



El Dorado Promise Scholarship
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RELEASE DATE: Friday, January 20, 2017.

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EL DORADO PROMISE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

On January 22, 2007, Murphy Oil Corporation announced the El Dorado Promise – a fifty-million-dollar scholarship program that enables all El Dorado High School graduates, who have been enrolled since at least the ninth grade, to have their tuition and mandatory fees paid at any regionally accredited university, public or private, in the United States. The El Dorado Promise is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year.

Since its inception, the El Dorado Promise has provided funding to 2,025 Promise Scholars, who attended or are currently attending 129 different colleges and universities in 29 states. Over 84% of the Promise eligible 2016 EHS graduates are attending college. This percentage is significantly higher than both the current Arkansas college-going rate, at 50%, and the national rate at nearly 66% (According to the Arkansas Department of Education).

“The El Dorado Promise not only ensures that every EHS graduate has an opportunity to go to college but it sparked a culture change within our district,” said Sylvia Thompson, El Dorado Promise Director. “From the first day of kindergarten, our students know that they will have the opportunity to attend college regardless of their financial need or academic ability, and the District has worked to ensure that students are prepared to take advantage of this opportunity to further their education.”

Pre-AP classes now begin in middle school and students and teachers throughout the district are demanding a more rigorous curriculum. As a result, AP enrollment at EHS has increased 164% over the past 10 years. The number of AP classes offered has increased from three in 2005, to 19 classes now.

“We are thrilled to celebrate this significant anniversary of the El Dorado Promise,” said Claiborne P. Deming, Murphy Oil Corporation Chairman of the Board. “It has been rewarding to see the results of the Promise, especially the unexpected benefits it has brought. We thought that families would move to El Dorado to take advantage of the Promise, that the District’s enrollment would stabilize and that more students would go to college. All this has happened. We did not consider the impact of the Promise on student behavior. An invigorated “college-going” culture has manifested itself with a greater desire for course rigor and selection.”



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The El Dorado Promise has celebrated this milestone throughout the El Dorado School District this week with several special activities including visits from college recruiters, guest speakers, career parades and a writing / art showcase which allowed every student in the district to express why they love the Promise. The week-long celebration will culminate with a Community Promise Pep Rally on the steps of the Union County Courthouse at 4:00 p.m., today.

The anniversary celebration will continue Thursday, February 2, with a special community event at the El Dorado Conference Center. “A Decade of Promise” will highlight many Promise success stories. Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson will speak at the event and the keynote address will be provided by Liz Murray, author of the New York Times best seller, *Breaking Night*, which tells her story of “Homeless to Harvard.” (*Liz Murray bio attached*).

The event will begin at 4:00 p.m. with a time for guests to enjoy refreshments and displays of Promise memorabilia. The program will begin at 5:00 p.m. Tickets to the event are free, but are required to attend. Tickets may be requested by emailing ElDoradoPromiseEvents@gmail.com or calling 870.864.6300.

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