

OEA

An affiliate of the
National Education Association

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Periodical
Post Paid at
Okla. City, OK

The Education Focus
OEA's all-member publication

The Education Focus

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association

December/January 2003-04

NBCTs Share Similar Stories

By Doug Folks

Scrolling through the list of this year's class of nationally certified teachers, it's easy to imagine that every successful candidate has a story. From first grade teachers in some of Oklahoma's smallest towns, to upper level math teachers in the state's largest high schools, Oklahoma's National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) Class of 2003 includes a wide variety of teachers.

The bottom line is Oklahoma students now have 226 more teachers – 143 of whom are OEA members – who have met the grueling standards of national certification. In all, the state ranks eighth nationally with 858 teachers who are certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). North Carolina leads the nation with 6,641 NBCTs.

Hinton and Edmond represent school districts at the opposite ends of the NBPTS spectrum. This year, Marla Pankratz became Hinton's first-ever nationally certified teacher. Meanwhile, Edmond led the state with

13 successful candidates this year to give the suburban district north of Oklahoma City a total of 43 since the state's first class in 1998.

Following is a look at the big and the small – and how similar it is in both places – for teachers who gain National Board Certification.

Meeting the Challenge

Marla Pankratz loves a challenge. Throughout her short teaching career – just 11 years so far – she's tackled the rigors of teaching transition first grade, creating a preK program from scratch, and moving into a traditional first grade class. A wife and mother of three children with a bachelor's and a master's from South-



Marla Pankratz is one of 143 OEA members to earn National Board Certification this year, and she is Hinton's first-ever nationally certified teacher.

western Oklahoma State University, she now has accomplished another great feat – National Board Certification.

The 33-year-old Pankratz is the first
See "Collaboration" on page 4



Putnam City North High School's Tom Pecore says teacher insurance is a major problem in Oklahoma, calling it a "silent epidemic."

Speaking Out

Pecore Spreads the Word About Insurance Plight

By Stacy Martin

You might say that Tom Pecore is a walking lesson in civics. He has found that if you speak out about a serious inequity, people pay attention.

So what is Pecore's issue? To put it simply, his health insurance premiums are so high it's making him sick. Like all teachers, his premiums have risen to take a huge chunk of his salary. Pecore's premium now comprises one-third of his salary – \$1,030 a month.

"This is a major problem in our state – a silent epidemic," said Pecore. "It goes to quality of life. If you can't afford to insure your child, and that child gets sick – you can't even get them the care they need."

Pecore is a 16-year classroom veteran at Putnam City North High School. He is certified to teach journalism and history, and coaches boys and girls cross country, and boys soccer.

See "Speaking Out" on page 6

A Gift We Can't Return

By Roy Bishop
OEA President

During the coming holiday season, you may receive a white elephant gift at a party. You'll laugh about it and take it home, all the while plotting how to give it to someone else next year, if not next week.

Our federal government gave us a huge white elephant recently, in the name of teacher quality via President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" law (NCLB). Unfortunately, we can't give it back to Congress, Mr. Bush or anyone else.

One of the goals that all teachers share is to have competent, caring and qualified teachers in our schools. While we might share this goal with the current administration, the method for reaching it is diverse. NCLB requires every teacher of a core content subject be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

Bush's original proposed legislation would have required subject area testing of every teacher without regard for experience or accomplishment. The NEA was successful in defeating this attempt, but in order to meet the fed-

eral mandate of highly qualified status, teachers must meet one of several options which include passing a subject area test in the field they teach, or obtaining an academic major or a master's degree in that area.

If a teacher does not meet one of the clearly defined criteria, then he or she must qualify under the HOUSSE (High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation) requirements. This is one of the most insulting and disrespectful aspects of NCLB that experienced teachers have to meet. It is estimated that between 8,000 and 9,000 teachers in Oklahoma may have to use the HOUSSE to determine highly qualified status.

The OEA found itself in an interesting position. While we had no choice in accepting the white elephant gift, we did have a choice on how we wanted to make it more palatable to our members. We could accept whatever HOUSSE was developed by the State Department of Education, or we could accept the State Department's invitation to provide input into building Oklahoma's HOUSSE. For the OEA,

producing a HOUSSE that was as fair as possible would be the most important role your Association could play on your behalf.

At every step of the process, OEA has stated that while this might be a requirement of the Bush administration we believe Oklahoma teachers represent the best the profession has to offer. From the beginning, we felt teachers should not have to take a test or jump through additional hoops to prove to someone yet again that they meet some bureaucratic definition of quality.

Because of our involvement, we were able to change the HOUSSE from a portfolio to a checklist. We were able to determine highly qualified status based solely on National Board Certification, and for special education and alternative education teachers, highly qualified will be based on a bachelor's degree and proper state certification.

We were also able to include a wide range of professional development institutes and recognition in the checklist, as well as increasing the total points al-



Roy Bishop

lowed for professional development and counting one point for each clock hour of professional development. We did all of this as well as minimize the reliance on test scores to determine highly qualified status.

On pages 8 and 9, you can read a detailed account of the Oklahoma HOUSSE and its requirements. No white elephant gift will ever be considered beautiful, but since we're unable to throw this one out, we've at least made it more acceptable to the fine professionals in our public schools.

USAO Students Promote Literacy

Members of the Student National Education Association (SNEA) at the University of Science and Arts (USAO) in Chickasha have utilized an NEA grant to provide schools with materials for parents to share with their children.

Most recently, SNEA delivered Traveling Tales Packs to Telstar, Wheeler, Lee and Sequoyah Elementaries in Oklahoma City.

The program is designed to help encourage parental involvement and promote literacy. Each thematic pack includes a letter to parents explaining

the purposes of the kit, a children's book and several recommended activities for parents and children to complete at home. The NEA grant was used to purchase books for the packs.

USAO's student organization is well known for its service work. Its programs have spanned many grade levels in several Oklahoma counties. Projects have included collecting and distributing Books for Tots; providing teaching materials for tor-



Sherri Fulmer presents a Traveling Tales Pack to Sandy Simmons, Crutcho ACT president. (Fulmer was president of USAO's Student NEA chapter when this photo was taken, and is now a first-year teacher at Moore's Santa Fe Elementary.)

nado damaged schools in Moore; helping to supply a dormitory lending library for the Oklahoma School for the Deaf; and providing information, materials and newsletters on multi-cultural issues through its Multicultural Resource Center.

Correction

In the November 2003 issue of *The Education Focus*, we incorrectly attributed a quote. It was Del City art teacher Nancy Spencer, a finalist for

state Teacher of the Year, who said, "Good teachers look for a miracle. Great teachers make a miracle one student at a time."

OEA

The Education Focus

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Milken Award Surprises These OEA Members, But Not Their Students

By Marty Bull

While Oklahoma's most recent Milken Award winners were stunned to hear their names called for the prestigious award, their students weren't the least bit surprised.

Yukon's Darryl Andrews and Spiro's Kasandra Lovell were recognized as Milken Award winners in assemblies held Oct. 14 at their respective schools. State Superintendent Sandy Garrett and Richard Sandler, of the Milken Family Foundation, made the surprise announcements.

As Garrett described the recipient in the Yukon ceremony, Andrews thought she would name a colleague who just happened to be one of his former teachers, but his students weren't sur-

prised to hear his name called. "I knew it was him," said Leaders of Tomorrow student Leslie Crissup. "He gives all his students 100 percent. He deserves this honor."



Kasandra Lovell, Spiro

*"She's the best teacher I've ever had. She makes English fun."
Christina Kushnick, Spiro Freshman*

Andrews, a Yukon native, has been teaching for 17 years. He teaches physical science and leadership at

Yukon High School and serves as the student council sponsor. He makes science fun and exciting, his students say, and his leadership students create service-learning projects that give back to their community.

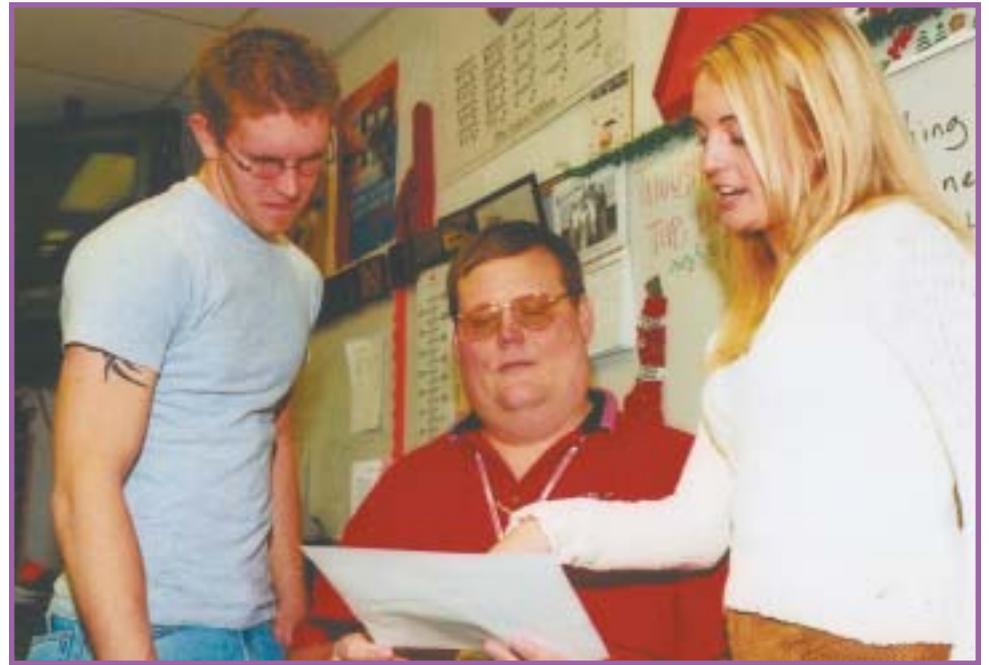
"The money is secondary to me," said Andrews. "The cards and e-mails I've received from my students and colleagues far outweigh the dollar amount."

During the Spiro ceremony, Lovell and her husband Jeff, a sixth grade math teacher in the district, were quietly discussing the closing of a land deal for a new house they are planning.

"I couldn't believe it when they called my name," said Lovell. "I had assumed that the school was receiving

some sort of an award. I never dreamed that I would be singled out. It is an honor to accept this on behalf of all teachers."

But Lovell's students were not surprised she was recognized as one of Oklahoma's most outstanding teachers. "She's the best teacher I've ever had,"



Yukon's Darryl Andrews visits with Christopher Osborne and Andra Erbar.

said 9th grader Christina Kushnick. "She makes English fun."

Lovell has the distinction of being the first National Board Certified teacher in Leflore County as well as a 2001 State Teacher of the Year finalist. During her 10 year teaching career, she has developed a hands-on approach to teaching English that engages students in the learning process.

As 2003 Milken Educators, Andrews and Lovell will each receive an unrestricted \$25,000 financial prize and an invitation to attend the foundation's national conference, which will be held for the first time in Washington, D.C., next spring.

The Milken Family Foundation has awarded \$345,000 to state teachers since Oklahoma became a "Milken State" in 2000. As the largest teacher recognition program in the U.S., the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards were established in 1985 to honor outstanding K-12 educators and attract attention to the profession. Since that time, the Foundation has given nearly \$49.4 million in awards, celebrating the achievements of 1,977 educators from throughout the country.

Darryl Andrews, Yukon

*"He gives all his students 100 percent. He deserves this honor."
Leslie Crissup, Leaders of Tomorrow student*

OEA Members Who Have Won Milken Awards

2003

**Darryl Andrews, Yukon
Kasandra Lovell, Spiro**

2002

**Kristy Crabtree, Norman
Ginger Mendenhall, Tulsa**

2000

**Suzanne Giordano, Edmond
Theresa Kiger, Tulsa Union
Marcellus Hankins, Mid-Del**

Collaboration Helps Edmond Teachers Earn National Certification

Continued from Page 1

teacher in Hinton Public Schools to gain national certification. She teaches today in the same classroom where she was a first grader, fulfilling a dream to live and work in her hometown.

Earning national certification didn't come easy for her. In fact, Pankratz nearly quit before she really started the process and had to bank her scores before completing the process in her second year.

"I called the National Board Certification office and tried to drop out," she said. "I don't know who I talked to, but she encouraged me to do all I can, bank the scores if I needed to, and get that much done."

Pankratz applied for the NBPTS program while teaching pre-K. She was accepted, though, after taking a new position as a first grade teacher. The thought of trying to teach her students how to read and go through the certification process was overwhelming. But she took the advice of that anonymous voice on the telephone and accepted the challenge.

After retaking two areas this past year, Pankratz earned her early childhood generalist certification. While her students were happy to hear she'd earned the title, she's not sure they truly understood what it all means.

"That's OK, though. I don't think I'd want them to think of me any differently than they think of their other teachers," Pankratz said.

Like most NBC teachers, she is sure she's a better teacher for going through the process.

"I am a better teacher today – I promise – than I was two years ago," she said.

So what's different? Well, class arts and crafts projects for one.

"I worked hard before, but I work

harder now making sure (the activity) provokes my students to learn."

Pankratz is very humble about her accomplishment. She thinks, now that she's broken the ice, some of her colleagues will apply for the process with the realization that national certification is available and obtainable to teachers in Hinton.

"We have one of the best teaching staffs in the state, and I think with me getting nationally certified just helps confirm that," she said.

Working Together

When Edmond Memorial High School's Martha Wissler first received information about Oklahoma's new national certification program in the late 90s, she immediately told Linda Hall she ought to go for NBC.

Long story short, Hall was among the 28 teachers in Oklahoma's first nationally certified class of 1998. Flash forward to 2000 and Hall returned the favor to Wissler, insisting she begin working for the prestigious prize.

Unlike Pankratz, Wissler had a ton of support. Eleven teachers at EMHS began the process together two years ago. Seven made the Class of 2002, and the remaining four banked scores and earned NBC in November.

Wissler credits Hall with helping her gain the certification in Adolescent/Young Adolescent Mathematics.

"She helped me proofread my portfolio, gave me suggestions," Wissler said. "She kind of guided me through the process."

Like many teachers, Wissler has her hands in many activities. In addition to teaching Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) Algebra I, precalculus, and Pre-AP calculus, she is Senior class sponsor, chess club sponsor, president of Edmond ACT, a member of the OEA board, a wife and a mother. She didn't give up anything during her attempt to gain national certification. And, to top it all off, she endured tough personal times during the first year of the process. For much of that year, her mother was critically ill and spent time in intensive care.

"At the end of the first year, I felt really lucky just to get something in the mail," Wissler said.

During the second year of the pro-



Jacci Gantz, Adys Altstatt, Micki Taylor and Martha Wissler this year joined seven other Edmond Memorial High School colleagues as National Board Certified teachers.

cess, Wissler, Jacci Gantz, Micki Taylor and Adys Altstatt worked to pull each other through. They met about once a month to compare notes and provide each other with moral support.

"The moral support was almost as important as the rest," Wissler said.

Wissler said that achievement of national certification, by her colleagues and herself, is a reflection of Edmond schools as a whole.

"It shows a real commitment to professional development and lifelong learning that we have here in this school," she said. "We have a large number of faculty who are just as committed, but have just not chosen to go through the process."

Class of 2003

Following is a listing of the 143 OEA Members who earned national certification in the Class of 2003.

Alva
Julie Angle
Alva High

Ardmore
Kristi Burge
Will Rogers Elementary

Bartlesville
Diana Douthit
Ranch Heights Elementary
Linda Hylton Boudreaux
Woodrow Wilson Elementary

Broken Arrow
Sheila Coody
Lynn Wood Elementary
DeAnna Cooper
Spring Creek Elementary
Carolyn Hanson
Vandever Elementary
Rebecca Ann Meador
Park Lane Elementary

Byng
Dorothy Lancaster
Homer Elementary
Priscilla Sturdevant
Byng Junior High

Calumet
Carla Scott
Calumet Elementary

Chickasha
Pamela Charlson
Lincoln Elementary

Catoosa
Paige Hora
J. W. Sam Elementary

Chisholm
Shannon Goodwin
Chisholm Elementary

Choctaw/Nicoma Park
Michelle Phelps
James Griffith Intermediate
Elementary

Claremore
Shauna Horton
Claremore High
Carol Little
Claremore High

Marjorie McClaren Claremore High Christy Twist Westside Elementary Westside Elementary	Hinton Marla Ruth Pankratz Hinton Elementary	Mustang Brenda Lindsay Mustang High Shereen Rasor Mustang Valley Elementary Mustang Valley Elementary	Marva Oard Piedmont High	Tablequah Lora Cosby Central Elementary
Coweta Jennifer Admire Coweta Intermediate Elementary Abby Booth Central Elementary	Jenks Susan Collier Jenks Middle Kasey Cooper Jenks Middle Christina Leach Jenks East Elementary Glenda Nelson Jenks Middle	Noble Doris Dewberry Noble Middle George Peck Noble High	Plainview Judy Hatley Plainview Primary Elementary	Tulsa Vivian Bishop Nathan Hale High Deborah Chisler Barnard Elementary Ann Hart Lindbergh Elementary Gwendolyn Ogan Lindbergh Elementary Jennifer Potts Chouteau Elementary Teresa Shelley-Carroll Cleveland Middle William Tuttle Central High Marcia Young East Central High
Crooked Oak Shanna Talley Central Oak Elementary	Kellyville Jacque Darland Kellyville Elementary	Norman Sally Bratton Norman High Ellen Cole Whittier Middle Jennifer Garrett Norman North High Kortni Kinslow Norman North High Dana Loy Alcott Middle Paige Mayhew Norman North High Kimberly McAlister Eisenhower Elementary Catherine Murphy Eisenhower Elementary Karin Perry Lakeview Elementary Ellen Rodriguez Longfellow Middle Kasie Shaw Norman North High Sheryl Tatum McKinley Elementary	Ponca City Laneta Going Garfield Academy	Union (Tulsa) Rebecca Barrett McAuliffe Elementary Mary Bauer Darnaby Elementary Cindy Brown Union Intermediate High Debra Snider McAuliffe Elementary Shelley Zevnik Union Eighth Grade Center
Deer Creek (Edmond) Mary Monroe Prairie Vale Elementary Kathleen Schwiebert Prairie Vale Elementary	Lawton Nancy Louise Alexander Woodland Hills Elementary Paula Jane Hargrove Eisenhower High Regina Lambert Tomlinson Junior High Geraldine Prince Lincoln Elementary	Oklahoma City Sandra Futrell Westwood Elementary Anna Hawkins Southern Hills Elementary Jennifer Hensley Quail Creek Elementary Tracie Rivera Douglass High Misti Smith Prairie Queen Elementary Marilyn Tarron Eugene Field Elementary Amy Wilkerson NE Academy	Putnam City Lisa Bickel Lake Park Elementary Amy Bixler Rollingwood Elementary Susan Harding Putnam City High Sharon Hubbard Wiley Post Elementary Susan McLemore Ralph Downs Elementary Betty Mise Putnam City North High Monique Reed Central Middle Glenda Ross Dennis Elementary	Vinita Jody Skinner Vinita High
Edmond Marybeth Dailey Santa Fe High Jacci Gantz Memorial High Suzanne Giordano Summit Middle Michelle Grinsteiner Cheyenne Middle Carrie Hauser Central Middle Carrie Sue Jarman Washington Irving Elementary Diane McCloskey Krakowski Northern Hills Elementary Karen Leath Clegern Elementary Ruth Rayner John Ross Elementary Micki Taylor Memorial High Robin Tippin Santa Fe High Martha Wissler Memorial High Gaye Young Central Middle	Madill Virginia Stowers Madill Elementary	Oologah-Talala Sharon Culver Oologah-Talala Elementary	Sand Springs Juanita Morgan Pratt Elementary	Waurika Sue Ann Kidd Waurika Elementary
El Reno Peggy Lynn Haynes El Reno High	Meeker Joyce Flowers Meeker Elementary Sandra Graves Meeker Elementary	Osage Melinda Fink Osage Elementary	Sapulpa Cathy Ellen Adams Woodlawn Elementary Mary Green Liberty Elementary	Woodward Lynette Balch Horace Mann Elementary Tara Burnett Woodward Middle North Cindy Smith Woodward High Melisa Taylor Horace Mann Elementary Leahanne Williams Woodward Early Childhood Center
Enid Janet Coontz Glenwood Elementary Teresa Murray Garfield Elementary	Miami Sally Fenska Miami High	Owasso Candace Roberts Larkin Bailey Elementary	Seminole Ella Cheatwood Northwood Elementary	Yukon Kandy Kay Myers Skyview Elementary
Grove Jamie Dawn Adams Grove Elementary	Midwest City-Del City Julie Guild Carl Albert Junior High Tamara Kaye Woodring Highland Park Elementary	Piedmont John Jones Piedmont High	Shawnee Melissa Heidrich Wilson Early Childhood Carolyn Shirley Shawnee High	
Hartshorne Carolyn Phillips Hartshorne High	Moore Shelly Albright Houchin Elementary Connye Le Griffin Moore High Thomas Kilbourn Westmoore High Jennifer Mankins Southgate Rippetoe Elementary Patricia Ann Miner Central Elementary		Sperry Elizabeth Mosier Sperry Elementary	
	Morris Becky Alexander Morris Elementary		Stillwater Melanie Gay Berrigan Sangre Ridge Elementary Angela Cyr Westwood Elementary Diane Fix Richmond Elementary Laura Gordon Richmond Elementary Shelley Mitchell Stillwater High Heather Newman Skyline Elementary Jamie Pratz Richmond Elementary Darbi Sefcik Will Rogers Elementary	

To see a complete list of Oklahoma's NBCT Class of 2003, for more information on national certification, or to search other states' list of successful candidates, visit the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Web site at www.nbpts.org/nbct/directory.cfm.

Call your regional OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist to find out how your Association can help you become nationally certified.

Fully Paid Insurance OEA Legislative Agenda

Continued from page 1

The more he thought about his health insurance plight, the angrier he became.

That leaves little money for other financial responsibilities, which include 19-year-old twins who attend college, a 15-year-old son at PC North, and Pecore's wife.

Ultimately, Pecore made the gut-wrenching decision to cancel his wife's health insurance so the family could afford to insure the children.

"So basically, it's 'Honey, I love you, but I can't afford to insure you,'" Pecore said.

Thousands of Oklahoma educators face a similar predicament. That is precisely why fully-paid, individual health insurance relief is the Oklahoma Education Association's top 2004 legislative priority.

Two years ago, the Oklahoma Legislature passed a law providing for fully paid individual health insurance for educators. The first phase of that law was implemented, but the second was derailed by the state's budget crisis.

Meanwhile, HealthChoice health insurance rates are scheduled to rise about 10 percent in January.

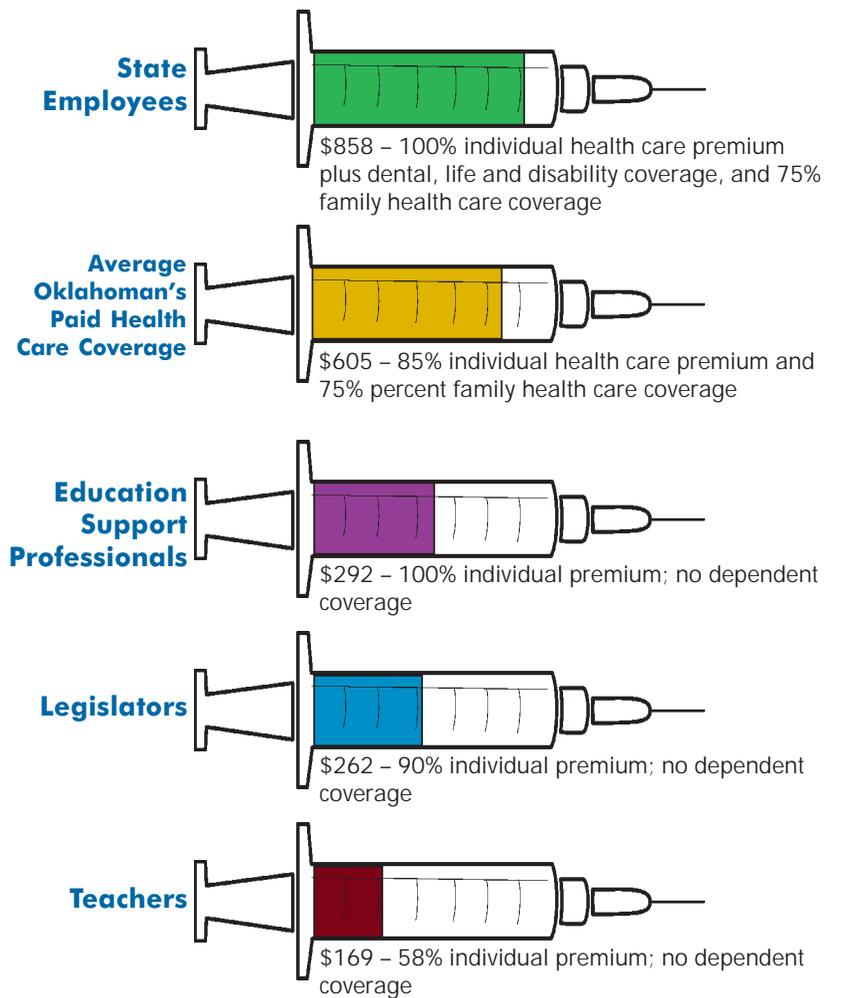
"It's time for legislators to fulfill the promise of HB 1968," said OEA President Roy Bishop. "We don't want to listen to any more excuses."

Meanwhile, an angry Pecore has been writing letters to the governor, legislative leaders and media. The media responded by putting Pecore on television and local newspapers have printed his letter as an op-ed column. Additionally, Pecore began corresponding with Legislative leadership regarding the issue.

Pecore's story has come to symbolize the health insurance woes of countless Oklahoma teachers. Answers haven't come yet, but Pecore knows that results don't always come quickly in politics. Even so, he intends to continue his crusade because he believes persistence pays.

"I'm going to keep after it," Pecore said. "We should speak out, make ourselves heard. We're in a republic – a democracy. That's what makes this

Employer Paid Insurance Benefits



Sources – Oklahoma State Education and Employee Group Insurance Board and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

nation great.

"Don't be afraid to stand up and do the right thing. You've got to be proac-

tive to make something happen. We

only have ourselves to blame if we follow along like sheep."

Dr. Seuss Would be Proud

By Bruce Treadaway

Dr. Seuss would be proud.

OEA's recently completed Read Across America "Fall Challenge" surpassed all expectations when students at 32 central Oklahoma elementary schools read a grand total of 121,558 books.

The six-week event was sponsored by Saturn/UAW of Oklahoma City and Staples stores throughout Oklahoma. Students at 11 Edmond elementary schools read 63,900 books. Moore students at 14 elementary schools read 50,775 books, and Midwest City-Del City students at seven schools read 6,883 books.

Each student who participated agreed to read at least 10 books each and, obviously, many students went

way beyond. The participating schools identified 297 "top readers" and they are invited to the governor's mansion on March 2 for Dr. Seuss' 100th birthday party.

Also, three students' names were drawn for cash prizes. The winners were Austin Holford, Sky Ranch in Moore, \$100; Noelle Tamez, Northmoor in Moore, \$50; and Kelly Ledbetter, Del City Elementary, \$25. In addition, their respective schools received a matching cash gift from Saturn. All schools participating received a case of copy paper from Staples.

OEA members who participated in the reading challenge had their names placed in a cash drawing. The winning teachers were Denise Cox, Northmoor Elementary in Moore, \$100; Margene



Margene Nelson (center), a teacher at John Ross Elementary in Edmond, accepts her \$50 award in the Read Across America Fall Challenge from Oneida Lee (left), of the 63rd and May Staples store in Oklahoma City; Bob Grant (second from left), Saturn of Oklahoma City, and Joe Lada, Staples district manager. Joining Margene is Edmond ACT president Martha Wissler (right).

Nelson, John Ross Elementary in Edmond, \$50; and Rhonda Smart, Sky Ranch Elementary in Moore, \$25.

"It is incredible to think how many books these kids read in just a six

week period," said Becky Felts, OEA vice president. "We thank Saturn and Staples for making this event special and we look forward to working with them to expand the event next year."

Former FMCS Director Richard Barnes Returns as Keynote Speaker

Richard Barnes, former director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, returns this year to headline the OEA Advocacy Conference, Jan. 23-24 at the Waterford Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City.

Barnes will present "Pronouns of Collective Bargaining" during his keynote speech at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 24. He is the executive director of the WJ Usery Center for the Workplace at Georgia State University.

The Conference will also offer a varied slate of breakout sessions

Registration is \$25 for certified employees and \$10 for support professionals, with the third person from the

same local Association attending free. Registrations are due by Jan. 16 by completing form on this page and mailing it to Melanie Engh at OEA Headquarters, or by completing registration online at www.okea.org/AdvocacyConference.

Lodging reservations are the responsibility of the conferee. The Waterford is offering a special rate of \$69 single or double occupancy for this conference. Reservations must be made by Jan. 12 by calling 800/992-2009 or 405/848-4782.

For more information, call Engh at 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785 or by e-mail at mengh@okea.org.



Rick Haynes, co-owner of Johnnie's Charcoal Broiler Restaurants, makes a check presentation to OEA President Roy Bishop (second from right); Vice President Becky Felts (right) and Executive Director David DuVall (left). OEA's partnership with Johnnie's will benefit the OEA Foundation.

Johnnie's and OEA a Natural Fit

A new relationship with Johnnie's Charcoal Broiler restaurants is benefiting the OEA Foundation and satisfying the cravings of OEA members for a good cheeseburger.

On the third Tuesday of each month, Johnnie's restaurants will donate a portion of their proceeds to the OEA Foundation.

Rick Haynes, co-owner of Johnnie's, was so excited about the new partnership he made a \$500 donation to the Foundation prior to the first Association day at his restaurants.

"This partnership is such a natural for us," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "Rick and his brother David are successful products of public education, their children go to public schools, and they believe in what our schools stand for."

OEA members and their families are encouraged to visit a Johnnie's every day, but especially on the third Tuesday of each month. After placing an order, tell the Johnnie's employee you are an OEA member and your bill will count toward OEA's total.

OEA Advocacy Conference

January 23-24, Waterford Marriott Hotel
6300 Waterford Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK
(East of Pennsylvania Ave. and South of 63rd Street)

Conference Agenda

Friday, Jan. 23

Registration – 6:30 p.m.

Opening Session – 7:30 p.m.

Featuring

President Roy Bishop, Vice President Becky Felts
and Executive Director David DuVall

Saturday, Jan. 24

Registration and Continental Breakfast – 8 a.m.

Keynote Session – 9 a.m.

Featuring Richard Barnes, Executive Director,
W.J. Usery Center for the Workplace,
Georgia State University

Saturday Workshops / Sessions
at 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2:30 p.m.

Registration Form

Name _____

Home Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ School Phone () _____

Home E-mail address _____

Local Association _____

OEA Region _____

Registrations are due by Friday, Jan. 16, 2004

Register online at www.okea.org/AdvocacyConference, or complete this form and mail it to Advocacy Conference, c/o Melanie Engh, Oklahoma Education Association, PO Box 18485, Oklahoma City, OK, 73154. Cost is \$25 per person for certified employees, \$10 per person for support professionals, with the third person from the same local attending free. Registration includes continental breakfast and lunch on Saturday, Jan. 24.

Lodging

Conference participants are expected to make their own lodging reservations directly with the Waterford Hotel at a special rate of \$69, single or double occupancy, by calling 800/992-2009 or 405/848-4782.

The special rate is good only for reservations made prior to Jan. 12. Space is limited, so call today.

For more information about the OEA Advocacy Conference, contact Melanie Engh at OEA Headquarters, 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785, or mengh@okea.org.



OPTION E

EARLY CHILDHOOD (Grades PK-3) AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (Grades 1-8)

Oklahoma's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE)

(For teachers who have not passed an Early Childhood or Elementary Subject Area Test)

100 Points = Highly Qualified

November 20, 2003

Name: _____ Teacher Number: _____ Subject Area: (circle one) Early Childhood Elementary Education

START National Board Certification	HOUSSE STARTS HERE (Column 1) Coursework in the Core Academic Subject Area for Early Childhood and Elementary Teachers on Official Transcript	AND/OR	(Column 2) Years of Satisfactory Teaching Experience in an Accredited School	AND/OR	(Column 3) Service in the Content (Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education) Area	AND/OR	(Column 4) Awards, Presentations, and Publications in Content (Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education) Area	AND/OR	(Column 5) Legislative Authorized Academic Institute* or Professional Development	AND/OR	(Column 6) Achievement of Students Taught (Optional)
		<p>IF NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED YOU ARE HIGHLY QUALIFIED STOP HERE</p> <p>100 Points</p>	<p>Semester hours of coursework with a grade of "C" or better in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Reading/Language Arts Mathematics Science Foreign Language Social Studies Art Music <p>An EDUC prefix is not acceptable except for reading hours.</p> <p>Credits earned using the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) are acceptable provided they are reflected on the official transcript.</p> <p>Also</p> <p>Semester hours of content coursework taught in an institution of higher education are acceptable</p>	AND/OR	<p>Must be employed as a full-time teacher, teaching the core academic subjects any portion of the day</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <p>A. State-mandated professional development, 1981</p> <p>B. State-mandated uniform teacher evaluation system, 1986</p> <p>C. State-implemented PASS objectives, 1993</p>	AND/OR	<p>Served as a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department chair/team leader Mentor teacher Cooperating teacher for intern/student teacher Academic club sponsor Academic judge Membership in a regional, state, or national professional content organization Officer in a regional, state, or national professional content organization Serve on a local, state, or national committee to develop, select, evaluate, or validate content standards, curriculum, or assessments Other (provide documentation) 	AND/OR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District teacher of the year State teacher of the year finalist State teacher of the year Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award Present academic content at local, state, regional or national professional meetings Published a content article in regional, state, or national journal Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Outstanding Educator Awards from content professional organizations 	AND/OR	<p>Must be content-specific to core academic subject area (one point per clock hour)</p> <p>A. Institute for special early childhood kindergarten certification* - Special certificate required for documentation</p> <p>B. Professional development related to <i>Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)</i> - 1993</p>
	<p>• 4 points per semester hour earned or taught</p> <p>~ ~ ~</p> <p>If Column 1 is equal to or greater than 100 points, you are Highly Qualified. STOP HERE</p>		<p>A. Fall 1981 - Spring 1986 1 point per year</p> <p>B. Fall 1986 - Spring 1993 2 points per year</p> <p>C. Fall 1993 - Spring 2003 3 points per year</p> <p>Maximum 49 points.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 points maximum per documentation of any one item. 20 points maximum per documentation for more than one item <p>Maximum 20 points.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 points maximum per documentation of any one item. 20 points maximum per documentation for more than one item <p>Maximum 20 points.</p>		<p>A. 30 points</p> <p>B. 1 point per professional development clock hour</p> <p>Maximum 30 points.</p>		<p>Institute: _____</p> <p>Prof. Dev. Hours: _____</p> <p>TOTAL Points: _____</p>
	# Hours: _____ X 4 = _____		# Years Experience: A. _____ B. _____ C. _____		TOTAL Points: _____		TOTAL Points: _____		TOTAL Points: _____		TOTAL Points: _____

HOUSSE options provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Education to help schools comply with the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind.

100 Points = Highly Qualified
Total of columns 1-6: _____

Oklahoma's Passes Final

By Dou

The State Board of Education completed con dated HOUSSE at its November meeting, giving use to meet highly qualified requirements of the (ESEA).

Now that the HOUSSE (High Objective Uni approved, teachers and administrators can dete who has work to complete. All teachers must be according to ESEA (aka President Bush's No C

OEA leadership worked closely with the Stat HOUSSE that gives teachers credit for their ex of providing a quality teacher in the classroom.

"We're very satisfied with how the criteria fi vice president. "Teachers who are nationally ce matically be considered highly qualified, and w clude.

"I really think most teachers who aren't autor through the HOUSSE checklist and find more t

Felts added that, for now, special education l

"Special ed is not listed as a core academic s meet the requirements," she said. "The State D guidance from the U.S. Department of Educatio Disabilities Education Act.)"

It is expected that Congress will not reauthor new guidelines before 2005.

If a teacher does not meet highly qualified st meet the requirements of a state's HOUSSE. In late 100 points by assigning a prescribed numbe most teachers will collect most if not all of their courses taken in college and for years of experi

Building principals will be responsible for cor through the HOUSSE. Rules for completing an Department of Education to school districts in J

You Are Highly C

- You have a bachelor's degree and a licer
 - You meet Options A, D or E if you are an
- Options A, B, C, D or E if you are a middle s
- Option A:** Passed a state certification tes
- Option B:** Completed an undergraduate a
- an undergraduate academic major (24 semes
- subject taught as documented by the teacher
- Option C:** Completed a graduate degree i
- Option D:** Holds certification though Nat
- dards in subject taught; or
- Option E:** Demonstrated competency in (see examples on these two pages).

HOUSSE Inspection

g Folks
 Instruction of its version of the federally man-
 g official approval to the checklist teachers will
 e Elementary and Secondary Education Act
 form State Standard of Evaluation) has been
 rmine who already meets the standards and
 considered "highly qualified" by June 2006,
 Child Left Behind).

te Department of Education to build a
 experience over the years and still meets the goal

anally came together," said Becky Felts, OEA
 rtified in the subject area they teach will auto-
 e thought that was a very important factor to in-

matically highly qualified will be able to work
 han enough points to meet the standards."

has been excluded from the HOUSSE.

subject. So, special ed teachers won't have to
 epartment and OEA hope to get additional
 on when it reauthorizes IDEA (Individuals with

ize IDEA this session, which would mean no

standards as outlined in ESEA, he or she must

n Oklahoma's HOUSSE, teachers must tabu-

r of points in six different categories. Felts said

points through credit for subject matter

ence.

confirming that a teacher is highly qualified

d reporting the results will be sent by the State

anuary.

Qualified If . . .

se/certificate in the subject(s) taught; and

n early childhood or elementary teacher, or

school or secondary teacher.

t in level/subject matter; or

ademic major **or** coursework equivalent to

ter hours of subject-specific coursework) in

's official transcript; or

n subject taught; or

ional Board of Professional Teaching Stan-

each subject taught based on a HOUSSE



OPTION E

MIDDLE (Grades 6, 7, & 8) AND SECONDARY LEVEL (Grades 9-12)

100 Points = Highly Qualified

November 20, 2003

Oklahoma's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) Checklist for Demonstrating Subject Competency

To be completed for each core academic subject area taught.

(English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, the arts [art and/or music], history, and geography)

Name: _____

Teacher Number: _____

Core Academic Subject Area: _____

START National Board Certified	HOUSSE STARTS HERE	(Column 1)	(Column 2)	(Column 3)	(Column 4)	(Column 5)	(Column 6)
		Coursework in the Core Academic Subject Area	Years of Satisfactory Teaching Experience in an Accredited School	Service in the Core Academic Subject Area	Awards, Presentations, and Publications in Academic Content Area	Legislative Authorized Academic Institutes* or Professional Development	Achievement of Students Taught (Optional)
IF NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED	YOU ARE HIGHLY QUALIFIED	Must be content-specific to core academic subject area	Must be employed as a full-time teacher, teaching the core academic subjects any portion of the day	Must be content-specific to core academic subject area	Must be content-specific to core academic subject area	Must be content-specific to core academic subject area (one point per clock hour)	Must be content-specific to core academic subject area
		Semester hours of content coursework with a grade of "C" or better. An EDUC prefix is not acceptable except for reading hours. or Credits earned using the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) are acceptable provided they are reflected on the official transcript. Semester hours of content coursework taught in an institution of higher education are acceptable	Rationale: A. State-mandated professional development, 1981 B. State-mandated uniform teacher evaluation system, 1986 C. State PASS objectives, 1993	Served as a: - Department chair/team leader - Mentor teacher - Cooperating teacher for intern/student teacher - Academic club sponsor - Academic judge - Membership in a regional, state, or national professional content organization - Officer in a regional, state, or national professional content organization - Serve on a local, state, or national committee to develop, select, evaluate, or validate content standards, curriculum, or assessments - Other (Provide documentation)	- District teacher of the year - State teacher of the year finalist - State teacher of the year - Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award - Present academic content at local, state, regional or national professional meetings - Published a content article in regional, state, or national journal - Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching - Outstanding Educator Awards from content professional organizations	- Professional Development Institutes - Math = 30 points* - Professional Development Institutes - Science = 30 points* Professional development 1 point per clock hour - Algebra for All (College Board model) - Pre AP/AP training in subject area or - Professional development related to Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) - 1993	- First, second, or third place in student academic competition such as collegiate interscholastic meet - Documented increase in student test scores
STOP HERE	100 Points	4 points per semester hour earned or taught	A. Fall 1981 - Spring 1986 1 point per year B. Fall 1986 - Spring 1993 2 points per year C. Fall 1993 - Spring 2003 3 points per year Maximum 49 points.	10 points maximum per documentation of any one item. 20 points maximum per documentation for more than one item	10 points maximum per documentation of any one item. 20 points maximum per documentation for more than one item	10 points maximum per documentation of any one item. 20 points maximum per documentation for more than one item	10 points maximum per documentation of any one item. 20 points maximum per documentation for more than one item
		# Hours: _____ X 4 = _____ TOTAL Points: _____	# Years Experience: A. B. C. TOTAL Points: _____	Maximum 20 points. TOTAL Points: _____	Maximum 20 points. TOTAL Points: _____	Maximum 30 points. Institutes: Prof. Dev. Hours: _____ TOTAL Points: _____	Maximum 30 points. TOTAL Points: _____

HOUSSE options provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Education to help schools comply with the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind.

100 Points = Highly Qualified
 Total of columns 1-6: _____

Guitar Prodigy Brings The Blues Alive

By Doug Folks

Students in Edmond and Putnam City schools received a rare treat in mid-October when guitar wizard Joe Bonamassa gave musical history lessons as part of the Blues in the Schools program.

While most, if not all, of the students and teachers attending Bonamassa's presentations may have never heard of him, they all left the one-hour sessions more tuned into the history of American music. They also walked out in awe of one of the most talented musicians they had ever seen play live.

If ever there was someone born to play the blues, perhaps it was Joe Bonamassa. Born on what would have been legendary bluesman Robert Johnson's 66th birthday, Bonamassa started playing guitar at 4 years old and opened for B.B. King — another blues legend — at age 12. Now 26, he is considered a rising star and someone destined for fame.

He has been named one of Guitar One's "New Guitar Heroes," and has played on the same shows as rockers Peter Frampton, Bad Company, George Thoroughgood, and country star Travis Tritt. Bonamassa's third

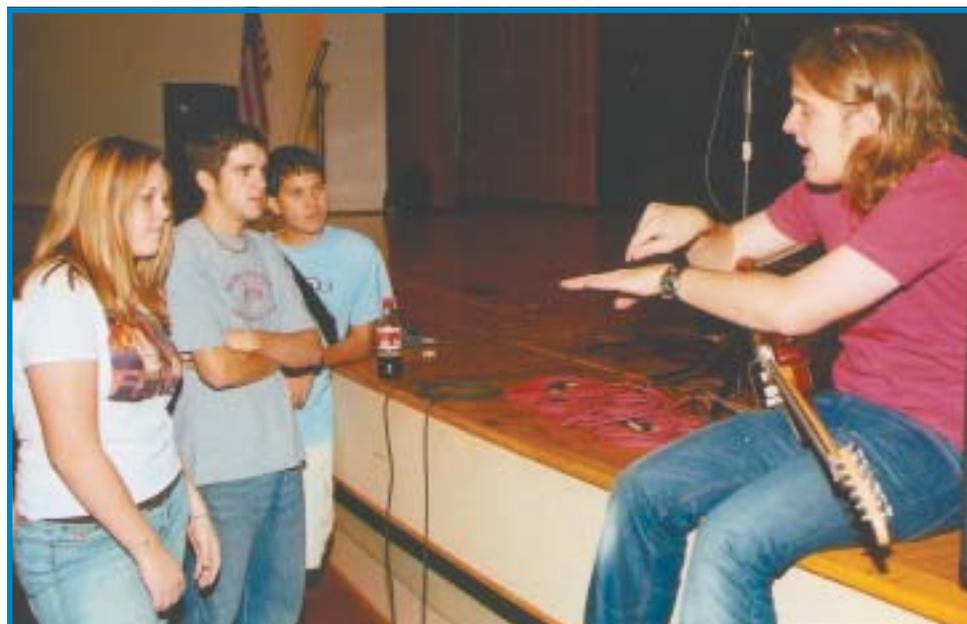
solo CD, "Blues Deluxe," is a tribute to the blues masters who have inspired him and is fitting release in 2003, which has been designated as the Year of the Blues.

Blues in the Schools is a program of the National Blues Foundation. Locally, the program was sponsored by the Route 66 Blues Project, which is a labor-of-love effort of brothers Craig and Jim Moody. Craig is a 6th grade geography and science teacher at Edmond's Summit Middle School; Jim is a remodeling contractor. Both have a deep affection for the blues.

"I've always loved the blues since seeing B.B. King on the Johnny Carson show when I was kid," Craig Moody said. He and Jim are co-founders of the Route 66 Blues Project.

Bonamassa gave his multimedia presentation on the history of the blues and played guitar at Putnam City High School and Edmond's Summit Middle School, North High School and Santa Fe High School. His message was simple and clear.

"I tell the kids to feel free to experiment with all kinds of music — blues, jazz, bluegrass," Bonamassa said. "If



Talking the Blues

Joe Bonamassa, seen above with students at Putnam City High School and making a point below at Edmond Summit Middle School, is telling students about the history of blues throughout the country. The 26-year-old musician began playing guitar at age 5 and opened for blues legend B.B. King at age 12.

you love it, play it ... I tell them it's OK to like Eminem, but it's also OK to like the blues."

Craig Moody said the aim of the Route 66 Blues Project is to expose students to the blues so that they have an understanding of music other than pop, rap or heavy metal.

"Our focus is bringing it down to

kids where they can hear the music in a friendly environment," Craig said, adding that most Route 66 Blues Project events happen away from bars.

For information on Blues in the Schools and the Route 66 Blues Project, visit www.blues.org and www.bluesproject.org, respectively.



2002-03 OEA Audit Report

The financial statements of the Oklahoma Education Association for fiscal year ended August 31, 2003, were audited by Luton and Co. An unqualified opinion was issued by the accounting firm stating that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the OEA. A brief summary of the 2002-03 financial reports follows:

CURRENT ASSETS	\$2,294,173
OTHER ASSETS	3,100
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,297,273
CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 736,106
LONG-TERM OBLIGATIONS	723,196
NET ASSETS:	
UNRESTRICTED	
Undesignated	498,237
Designated for building and related expenses	339,734
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$2,297,273
REVENUE:	
MEMBERSHIPS	\$5,031,428
NEA SUPPORT	1,068,976
OTHER	306,016
TOTAL REVENUE	6,406,420
EXPENSES	6,221,790
Transfers for Fixed Assets	145,905
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$38,725

From Your Counsel

Common Questions About Automobile Accidents

By Joe E. White Jr.
The White Law Firm

An automobile collision is usually a very traumatic experience causing many fears and concerns. Those involved usually suffer damage to their automobile and sometimes personal injuries. Compound having your automobile damaged and sustaining personal injuries along with the related medical expenses and missed work, and most people will naturally feel overwhelmed.

As the provider law firm for the OEA Personal Legal Services Program (PLSP), the White Law Firm would like to provide some simple answers to some common questions that arise when such accidents occur:

Q: Should I give a statement to the other driver's insurance adjuster?

A: Be very careful with any state-

ment you make before speaking to an attorney. Insurance adjusters are trained to gather all information that helps their cases. You may give a statement that could later hurt you in resolving your case. Additionally, never sign anything before having an attorney review it first.

Q: What are the damages that I can expect to recover in a typical automobile collision?

A: You are entitled to recover property damage, past and future medical bills, lost wages, lost earning capacity, pain and suffering, and damages for any permanent body impairment.

Q: What happens if both myself and the other driver are at fault?

A: In Oklahoma, each driver is responsible for his/her own fault in causing an accident. In order for you to

recover your damages, you must not be greater than 50 percent at fault. For example, if you were found to be 49 percent at fault, you would be entitled to 51 percent recovery of your damages. However, if you were found to be 51 percent at fault, you would collect nothing and could now be sued by the other driver. This is why it is very important to have the White Law Firm help with your case early on to guard against what could be a very unhappy outcome.

Q: What is the time period in which a case relating to an automobile collision must be filed in court?

A: Most personal injury cases in Oklahoma must be filed within two years from the date of the loss. This statute of limitations period varies with different kinds of cases and in different states. If the time period has passed before you have either settled your case or filed suit, you will most likely be barred from any recovery. For this reason, it is wise to immediately contact an attorney to determine the particular statute of limitation in your case.

Q: Do attorneys require payment when I first visit them regarding an automobile collision case?

A: Typically, an attorney does not require any advance payment for an initial consultation regarding your automobile collision case, or any other case. We provide free evaluation of all types of cases for all OEA members and their family members under PLSP.

Q: What fee will an attorney charge me if they handle my case?

A: Most firms handling personal injury cases do not charge an hourly fee. Instead, firms usually charge a contingency fee, which is usually 30 percent to 40 percent of your gross financial



Joe E. White, Jr.

recovery, computed before deduction for costs. However, OEA members and their qualified family members under PLSP receive the benefit of a discounted contingency fee starting as low as 25 percent. This can amount to several thousand dollars in savings.

In sum, if you or a loved one has been involved in an automobile collision, it is very important that you contact an attorney immediately.

Insurance companies handle automobile collision cases everyday. They train their claims adjusters to ask the right questions and to identify information necessary to help reduce the claims they pay out to victims.

Most people are unfamiliar with the intricacies of dealing with an insurance adjuster and will be at a substantial disadvantage. No matter how friendly or helpful the claims adjuster may appear, his/her goal is to settle the claim for the least amount possible. This automatically places you in an adversarial position leaving you legally vulnerable to costly mistakes.

The White Law Firm has handled hundreds of personal injury cases and understands how insurance companies and their adjusters operate. Our mission is to help people in need by providing outstanding legal representation to prevent good people from being victimized with high-pressure tactics used by insurance companies.

With PLSP, we stand ready, willing, and able to protect OEA members and their families during a time of need.

Minority Leadership Conference

January 15-16, 2004

Westin Hotel, Downtown Oklahoma City

Registration is \$85 per person and space is limited.

Pre-registration is required through Robin Jones
at NEA Human and Civil Rights via fax
at 202/822-7578 or e-mail at rjones@nea.org.

Western Region Leadership Conference

January 16-18, 2004

Westin Hotel, Downtown Oklahoma City

\$125 if postmarked before December 19

\$150 if postmarked after December 19

Registration forms and information available at:
www.okea.org/Governance/westernstates.htm
or contact Janice Dealy at jdealy@okea.org,
or call 800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

You must register for the Minority Leadership
and Western Regional Leadership Conferences separately.

Media Awards to Become More Prestigious

Changes to the criteria of the Marshall Gregory media awards program will make those honors more prestigious, OEA leadership has announced.

Nominations for the Marshall Gregory Awards, and for all Association awards, must be sent to OEA headquarters and postmarked no later than January 31. The awards will be pre-

sented at the OEA Awards Banquet on April 23 during Delegate Assembly weekend.

Beginning immediately, the OEA will present only one award of excellence in each of the Marshall Gregory categories, said Roy Bishop, OEA president. Student entries will be eligible for only one award as well.

"The OEA itself, and public educa-

tion in general, receives a lot of truly excellent coverage by reporters and media outlets around the state," Bishop said. "By making this change, we'll make the Marshall Gregory Awards very special. Winning one will be very prestigious.

The awards, named for a former OEA communications director, are given to professional and high school

journalists for outstanding coverage of public education and education issues. Categories include news stories, opinion articles, feature stories and photography for single event and year-round coverage for reporters and editors at newspapers, radio stations and television stations. For complete nomination criteria and nomination forms, visit www.okea.org/Awards.

Honoring Those Who Promote Public Education

OEA Board of Directors Awards

Nominations for these awards must come from a current member of the OEA Board of Directors.

OEA Friend of Education
OEA's highest award, the Friend of Education honors a person who has made significant contributions to the betterment of public education. Past winners have included Frosty Troy, Henry Zarrow, and Henry Bellmon, to name just three.

Claude A. Dyer Memorial
Given to an Oklahoma educator who has worked to bring about legislative action for equitable salaries and desirable working conditions, and has rendered leadership and direction in efforts to protect and advance the civil and human rights and responsibilities of educators.

Political Activist
Given to an individual or organization who exhibits a willingness and determination to promote the goals of the OEA through activities in the political arena.

OEA Outstanding Legislator
Presented to legislators for outstanding support of public education and education employees.

Stan R. Bryant Political Action
Given to the OEA Zone that had the largest per member contribution level for OEA-PAC in the previous year.

Human and Civil Rights Awards

Kate Frank Award
Presented to the OEA member and/or local Association rendering outstanding and significant service to advancing the cause of member welfare, rights and professionalism.

Tuskahoma Brown Miller
Presented to a business or group which has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

F. D. Moon Educational
Presented to the person who has contributed significantly to the advancement of education for students.

Glenn Snider Human Relations
Presented to the school district, individual or organization, best exemplifying the practice of effective human relations and concerns for human rights.

Instructional Excellence Education
Teachers Teaching Teachers and Teachers Teaching Students
To recognize individual OEA members for outstanding contributions in instructional excellence, both with students and colleagues. The awards acknowledge the fact that the quality of education in this country can rise no higher than the quality of teaching.

OEA Education Support Professional
Honoring an individual ESP member whose activities reflect the contributions of educational support professional to public education.

Advocate For Academic Freedom
Honors a person or organization whose contribution to the safeguarding of academic freedom has had a significant impact on the public schools in Oklahoma and the nation.

OEA Collective Bargaining
Presented to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement of education through the collective bargaining process.

Marshall Gregory
Recognizing Oklahoma reporters and broadcasters and their newspapers, radio and television stations for significant efforts to provide continuing and accurate coverage of the public schools, current education issues and the OEA. Categories for professionals and for high school journalists are offered.

Golden Apple Awards
Recognizing OEA local Associations for their consistent efforts to provide quality communications to all of their audiences, including members and

other education personnel, local school administration, parents, and the community in general.

Five Star Local Awards
The OEA 5 star local program is intended to strengthen local association programs and to recognize locals who meet the criteria in each program area. Application deadline for recognition at Delegate Assembly will be April 1, 2004. Application deadline for recognition at Summer Leadership Conference will be July 1, 2004. Five Star Local nomination forms can be found at www.okea.org/5StarLocal.



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You Decide

A monthly column of member opinion.

This issue's question:
"Which is a better instructional method: student centered or teacher directed?"

Quality Teaching Begins With the Student in Mind

By Jennifer Evers

Lincoln Elementary, Lawton

In regard to everything I was taught during my master's program and in respect to my five years of teaching experience, I have learned that quality instruction planning begins with the learner in mind.

The glory days of chalk and talk and sages on stages have proven tiresome and have been the root of learner burnout for years. Teacher directed instruction focuses entirely too much on the teacher talking and pushing his/her agenda.

Teaching is supposed to be about creating opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking and facilitat-

ing learning experiences with guidance and materials. How can kids think critically when teachers are talking all the time?

Students should always have a voice in the development and direction of their learning. It's not just a constructivist approach, it's a democratic approach and allowing students to take charge of their learning and make some decisions empowers them as learners. We cannot create effective decision makers when we as teachers consistently continue to make all of the decisions for them!

It's simple to try; just ask the students about their interests, take a few of those interests and chart out a



Jennifer Evers

those areas of interest through inquiry, discussion, and active participation. As-

course of discovery together. Create opportunities for students to build their knowl-

edge in those areas of interest through inquiry, discussion, and active participation. Assess what the students have learned through portfolios, projects, and presentations. Allow students to critique their own progress by standing back and allowing them to think critically about themselves. These higher order thinking skills not only fall in line with Oklahoma PASS guidelines, but also represent the best of Bloom's Taxonomy. Student centered learning is the better instructional approach.

You Have to Use Both Methods in the Class

By Jenny Prather

Lakehoma Elementary, Mustang

I do not believe either method is better – student-centered or teacher di-



Jenny Prather

rected. An effective teacher must use both methods in a classroom. As a first grade teacher, I allow my stu-

dents the freedom to help direct our units. I still "direct" or choose the major objectives we will cover. However, the students may expand or completely change the direction of our unit. As we build our classroom community, they begin to assume the responsibility of setting rules and reinforcing positive behavior among themselves. This would not happen if they didn't feel some ownership in our classroom. This is reinforced each day with a morning meeting where we do regular calendar activities, but also expands that time to include a discussion of any concerns they may have with a number of

things ranging from problems on recess to questions about books they have read or things they just want to know.

I use this time to help them discover ways that they can solve the particular issue. It may mean going to the media center to further research something, using the Internet to look up a question brought up earlier, or having a class meeting to get feedback from their peers.

The children never cease to amaze me with questions, ideas and solutions to problems. I allow them the freedom to share with fellow classmates in a risk-free environment. They are told from day one that everyone makes mistakes, especially the teacher, so it isn't any big deal if mistakes happen. They know that no one is going to laugh at their ideas so they are incredibly open during morning meeting.

As a teacher, I believe my role is not to direct their every move, but to guide them to become productive citizens who are able to make wise choices and take responsibility for their actions.



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	\$45.00/700 Minutes 700 Anytime + Unlimited Nights and Weekends, Add 2nd line for \$20	
	\$58.50/1100 Minutes 1100 Anytime + Unlimited Nights & Weekends, Add 2nd line for \$20	
	\$90.00/2000 Minutes 2000 Anytime + Unlimited Nights and Weekends, Add 2nd line for \$20 and Unlimited Vision (Data)	

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Grant Application Deadlines Approaching

NFIE

The NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) is taking applications for three different grants.

NFIE “**Innovation**” and “**Learning & Leadership**” grant deadlines are Feb. 1. Winners will be announced by June 15.

Innovation Grants fund break-the-mold innovations that significantly improve achievement for underserved learners.

Learning and Leadership Grants provide opportunities to engage in high-quality professional development and lead colleagues in professional growth. These grants are available for all subjects, including the arts, literacy, science and technology.

For the second year in a row, NFIE is offering fine arts grants to NEA members. Available to secondary

(grades 6-12) school art specialists through local NEA affiliates, the grants allow fine arts educators to create and implement programs that promote learning among students at risk of school failure. The deadline is Feb. 2. For more information on eligibility and grant guidelines, visit www.nfie.org/programs/finearts.htm.

All members who are practicing U.S. public school teachers in grades K-12 or education support professionals are eligible for these grants of up to \$5,000.

Visit www.nfie.org for complete program details, guidelines, examples of funded projects, and applications; or call NFIE at 202/822-7840.

Colonial Williamsburg

Applications are now available for fifth-grade Oklahoma public school

teachers interested in attending the **2004 Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute** June 15-22 in the restored capital city of 18th-century Virginia.

Applications are available on the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Web site at www.ofe.org. Completed applications must be postmarked by Feb. 27.

Fellowship recipients will receive all-expense paid trips to Williamsburg, and \$100 for classroom materials.

For more information, contact the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence at 405/236-0006.

HP Technology For Teaching Grants

This just-launched grant initiative aims to bolster the innovative and ef-

fective integration of technology in K-16 education settings.

Awards will be made to those K-12 schools using a collaborative, team-based approach to implementing technology integration projects. The focus of the project must be on using technology to teach, rather than teaching students to use technology.

Online applications will be accepted from Jan. 15 to March 1, 2004.

HP has set aside \$4.5 million for 150 awards to teams of five teachers from K-12 public schools. The award package, valued at some \$35,000 each, includes five Tablet PCs, five multimedia projectors, free help desk support for one year, a \$500 stipend per teacher and customized professional development.

For applications and other information, visit www.hp.com/go/hpteach.



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Executive board members for the newly formed Blanchard Association of Support Employees (BASE) are (from left) Virginia Morton, treasurer; Bill "Butch" Brooks, vice president; Kitty Knox, secretary; Anthony Cottle, president; and Tracy Iness, at-large.

Blanchard Support Employees Form New Local

A little communication can be the spark for a number of great things. In Blanchard, the support professionals didn't realize they could be OEA members until Blanchard ACT President Diane Walden started a discussion with some of the ESPs.

The result was a ground swell of interest and a new local association was formed.

In late October, The Blanchard Association of Support Employees (BASE) voted to affiliate with the OEA and NEA, adopted a constitution, and elected officers. By mid-November, the group had 30 members among the 48 ESPs employed in Blanchard.

BASE officers set three goals for

the organization:

1. Recruit 70 percent of Blanchard ESPs into the organization;
2. Communicate regularly with members, and;
3. Explore the possibilities of becoming the recognized bargaining agent and negotiating a contract.

The new local plans to hold monthly, all-member meetings at least through this school year to become familiar with OEA benefits and the role BASE should play in the district and with its members. OEA staff will provide trainings at these meetings on topics such as leadership, True Colors and bargaining.

New Member Column Coming

A new member-written column – "Benefits in Action" – will debut in the February issue of *The Education Focus*.

Every school in Oklahoma has someone with a story to tell about how belonging to OEA has helped them through a professional or personal crisis. We invite education employees from across the state to share stories of how they have benefited from being a member of OEA/NEA. These stories can be from the use of NEA

Member Benefits programs, or simply from having an OEA staff person helping with a problem.

Stories can be from any time during your membership with the OEA. Participants who have their stories published will receive a \$25 gift certificate.

Tell us your story so others can see how belonging to the OEA has positively affected your life.

Columns can be from 200-300 words long. E-mail your stories to Patti Razien at prazien@okea.org.