

## **LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS**

In 1999, enactment of legislation placing limitations on school districts' use of temporary teacher contracts, thereby protecting teacher due process rights.

In 1998, leader in enactment of legislation providing new and larger sources of income to the Teachers' Retirement system, reducing the financial strain on local school districts in meeting payroll obligations to the system, and freeing up money to districts for teacher and support employee pay and benefits improvements.

In 1998, supported legislation granting cost-of-living increase to current retirees.

In 1998, leader in formation of the Oklahoma Education Coalition to promote achievement of public education agenda. Composed of OEA, Oklahoma State School Boards Association, Cooperative Council of Oklahoma School Administration, Oklahoma Federation of Teachers, Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools, United Suburban Schools Association, Oklahoma Parent-Teachers Association, Higher Education Alumni Council of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Vocational Association, Oklahoma City Public Schools, Tulsa Public Schools.

In 1998, enactment of legislation permitting female teachers to count up to 90 days lost work time due to pregnancy as service credit toward later retirement.

In 1998, further improvement of state teacher's salary schedule by equalizing steps two through 25 at \$332 each, thereby increasing career teacher salaries more than \$1,100.

In 1998, beginning of partial state payment of health insurance premiums for teachers in the amount of \$684 per year per teacher. Paid in the form of a flexible benefit allowance, enabling teachers to choose from a list of qualified benefits in lieu of health insurance.

Benefit maintained in 1999 and 2000.

In 1998, prevented a move by some legislators to diminish retirement benefits by changing Teachers' Retirement System from a "defined benefit" program to a "defined contribution" program.

In 1998, prevented an increase in the percentage of gross pay teachers are required to contribute to Teachers' Retirement System.

In 1998, beginning of partial state payment of health insurance premiums for education support employees in the amount of \$1,020 per year per full-time employee. Paid in the form of a flexible benefit allowance enabling support employees to choose from a list of qualified benefits in lieu of health insurance. Improved to \$1,805 in 1999. Improved to \$2,043 in 2000.

In 1998, achievement of more than \$122 million in new funding for elementary and secondary schools, eclipsing 1997 for the largest increase in school funding since 1991.

In 1988, expansion of state employee group health and dental program to allow for participation by school employees, thereby making affordable quality group health care available to thousands of school employees for the first time.

In 1997 and 1998, opposed massive increases in health insurance premiums proposed by Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board, succeeding in cutting the proposed increases in half.

In 1997, achievement of more than \$92 million in new funding for elementary and secondary schools, the largest increase in school funding since 1991 (the first year of funding under HB 1017).

In 1997, enactment of legislation providing financial assistance to outstanding Oklahoma teachers to seek "national certification" from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, including payment of a \$5,000 annual stipend to each teacher gaining such

certification. Continued support in 1998, 1999 and 2000 resulted in opening the program to hundreds more applicants.

In 1997, addition of 10 steps to state teachers' salary schedule, increasing salaries for 25 year teachers by \$3,320

In 1997, beginning of partial state payment of the teacher's required annual contributions to the Teachers' Retirement System, resulting in a pay increase for all teachers (approximately \$1,425 for teachers with 25 years experience).

Between 1990 and 1995, increase of \$9,000 at beginning step of the state teachers' salary schedule.

Between 1990 and 1995, increase of \$9,000 at step 15 of the state teachers' salary schedule.

In 1993, reduction of maximum student load for secondary teachers from 175 students per day to 140.

Between 1988 and 1993, reduction of maximum elementary class size from no limit in 1988 to 20 students per class (among the nation's lowest).

Between 1990 and 2000, more than doubling of state funding for elementary and secondary schools (increase from \$881 million to more than \$1.9 billion).

In 1992, leader in enactment of legislation to stabilize funding for the Teachers' Retirement System and to establish a schedule to eliminate a huge unfunded liability caused by years of legislative neglect.