Women in Communications has honored her as their Newsmaker of the Year and Union with their Benchmark Award. The Boy Scouts of America, presented her with the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Service Award for unselfish service to the youth of America and the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice awarded her the Nancy McDonald Spirit Award.

Dr. Burden is the chair of the Tulsa County P-20 Council. She is the board secretary of the Community Action Project and on the boards of the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice, Junior Achievement, Tulsa Metropolitan Human Services Commission, Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce and the Oklahoma Curriculum Improvement Committee. She has served as a juror for the Brock International Prize in Education, an award that recognizes an individual who has made a significant impact on education, and nominated the 2010 winner, Mr. Geoffrey Canada. Throughout Dr. Burden's tenure, Union has consistently grown its support of the Tulsa Area United Way which resulted in the 2010 Sun Award, their highest honor. Previously she has served on the boards of the Tulsa Area United Way, Leadership Tulsa, the Metropolitan Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, and the Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition. She has participated in Leadership Oklahoma, the Educator's Leadership Academy, the State Superintendent's Advisory Council, and the United Suburban Schools Association.

In Dr. Burden's long career with Union Public Schools, many progressive initiatives have contributed to the student-centered culture of the district. Early childhood education, full-service community schools, differentiated instruction with appropriate intervention and enrichment, and an administrative organization that focuses on personalization have been hallmarks. Union was selected to host the nationally recognized Carrera Program for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention that provides full support for "at promise" students 6th-12th grade. In Union's professional learning community, teachers profit from weekly collaboration during the school day and unique student needs are addressed through child study teams at each building. The district goals for students – 100% graduation and 100% college/career ready – are supported by expanded opportunities at the high school level in the Union Collegiate Academy and a focus on building aspirations for higher education at every grade level. Union's EXCELeRate program provides concurrent enrollment in partnership with Tulsa Community College, a rigorous Advanced Placement program, and virtual courses through the Union Virtual Learning Academy.

Under Dr. Burden's leadership, Union has been recognized nationally for outstanding athletic, fine arts and academic programs. With enduring community trust, annual bond issues that typically pass with 75-80 percent of the vote have provided beautiful facilities to support the district's 15,000 students and the quality programs that serve them.