

# OEA

An affiliate of the  
National Education Association

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**The Education Focus**  
OEA's all-member publication

# The Education Focus

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association

April 2004



Pre-kindergarten students from Moyers re-enact Dr. Seuss's "The Foot Book" as part of OEA's Catavan visit to celebrate Read Across America. Moyers was one of a dozen stops by the South Catavan, which helped students celebrate what would have been Dr. Seuss's 100th birthday.

## Now That's a Party!

Q – How do you celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of America's most beloved children's authors?

A – You get as many kids into the act as possible.

And that's just what the Oklahoma Education Association did to celebrate Read Across America (RAA) for 2004. OEA staff, dressed as characters from Seuss's books and traveling in North and South "Catavans," performed in nearly 20 school districts. Add in a few shopping malls, a museum and even the Governor's Mansion, and more than 40,000 children, parents, teachers, support professionals and administrators took part in the biggest birthday bash ever.

That doesn't take into account schools that celebrated reading in their

own ways or the visits OEA staff made outside of the official week of celebration.

"Read Across America is one of the most rewarding activities we take part in at the OEA," said Roy Bishop, president. "While we have a lot of fun

with it, the real story is how this event reminds thousands of children and their parents how important it is to read not just during Read Across America, but every day.

"Reading is the fundamental skill that allows a child to be successful in everything else."

The entire celebration culminated with 250 students spending March 2 – what would have been Dr. Seuss's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday – at the Governor's Mansion. First Lady Kim Henry hosted the party as a reward to the students, all of whom earned top readers honors at their individual schools in Edmond, Midwest City-Del City and Moore.

For a look at some of the highlights of OEA's RAA celebration, check out pages 7-9.

### Thanks a Million!

Special thanks to the sponsors of OEA's 2004 celebration of Read Across America!

- Blunck's Studio
- Christmas Connection
- Dillard's Dept. Stores
- Johnnie's Charbroiler Restaurants
- Saturn of Oklahoma City
- Staples

# Pat Yourself on the Back

## *OEA Members Made the Difference in New Funding Legislation*

By Roy Bishop  
OEA President

On March 9, Governor Brad Henry signed into law one of the most important pieces of legislation in his effort to provide a yearly source of revenue for education. SB 553 will generate more than \$70 million annually, with 88 percent of the revenue going to the General Education Revolving Fund and the other 12 percent going to the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) scholarship fund.

The signing of SB 553 couldn't have been possible without Senate and

House leadership. Senate Pro Tem Cal Hobson got the bill through the Senate with strong caucus support, but House Speaker Larry Adair had to work both sides of the political aisle to find the votes to pass this historic piece of legislation. Helping make the difference were the combined efforts of the Native American Tribes, the Horseman's Association and the Oklahoma Education Coalition.

While all those groups were instrumental in making a difference, it was you, the members of the Oklahoma

Education Association, who phoned, e-mailed and met with your representatives in an effort to pass SB 553.

You made a difference; when members of the House heard from you they knew exactly how important this bill was to education. You were able to move many House members into supporting the bill.

The success of SB 553 and the passage of single-premium insurance bills in the Senate and House have gotten OEA off to one of its most successful starts in any legislative session. Rest-



*President Roy Bishop*

ing on our laurels is not an option. We must continue to address educational issues.

Over the last year, I've spoken a great deal about teacher quality, high standards, and respect for the profession. This is the first step in getting all that our students, teachers and schools need to be successful. Staying actively engaged during this session will ensure that we won't lose what we worked so hard for.

You do make a difference. Thank you for all your support.

## ECU, UCO Share Best Chapter Honors

Student chapters at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) and East Central University (ECU) were chosen co-chapters of the year to highlight the 2004 Student Oklahoma Education Association convention in mid-March.

The honor was UCO's second consecutive chapter of the year honor.

"The convention was one of our largest in recent memory," said Floyd Cox, SOEA coordinator. "We had more than 150 students, advisors, presenters and staff attend this year."

State Teacher of the Year Cindy Ball led an impressive contingent of workshop presenters. Other sessions were presented by Jana Legako, human resources director from Gordon Cooper Technology Center; Katherine Bishop, OEA member from Putnam City's Lake Park Elementary; Liz Picone, NEA Member Benefits; Jan Sands, Putnam City ACT president; OEA President Roy Bishop; Dr. Linda



*Ruth Kliewer (left) of the University of Central Oklahoma and East Central University's Natalie Henry (right) accept co-chapter of the year honors from Student OEA President Amy Castro. The award was presented during the SOEA Convention in early March.*

Wilson, professor at Langston University – Tulsa; and OEA staff members Lela Odom, Pam Westbrook and Bonnie Hammock.

In addition to chapter of the year honors, the outgoing board members were recognized. Completing their terms were Amy Castro, president, University of Oklahoma; Katy Cook, vice president, Langston University-Tulsa; Serena Woolfolk, secretary, Langston University; Melanie Johnson, OEA Delegate, East Central Univer-

sity; LaDonna Whatley, NEA Delegate, East Central University; and Jennifer Thornton, legislative representative, Northwestern State University.

Convention attendees raised a record \$245 during a Political Action Committee (PAC) fund-raiser.

Next up for SOEA is officer elections for 2003-04. Nominations are due at OEA Headquarters by April 5.

For more information, contact Cox at [fcox@okea.org](mailto:fcox@okea.org), 405/528-7785 or 800/522-8091.

## OEA

*The Education Focus*

Volume 21, No. 6  
A production of OEA's  
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*The Education Focus* (ISSN 1542-1678) is published nine times annually with issues in September/October, November, December/January, February, March, April, May, June/July and August for \$5 by the Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Periodicals postage paid at Okla. City, OK, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER:  
Send address changes to  
*The Education Focus*  
PO Box 18485  
Oklahoma City, OK 73154

# Fiscal Healing

## 2004 Session Shaping Up to be One of the Best Ever

By Stacy Martin

The 2004 Legislative Session is remarkable for the emergence of public education initiatives that may begin the fiscal healing in Oklahoma's schools.

It wasn't a moment too soon. State teachers have struggled under the combined weight of state budget cuts, stagnant pay and skyrocketing health insurance premiums. For many, it has forced them near the breaking point.

In fact, public schools – and those who work in them – have endured prolonged economic distress. Budget cuts have approached \$300 million.

But in 2004, Gov. Brad Henry began fulfilling his campaign promise to improve conditions in Oklahoma's education system.

First, Henry served as the primary architect of Senate Bill 553, the Indian gaming bill. The bill will tax and regulate Oklahoma's already-thriving Indian gaming industry.

The bill became the first new revenue source for schools in 14 years. Conservative estimates indicate it will initially pump \$70 million a year into schools, a total which will likely grow.

Enhanced teacher health insurance benefits were also passed by the Legislature. For teachers taking insurance, it will mean \$1,400 more toward their health coverage. That money previously came from their pockets.

After the Indian gaming bill victory, Gov. Henry was ready to tackle the teacher salary issue, as he had promised. The governor called a press conference in mid-March to challenge the Legislature to take up the teacher salary issue quickly, rather than wait until session's end.

His intention is that they would act immediately on his five-year plan to

### The Road to the Regional Average

On March 15, Gov. Brad Henry announced details of his plan to raise Oklahoma teacher salaries to the regional average. In Year 1 (2004-05) of the plan, the state will pay 100 percent of the individual health care premium. Following is a chart that shows how much teacher pay will increase in each year during Years 2 through 5 of the plan.

#### Proposed Bachelor's Degree Salary Increases\*

0-4 years .....	\$300
5-9 years .....	\$600
10-14 years .....	\$1,000
15-19 years .....	\$1,100
20-24 years .....	\$1,200
25 years or more .....	\$1,400

(\* – Master's and Doctorate schedules would receive additional funds as well.)

raise teacher pay. The initiative would raise educators' \$34,377 average salary at least to the \$38,527 regional average during that time period.

Surrounded by OEA members and leaders as well as others from the education community, Henry challenged the legislature to act on this pressing issue, saying he was confident revenue sources exist to fund it. His office estimates the health insurance bill and salary plan will cost \$244 million.

“With the legislative session nearing the halfway point, I want to make sure the teacher pay issue doesn't get lost in the shuffle,” Henry said. “Many important issues are being debated by the Legislature, but none are more important than our teachers.”

Under the Henry plan, teacher compensation would be raised incrementally over the five-year period. Year one addresses individual health insurance. Years two through five raise av-

erage teacher pay incrementally to at least the \$38,527 regional average (see chart on this page).

Career teacher salaries would increase more than those for newer teachers. The reason is the greater pay disparity for career teachers, the governor said.

OEA leadership applauded Henry's plan for education.

“Gov. Henry's education agenda is visionary and we support him wholeheartedly,” said OEA President Roy Bishop. “We look forward to working out the details that will make Oklahoma teacher salaries truly competitive with the regional pay average.”

## RA Credentials Deadline is Approaching

Credentials for the NEA's 142<sup>nd</sup> Representative Assembly are due April 10 at the Oklahoma Education Association headquarters in Oklahoma City.

This summer's RA is scheduled for July 2-7 in Washington, D.C. The Oklahoma delegation's host hotel will be the Hilton Crystal City.

With nearly 10,000 delegates, the RA is the world's largest democratic, deliberative body.

Local Associations are allowed one delegate to the RA for every 150 active members or a major fraction thereof. Locals with fewer than 76 active members may join together to form membership units known as “clusters” for the purpose of participating in the RA.

Each local in a cluster of two or more must have less than 76 members. The allocation of credentials for such locals is based on a ratio of 1:150 active and life members or a major fraction thereof.

For more information on RA credentials or clustering, contact OEA Associate Executive Director Charles McCauley at 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785 or [cmccauley@okea.org](mailto:cmccauley@okea.org).



Governor Brad Henry signs into law the Indian Gaming Compact while Speaker of the House Larry Adair (left), Senate Pro Tem Cal Hobson (second from right) and supporters of the bill look on. The Gaming Compact is expected to funnel at least \$70 million into public education next year.

# In Search of Adequate & Equitable Funding

By Marty Bull

For decades, adequate and equitable school funding has been the number one issue facing school districts across the country. State legislators, universally known for drafting tough standards without determining the actual cost to implement them, choose to haggle over what they think the state or their political careers can afford and work backward from there.

However, a far better way to allocate resources to meet standards for student achievement and school accountability has emerged – adequacy.

“The concept of adequacy is simple – after education standards are established you cost out what it will take to implement them with adjustments for inflation, enrollment increases and changing student needs,” said OEA President Roy Bishop. “It’s high time we quit begging for a percentage of an already defined budget and start demanding adequacy in school funding.”

## Seeking Adequacy

During the 1970s, school districts across the country asked the courts to rule on equity cases in all but five states. Issues raised included inadequate facilities and the rich districts vs. poor districts controversy. But in the early 90s, when ways to assess the difference between a quality education and its connection to spending became available, adequate funding came to the forefront.

Since 1992, 34 states have participated in costing out studies, and more are expected to complete studies this year.

Although some costing-out studies are court-mandated, such as in New York and Arkansas, other studies have

been initiated by state governments or independent education advocacy organizations. These studies can provide valuable information that can be utilized both legislatively and in the courts.

Over the last few years NEA affiliates have been closely following this trend and have become more and more interested in adequacy litigation as a long-term solution to continuing

its failure to provide equity in funding for all Kansas children and ordered the state legislature to take immediate action to remedy the situation.

Meanwhile, Arkansas’s Supreme Court became dissatisfied with the legislature’s lack of movement on school funding and appointed a “special master” to oversee the state legislature to ensure that action was taken.

Both courts ruled in favor of an ad-

The Kansas and Arkansas courts were greatly influenced by testimony from educators. Kansas teachers laid out the strategies necessary to teach the most challenging students, including smaller class sizes, new learning strategies and professional development for teachers, more and better trained teachers, principals who encourage innovation and reward achievement, expanded learning times and preschool.

Arkansas’s current lawsuit stemmed from previous equity lawsuits which sought the equalization of school funding and assistance for at-risk students.

## Montana: \$170 Million Short

In January, a Montana court heard arguments based on the same testimony that has met with success in other states. The suit is based on a costing out study sponsored by an Association-backed coalition and alleges that the current financing formula is unconstitutional. The study found that Montana schools would need up to \$170 million to meet state and national standards. The case was heard in late January and early February and a ruling is expected in May. Both sides have indicated that they will appeal depending on the outcome.

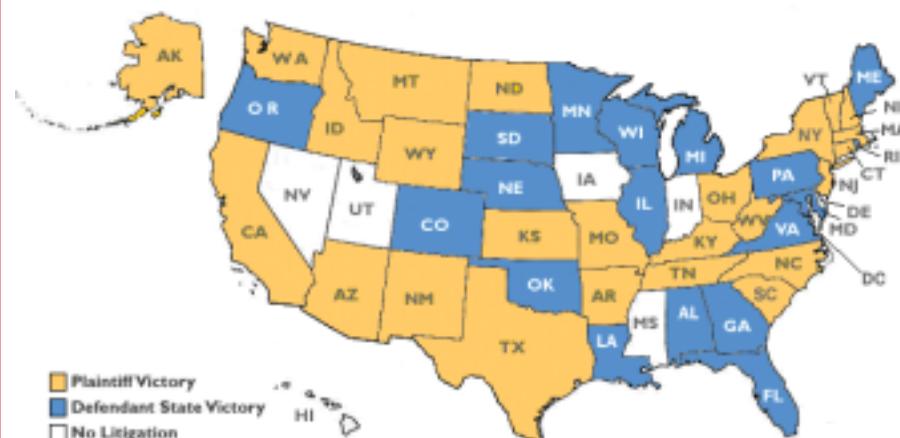
An education coalition in Missouri filed an adequacy and equity lawsuit against the state in January, claiming that the Missouri education finance system is unconstitutional. The suit is based on an adequacy study that indicates that Missouri schools need over \$900 million to be adequately funded. The petition claims students are being harmed by underfunding of essential resources, such as teachers, courses and programs, and facilities and equipment. A hearing date has not been set.

In Colorado, although an education coalition has sponsored an adequacy study, there is currently no plan to enter into litigation. This is due in part to the coalition’s success in the passage of Amendment 23, which guarantees funding for K-12 public schools during a budget crisis.

See “Courts” on Page 6

## State By State

### Developments in education finance litigation



Map used by permission from The ACCESS Project.  
Visit [www.schoolfunding.info/states/index.htm](http://www.schoolfunding.info/states/index.htm) for a state by state accounting of the latest developments in education finance litigation.

budget shortfalls. Some state NEA affiliates supported the expansion of previously filed equity suits, others helped form grassroots coalitions to seek legal remedies, and still others supported the efforts of other education entities from behind the scenes.

## Neighboring States

Kansas and Arkansas are two states that have made a case for adequate funding most recently. Early last December, the District Court of Shawnee County, Kansas, ruled the present school finance system to be in violation of the state constitution due to

equacy study by an independent agency that concluded both states would need to come up with over \$800 million to fund an adequate education.

The Kansas legislature is currently in session debating how to best meet the study’s recommendations.

In Arkansas, the state legislature not only passed a 7/8 cent sales tax but passed a law that protects the education budget in the event of a budget short fall. The sales tax will be used in part to pay for a \$6,000 pay increase for beginning teachers and a \$2,000 incentive to all teachers who teach in at-risk schools.

# It's a Family Affair in Chisholm

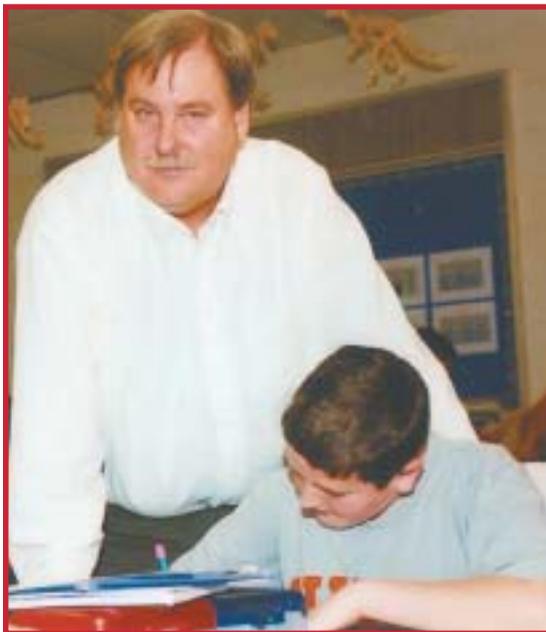
By Doug Folks

She's a little bit reading; he's a little bit science.

That may not have the snappy rhythm of a more well-known brother and sister team's trademark, but students at Chisholm Elementary will tell you that Teresa Peyton and Tim Braley are just as much fun as Donnie and Marie.

Oklahoma has its share of education families, but how many schools can boast a brother and sister who teach across the hall from one another? Throw in their mom, Darlene, who balances the books for Chisholm's cafeteria, three siblings all in education and a late father who was a public school teacher/coach and a college professor and the Braleys are one of Oklahoma's first families of education.

Teresa has been at Chisholm for 25 years. Brother Tim is two years older

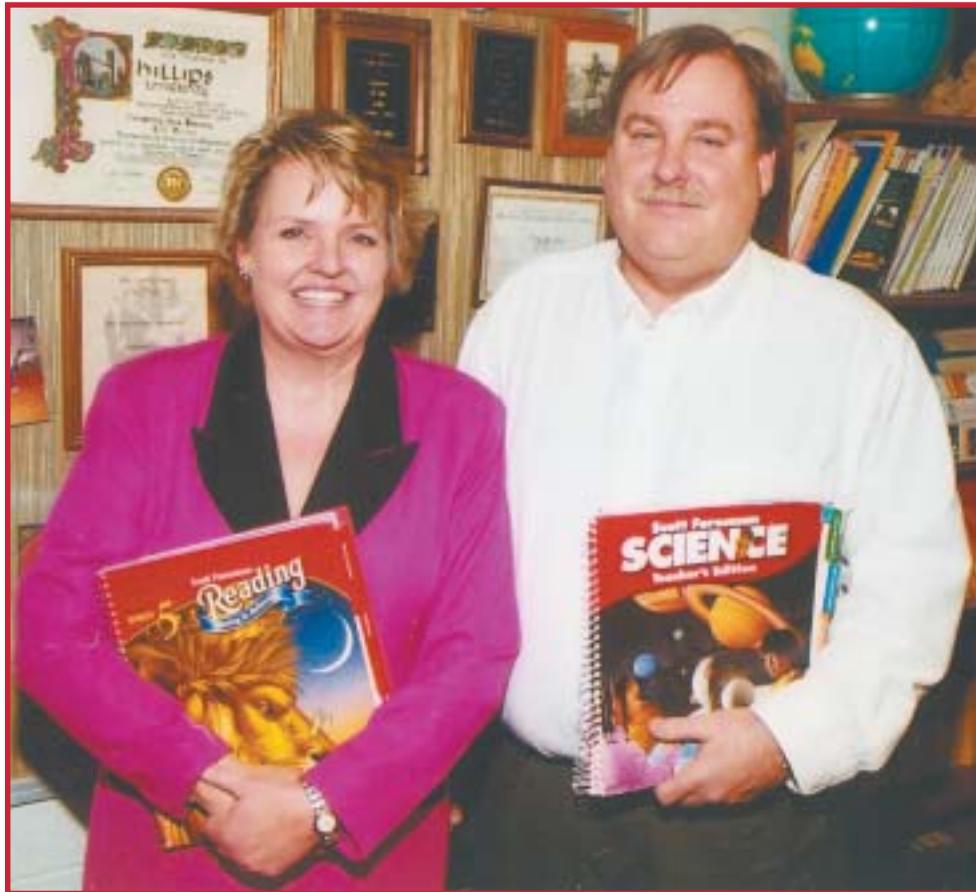


Tim Braley and student Josh Miller.

than she is, but he has only been in the classroom for 12 years after making a mid-life career change.

"With my parents and my brother and sisters all in education, I needed to make a change so I could have something to talk about with them," he joked.

While Tim's path took a different turn for a while, he says teaching was always something he was drawn to.



Teresa Peyton and her brother Tim Braley teach fourth grade across the hall from one another at Chisholm Elementary, work in the Chisholm Education Association together and cosponsor a drama club for their students.

Their father, Jack L. Braley, was a high school teacher and a coach at

Waukomis before spending 20 years as a professor at Phillips University in Enid where both Teresa and Tim received their undergraduate degrees. Both had their father for a professor.

The oldest Braley child, Diane Miller, has a doctorate in education and is a professor at the University of Kansas. No. 2 child David Braley works in the education department of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, and the youngest child, Lori Chambers, is a speech pathologist in the Dodge City (Kansas) Public Schools System.

Prior to going back for an education degree, Tim ran an asphalt plant and later worked as an engraver and owned an awards store. But working with children was always on his mind. And now it seems only natural that he works side by side with his sister.

"We really work well together," Teresa said. "We've always been close."

Neither can find any negatives of working so closely, and that's a good thing because they work together more than just at school. From the local Association to extracurricular activities with students to joining their families for social events like Chisholm basketball games, Tim and Teresa seem to always be together. They work in self-contained classrooms, but have switched classes before. They occasionally team-teach units with their respective fourth grade classes.

"Tim's the science whiz, so if I need

science help I go to him," Teresa said. "I'm more of the reading specialist, so I can help him there."

Both are very active with OEA and their local Association. Tim is president of the Chisholm Education Association (CEA) and Teresa is the secretary. The two siblings help organize and run a quiz bowl for adults as a scholarship fund-raiser for CEA. Both have been Chisholm Teachers of the Year.

With help from second grade teacher Lisa Walker, Tim and Teresa sponsor a drama club for third through fifth graders, and they tackle some interesting productions. For instance, in April their dinner theater troupe will perform Louis Sachar's "Sideways Stories From Wayside School."

A short talk with Tim and Teresa proves to a visitor just how much love and admiration there is between the two of them.

"It's not what she's ever said to me, it's her whole attitude," Tim said of what he's learned from Teresa. "She is a very professional, very caring person. She just creates such a wholesome environment in her classroom."

Teresa thinks just as highly of her brother.

"I think I learn every day from him," she said. "I've learned from Tim that having fun while you teach is important."



Teresa Peyton and student Somi Lee.

# Support to Repeal Unfair Social Security Laws Growing Stronger

By Doug Folks

Support to repeal two unfair Social Security laws has reached a super majority in the U.S House of Representatives and it appears that the bill will soon be heard on the House floor, according to reports out of Washington.

Barbara Smith, a former president of the Oklahoma Education Association, has taken an active role in educating Oklahoma teachers about the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) as a member of the National Education Association (NEA) cadre on WEP/GPO. So far, 289 U.S. Representatives have signed on as coauthors of HR 594, which would repeal the two laws. The Senate version now has 30 coauthors.

"In the House, Reps. Brad Carson, Tom Cole, John Sullivan and Frank Lucas have all agreed to be coauthors,"



Barbara Smith

she said. "So far, neither of Oklahoma's senators (Don Nickles and Jim Inhofe) has agreed to support the bill."

The WEP unfairly impacts public sector workers such as teachers and

firefighters who pay into Social Security in one job, but retire from states or from companies or school districts that do not withhold the employee contribution.

For instance, Smith's husband, Willie, worked several years in Oklahoma and paid into Social Security. But after retiring from teaching in Missouri, he found his retirement benefit had been slashed from about \$1,000 a month to just \$340.

"All we expected to draw was what Willie had paid in," Barbara said.

The GPO decreases the spousal benefit for those same employees. For instance, if Willie should survive Barbara, he will receive almost none of her Social Security benefits. Conversely, if he had never worked a day in his life, he would receive all of what she paid in.

Texas is another state that does not

withhold Social Security, and Oklahoma has 53 school districts which do not withhold the benefit for employees.

California Reps. Howard McKeon and Howard Berman, primary sponsors of the WEP/GPO legislation, recently met with Rep. Clay Shaw (R, Florida) to express the NEA's frustration with the lack of movement on the bill. Shaw, chair of the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means, has indicated he will move the bill out of committee and into the House for debate this session.

"There is no date set on when the bill might be heard, but we are encouraged to hear that we may finally be getting some response," Smith said.

With a super-majority of coauthors, the bill qualifies for a "discharge petition," which is a procedural mechanism to bring a bill directly to the House Floor. McKeon and Berman do not support that method, feeling that working with Shaw will ensure a more favorable outcome. The NEA concurs with this strategy, Smith said.

"We need to keep writing those post cards and sending e-mails," she said. "We need to thank those who are supporting the bill and encourage those who haven't signed on to do so right away."

Smith said that getting the bill written and onto the House floor is a good example of democracy in action.

"This has only happened because of a true grassroots effort," Smith said. "Progress has only been made because teachers and support professionals, and a few police and firefighters, have been pushing the issue. It's just a great example of how things can happen even when people first think it's impossible to accomplish."

Smith added that she is still conducting workshops on the WEP/GPO situation. To schedule her to speak at your school, contact Smith at [bssmith@onenet.net](mailto:bssmith@onenet.net) or 918/542-4306.

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## Courts Are Realizing That Adequacy Requires Money

Continued from Page 4

In April 2003, Nebraska State Education Association members adopted a new business item directing the Association to seek adequate and equitable funding for Nebraska schools. The NSEE joined the Nebraska Coalition of Educational Equity and Adequacy in a lawsuit based on a \$750 million gap between current resources and what is needed for Nebraska schools to meet state and federal requirements. The petition is scheduled to be filed in the next few months.

"The fact that the courts are beginning to recognize that it takes money to provide teachers with adequate resources to meet the high standards of today's public schools should give us all hope," said OEA Executive Direc-

tor David DuVall. "OEA members have asked this Association to do whatever it takes to bring about adequate and equitable funding for Oklahoma schools and that's what we're going to do."

### Taking the First Step

OEA members took the first step toward true adequate and equity funding at the 2003 Delegate Assembly when delegates approved a new business item that authorized the Legal and Corporate Services and the Legislative Committees to form the OEA Adequacy and Equity Task Force. The Task Force, which was charged with investigating adequate and equitable school funding, met last November and recommended the development of a

litigation and organizing plan, and proposed a budget that contained the necessary finances to fund the project.

In December, the OEA Adequacy and Equity Coordinating Committee began meeting to develop a plan that includes three major components: a litigation strategy, an ongoing organizing plan and collective bargaining support. Funding for the project is included in the 2004-05 Budget unanimously recommended by the OEA Board of Directors. An outline of the project and budgetary considerations will be presented at trainings prior to Delegate Assembly and be brought before the Assembly for approval.

"Every Oklahoma student deserves an equal opportunity for a constitutionally adequate education," said President Bishop. "We know our members will make a compelling case for adequacy in funding."

# Partying at the Governor's Mansion

OEA's 2004 celebration of Read Across America culminated March 2 – Dr. Seuss's 100th birthday – with a giant party at the Governor's Mansion. The event, hosted by First Lady Kim Henry, was a special party for nearly 250 students from Edmond, Midwest City-Del City and Moore school districts. Each earned their way to the celebration by being one of his or her school's top readers.



In addition to hosting the event, First Lady Kim Henry read "My Many Colored Days" to the children.



Sam I Am (aka OEA Teaching and Learning Assistant Cindy Manning) meets a new friend.



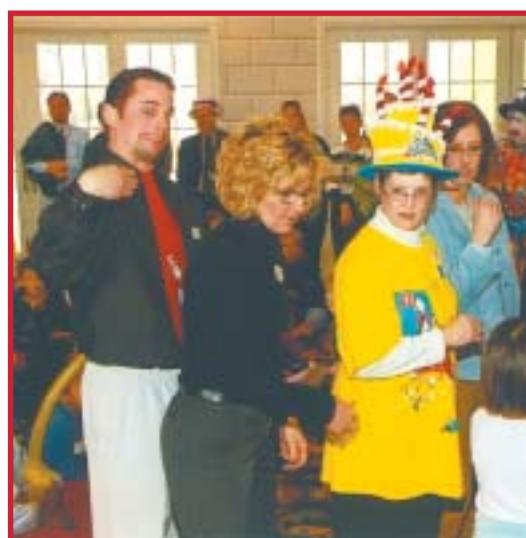
The Lynda Tarpley Dancers, including OEA Advocacy Specialist Pam Westbrook as the Cat in the Hat, tapped their way through two numbers.



Judge Carol Hansen administers the Readers Oath.



Members of Fools for Christ, a clown troupe from the 1st United Methodist Church in Moore, made balloon animals for the students.



Jason Perez (left), Moore; and Edmond's Sally Foster (center) and Gail Williams try to unscramble a puzzle.

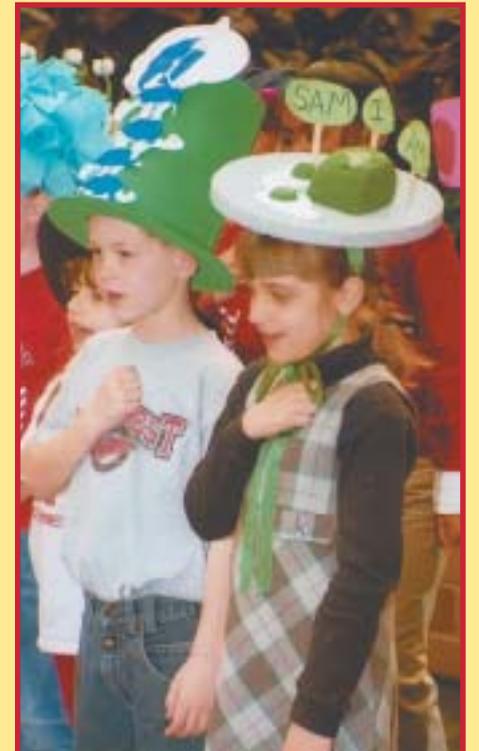
Tulsa Opera stars Lara Wilson as Sam I Am (left) and Amanda Mansheim as the no-name grouch, re-enact Dr. Seuss's most popular book, "Green Eggs and Ham."



# Happy 100th Birthday, Dr. Seuss!



Pre-kindergarten "kittens" wait to sing in Healdton



Silly hats at Heritage Park Mall in Midwest City.



Mother Goose (aka OEA member Rose Rush of Shawnee) at the Shawnee Mall Celebration.



OEA President Roy Bishop and friend in Lone Star.



Hinton Elementary principal Patrick Duffy parachuted from an airplane after his students read more than 25,000 books in a reading challenge. The NEA was on hand to film the event for a national Read Across America video and OEA President Roy Bishop (second from right) and Vice President Becky Felts (right) were on the ground to greet him with a Cat in the Hat hat after he landed.



Celebrity readers Julie Chin, KJRH meteorologist (left); and Miss Tulsa Stephanie Robinson (right); pose with Cat in the Hat Rachael Gunnels, Web master for Tulsa CTA.



OEA Vice President Becky Felts greets students in Meeker.



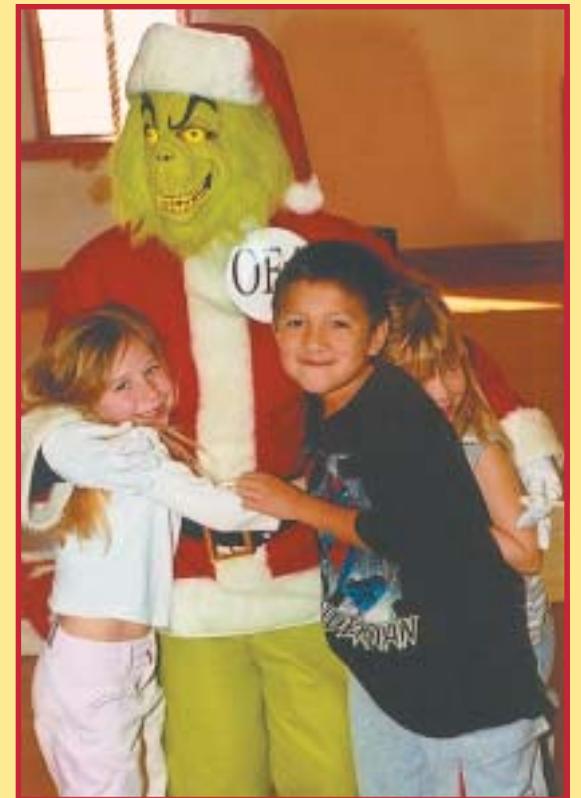
Thing 1 (OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist Debby Stine) and a student at the Tulsa Public Library.



OEA staffers Pam Westbrook (Sam I Am) and Bonnie Hammock (Cat in the Hat) "get down" with a student at the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History.



OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist Sharon Moore as Sam I Am, helping with the word scramble in Mounds.



OEA Communications Assistant Maureen Peters as the Grinch in Strother.



Rush Springs' Jane Porter gets in the act..



Bruce Treadaway, dressed as the no-name dog in Green Eggs and Ham, has a serious conversation with students in Antlers. Treadaway is an OEA Communications Specialist and the Read Across America coordinator.

# OEA Calls for Paige's Resignation

*Education Secretary's Comments Trivialize Suffering of Terrorism Victims*

*By Stacy Martin*

The Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) and its members joined in late February in a national outrage over U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige calling the National Education Association (NEA) a terrorist organization.

Paige's remarks came as no surprise to NEA and OEA leaders. Paige is the primary architect of President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a law widely considered a punitive and destructive force rather than true education reform as it has been billed.

"The education community knows that Paige's wrath arises from his frustration about NEA's strong opposition to the No Child Left Behind Act," said OEA President Roy Bishop.

"His remarks offend school employees everywhere and even worse, trivialize the suffering of victims of true terrorism. For these reasons, we join many of our colleagues nationwide in calling for his removal from office."

OEA set up a link on the OEA Web site enabling members to communicate their thoughts directly via e-mail to President Bush, Paige's office and other federal representatives.

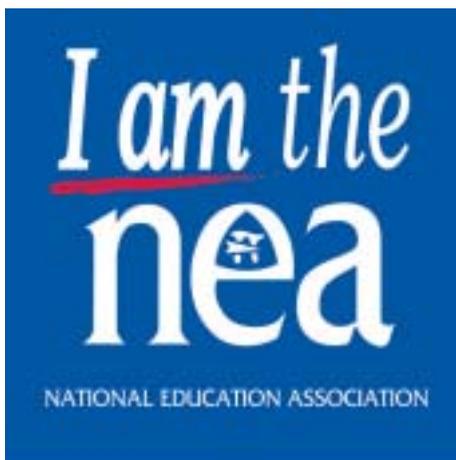
OEA members' reactions echoed those of many educators from around the country.

"I was raised to revere the flag, respect my elders, work to support myself and my own, lend a helping hand to those who could not, and contribute as a good citizen by voting and participating in this great democracy," said Connie Gillis, who teaches at Tulsa's Clinton Middle School. "I am appalled that a member of the current administration would denigrate all I have ever stood for and worked for with one careless, offhand, thoughtless, cruel, demeaning, vicious remark.

"My patriotism for this nation will never be shaken, but my faith that this administration will ever be able to accomplish anything in education has fallen to zero."

Putnam City educator Jennifer

Owens sent a letter of outrage to Bush, who appointed Paige.



"Please, Mr. President, for the sake of the job my colleagues and I do every day, take a stand against these inflammatory comments," Owens wrote. "I teach my students to respect you and your office even at times when I cannot agree with your ac-

tions. Please extend the same courtesy to me and millions like me by teaching those under your power to respect me and the work that I do for the children of our country."

At the national level, NEA President Reg Weaver issued strong words.

"It is morally repugnant to equate those who teach America's children with terrorists. NEA is 2.7 million teachers and educators who are fighting for children and public education. Yet this is the kind of rhetoric we have come to expect from this Administration whenever one challenges its world view," Weaver said.

He added that the NEA heard from thousands of members who said they were insulted beyond repair. Despite the attacks of the nation's top education official, Weaver said the NEA will continue fighting for NCLB to be fixed and funded.

Paige issued an apology, saying he was not referring to teachers around the country, but to those that lobby for the NEA in Washington, D.C. The controversy has spurred a revival of the NEA slogan, "I am the NEA."

*When Secretary of Education Rod Paige called the NEA "a terrorist organization," it was especially hurtful in Oklahoma where one of the country's worst domestic terrorist attacks took place. Few adults living in Oklahoma when the Murrah Building was bombed will ever forget where they were or how they felt after that tragic event.*

*In his apology, Paige said he was referring to the "NEA's high-priced Washington lobbyists," but apparently didn't realize that many NEA members spend a good deal of time visiting with their congressmen on education issues.*

*In the box to the left is a letter to Oklahoma's congressional delegation from Linda Hampton, OEA senior NEA director and a teacher at Pleasant Grove near Seminole. On page 11, read about the lobbying efforts and philosophy of Hampton and her fellow NEA Director, Mustang's Greg Johnson.*

Dear Sirs,

US Education Secretary Paige's comments referring to the NEA as "a terrorist organization" is upsetting to me on several levels. First and foremost, I am an NEA member and am proud of what my organization has done for public education, students, and teachers. To hear it referred to in such a despicable manner by the very person who should value teachers is most offensive. As you well know, Oklahoma educators have put up with 8 years of Gov. Keating's name calling. I had hoped this shallowness had ended, but sadly it now appears on the national level.

At first I was furious both for myself, my colleagues, and all the public school students NEA does such a wonderful job representing. As I thought more about it, I became more saddened than angry. If Oklahoma students had made the same remark about another student or teacher, very serious consequences would follow. If the remark were made in an airport, there would be serious consequences. Yet in our nation's capitol, these same remarks are laughed off as a joke. I think Secretary Paige should be subject to the same serious consequences as others are.

When Sec. Paige apologized for his remarks, he stated that he "had made it clear to the governors that he was referring to the Washington-based union organization not the teachers it represents." (*The Daily Oklahoman*, Feb. 24, 2004) The NEA is the teachers it represents, so clearly an apology was not made.

I have visited with several of you when I have come to lobby on behalf of NEA's 2.7 million teachers. Does that make me one of the people whom he refers to as a "terrorist"? When I have been to your offices and spoken with either you or your staff, I always left feeling we had had very meaningful dialogue about public education. Never have I related my visits to anything remotely resembling terrorist activities.

In Oklahoma the bombing of the Murrah Building makes acts of terrorism seem even more horrific. NEA members all over the United States sent letters of support and exhibited many acts of kindness. NEA as a terrorist group? – never!

You are not only my representative in Washington, but you also represent over 40,000 OEA/NEA members in Oklahoma. I would ask you to seek the removal of Sec. Paige. He has proven himself to have a sinister dislike for the very people he should represent.

Thank you,  
Linda Hampton  
Proud OEA/NEA member  
Pleasant Grove Elementary Teacher

# NEA Directors Cover All Bases On Capitol Hill

By Doug Folks

Every other month, Oklahoma's congressmen receive a powerful one-two punch from an unlikely team of teacher lobbyists, and it appears to be paying off in a number of avenues.

Linda Hampton and Greg Johnson are Oklahoma's representatives on the National Education Association Board of Directors. Several times a year, they journey to Washington, D.C., where they spend two days conducting business of the NEA, and one full day lobbying on Capitol Hill.

What's so different about these two NEA directors is that they are so different. Hampton is a Democrat and an elementary teacher at Pleasant Grove, a tiny dependent district near Seminole with just 10 faculty members. Johnson, a Republican, is the choir director at Mustang High School, one of Oklahoma's largest schools.

During their visits to D.C., Hampton, Johnson and the other NEA directors spend two days in a board meeting. They hear reports from NEA officers; receive updates from NEA Government Relations and other departments; work on projects as required from actions passed during the annual Representative Assembly; and conduct other business of the board.

Prior to the board meeting days, directors from around the country lobby their respective congressmen and women. A briefing is held at NEA Headquarters at 8 a.m., and then the directors spend the rest of the day walking the halls of Congress trying to gain a few minutes with elected officials or one of their staff members.

"Greg and I try to stress to them it's not a partisan issue with us, it's about

Oklahoma kids, teachers and support professionals," Hampton said. "We're both from different parties, so our goal isn't to discuss politics; it's to discuss what's important for education."

Johnson says their different backgrounds work to their advantage.

"When we come to talk to them, we bring the Oklahoma perspective," he said. "We can play it from every angle. We stress we're there as a resource. If there's ever a question they might have about education, we want them to know that we are someone they can call on."

It's no secret that the NEA often runs opposite of the beliefs of Oklahoma's conservative Congressional delegation. But Johnson and Hampton are starting to see a change in how they are received on the Hill.

"Last October, we were able to talk with Rep. (Earnest) Istook's legislative assistant for only about five minutes. But the last time we were there, he spent an hour and a half with us," Johnson said.

"I think we are starting to make some inroads because when we first started going, there were times we would present our business cards and the congressmen were never available," Hampton said. "Now, we've made contacts with their education liaisons and they always talk to us. And we're even getting to spend time with the congressmen themselves."

During their January visit to Washington, Rep. Tom Cole stepped out of a committee meeting to talk briefly with Johnson, Hampton and OEA Vice President Becky Felts. Also, Istook is taking an interest in a bill that Johnson and Hampton showed him that would



NEA Directors Greg Johnson (left) and Linda Hampton (right) and OEA Vice President Becky Felts (second from left) visit with Oklahoma Congressman Tom Cole during a recent visit to Washington, D.C. Each time Johnson and Hampton attend an NEA board meeting, they spend one day lobbying for public education on Capitol Hill.

renew a \$250 teacher tax deduction. Johnson said Istook is even considering coauthoring the bill.

"When we lobby, we always stress we are a team and that team includes support professionals, teachers and students," Hampton said.

"It's overwhelming and at the same time I'm amazed at what a small world it is," Johnson said of his experiences during this first year of his term. "The thought that I could go to Washington

and affect change is pretty amazing. But then you talk to them and you find that they are just like you and I. We all have jobs to do. It doesn't necessarily mean we'll agree, but we can have a conversation. It's a chance to hear the other side."

*If you'd like Hampton and Johnson to take a message to Washington, D.C., contact them at [lindashampton@hotmail.com](mailto:lindashampton@hotmail.com) and [dkjjohn@concentric.net](mailto:dkjjohn@concentric.net).*

## Republican, Democratic Caucuses Plan Meetings

OEA's Republican and Democrat Caucuses are planning separate meetings during April's Delegate Assembly.

The Republican Caucus will meet at 8 a.m. Saturday, April 24, at the Clarion Hotel, I-40 and Meridian Ave. in Oklahoma City.

Caucus chair Hazel Koehler says the agenda will include a discussion about the group's role during this year's elections. Also, directors from each of OEA's six geographic regions will be elected to serve on the Caucus board. Copies of the groups constitution and bylaws will be available at the meeting.

Koehler, a retired Spanish teacher from Broken Arrow, helped reestablish the Republican Caucus in 2001 after it had sat idle for a few years.

For more information on the Republican Caucus, contact Koehler at [oeareec@aol.com](mailto:oeareec@aol.com) or call her 918/258-8221.

The Democratic Caucus will meet April 24 as well. Caucus chair Ann Weaver reports the meeting will be organizational in nature. The group will discuss how it will participate in November's elections.

For more information, contact Weaver at [anniew12345@earthlink.net](mailto:anniew12345@earthlink.net), or call her at 918/427-6227.

# Foundation Names Mendenhall, Meador Medal of Excellence Winners

Two OEA members – Ponca City’s Ginger Mendenhall and Bartlesville’s Granger Meador – have won prestigious Medal for Excellence awards from the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence

The annual awards honor the state’s top educators and education programs. Medals are awarded annually to outstanding Oklahoma teachers, one each at the elementary, secondary, and college/university levels, and an administrator from the elementary or secondary level. An exemplary alternative education program and local education foundation also receive medallion honors.

Mendenhall and Meador will each receive a \$7,500 cash award, with an additional \$1,000 cash award going to their respective schools. They also will receive glass “Roots and Wings” sculptures, created by Oklahoma artist Ron

Roberts and produced by Jim Triffo of Oklahoma City.

Mendenhall, a math and reading specialist at Liberty Elementary School in Ponca City, is the winner of the Medal for Excellence in Elementary Teaching. A former Tulsa Teacher of the Year and finalist for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year, Mendenhall is one of the few Oklahomans nationally certified as a Learning Styles Instructor.

Two guiding principles form her teaching philosophy: “No child will be left behind in my classroom,” and “All children learn if they are taught according to their learning style preference.” Mendenhall begins each school year by assessing whether her students are auditory, visual, tactile or kinesthetic learners. She then works with fellow teachers, parents and the students themselves to design learning methods that meet each student’s

needs.

Tulsa colleague Wallena Dominic describes Mendenhall’s classroom as “a totally organized amusement park,” with some students studying on stationary bikes while others work quietly wearing earplugs or playing learning games to reinforce lessons.

Meador, winner of the Medal for Excellence in Secondary Teaching, teaches advanced placement and inquiry physics to juniors and seniors at Bartlesville High School. The recipient of numerous teaching awards, Meador says “chalk-and-talk” science and math classes that emphasize factoids over concepts are leaving American students behind their international peers. Instead, Meador uses inquiry-teaching methods that help students learn science through an active quest to discover facts and relationships.

“Properly presented, physics can set a student bestride the universe!” Meador said. His students learn about electromagnetism by building working motors. They learn about horsepower by running stairs at the stadium. Meador’s students roll balls down tracks or experiment with rotating platforms to experience physics in action.

Other award recipients included the Broken Arrow Alternative Academy, which will receive the alternative education award, and the Sand Springs

Education Foundation, winner of the award for local education foundations.

The director of the Broken Arrow Alternative Education program credited the teachers for the program’s success. Broken Arrow EA members who teach at the Academy include Juli Allen, Jack Castle, Linda Mazurk, Steven Moreau and Robert Stout.

The Sand Springs Education Association is actively involved in fund-raising activities for the foundation and contributes greatly to its success, said SSEA President Linda Bynum.

In addition to presenting the Medal for Excellence awards, the Foundation will honor 100 of Oklahoma’s top graduating public high school seniors as Academic All-Staters at a May 22 banquet at the Tulsa Convention Center. The Academic Awards Banquet is open to the public; tickets are \$40. Call the foundation office at (405) 236-0006 for more information.

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable organization created in 1985 to recognize and encourage academic excellence in Oklahoma’s public schools. Its Academic Awards Program provides \$199,000 in scholarships and cash awards annually to honor outstanding public school students and educators.



## Fast Food Fund-raiser

Mary Lancaster (left) and Purcell ACT President Celia Brown (center) wait for an ice cream order from McDonald’s Shift Manager Sucel Sanchez during the restaurant chain’s fourth annual McTeacher’s Night Fund-raiser.

Purcell elementary teachers raised \$939.87 working behind the counter, in the dining room and greeting customers.

McTeacher’s Night was held at 80 Oklahoma McDonald’s in March, or will take place in April. Participating schools receive 20 percent of the total sales for the evening. Local radio personalities participated at some locales.

Last year, nearly 700 McDonald’s Restaurants raised more than \$400,000 for local schools in 16 states. Oklahoma teachers are hoping to surpass last year’s total of \$63,000 in donations.

# Survey Says Students of Nationally Certified Teachers Fare Better in the Classroom

By Marty Bull

An exhaustive new study has found that students of nationally certified teachers perform better on achievement tests.

Controlling for a wide range of variables, Urban Institute researchers Paul Goldhaber and Emily Anthony analyzed three years of comprehensive teacher and student data and found that National Board Certified teachers (NBCT) are more effective in raising student achievement than teachers who do not pursue National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification as well as teachers who pursue certification but fail to obtain it.

The study also indicated that NBCTs have a greater impact with younger students and low-income students.

“This study could finally put to rest some of the controversy in education circles surrounding national certification,” said OEA Vice President Becky Felts. “These results are a great indicator of the value of the program.”

In the mid-1980s, an alarm was raised about the quality of the nation’s schools and issued calls for reform.

The NBPTS was created in 1987 to identify national standards for teachers and offer certification for those individuals who meet them.

In 1997, the Oklahoma Legislature approved not only funding for application fees, but also a \$5,000 stipend for the life of the certificate for those teachers who were successful. Today, Oklahoma ranks eighth in the nation with 858 nationally certified teachers.

Since its implementation, critics have questioned the effectiveness of the certification in identifying quality teachers. However, the Urban Institute study – funded by the U.S. Department of Education and based on an analysis of more than 600,000 North Carolina elementary test scores – found a direct correlation between student achievement and National Board certification.

For example, learning gains in reading for students who had NBCTs rose as much as 12 percent for the youngest students (3rd grade) and rose 15 percent for low-income students. Also, students with NBCTs improved an average of 7 percent more on math and reading tests.

The data clearly shows that the

NBPTS program identifies effective teachers and conveys information above and beyond traditional state-based licensure scores. However, it does not support that the process itself improves teaching skills.

“The National Board Certification process helped me document my best-teaching practices such as reflective techniques and parental involvement activities,” said Shelly Zevnik, Union CTA Vice President and a National Board Certified teacher. “This study should give the legislature the statistics it needs to continue to fund this worthwhile program and, hopefully, expand it to include even more candidates.”

To obtain NBPTS certification, applicants undergo an extensive performance-based evaluation. The process consists of 10 sub-assessments that include written examinations, lesson portfolios and classroom videos, and focuses on classroom practices, content and pedagogical knowledge, and community and professional involvement. The application cost is \$2,300.

For information about national certification, contact the OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist in your geographic region, or visit [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

## Avoiding Identity Theft

To minimize your risk for identity theft, remember the word **SCAM**:

**S** – Be stingy about giving out your personal information to others unless you have a reason to trust them ... whether you are at home, on the telephone, on-line, out and about, or on an extended vacation or business trip.

**C** – Check your credit card, bank, brokerage, and other financial accounts regularly. Verify all charges and information.

**A** – Ask for a copy of your credit report, from each of the three major credit reporting agencies, at least once a year.

**M** – Maintain careful records of your banking and financial accounts.

If it happens to you, file a police report if your wallet/purse is stolen. Then call the three national credit-reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security number. They then have to contact you, by phone, to authorize new credit. Those numbers are:

Equifax ... 800/525-6285

Experian ... 888/397-3742

Trans Union ... 800/680-7289

## Highly Qualified Changes Provide More Flexibility

The U.S. Department of Education has announced changes to the “highly qualified” teacher rules under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), giving teachers more flexibility in meeting the standard.

This is the third in a series of such changes, coming on the heels of two policies granting some flexibility in assessing students with significant cog-

nitive disabilities and limited English proficiency.

Following is a brief summary of the new rules. (Additional details and clarifications will be available soon.)

1) Teachers in rural schools who are highly qualified in one core academic subject, and are assigned another core academic subject to teach, have three years to become highly

qualified in the other subject, as long as they are receiving professional development, supervision, or mentoring.

2) Science teachers who teach more than one discipline (biology, chemistry, physics, etc.) *may* have additional flexibility to become highly qualified in each of those subjects *if* the state has a broad-based “science” certification.

3) Current middle and high school teachers who teach multiple subjects and wish to prove competency via their state HOUSSE will only have to

do so once for all their subjects.

In addition to these changes, Education Secretary Rod Paige noted that Congress is looking at issues unique to special education teachers through IDEA reauthorization. NEA initiated a “fix” for special education teachers in the Senate reauthorization bill.

For more specifics on the new rule changes, visit [www.nea.org/esea](http://www.nea.org/esea); or contact Larry Miller, OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist, at [lmiller@okea.org](mailto:lmiller@okea.org), 405/528-7785 or 800/522-8091.

# Due Process Protection Varies

By Richard Wilkinson  
OEA General Counsel

One of the most frequently asked questions during this time of the year is, "Am I entitled to a hearing when a local superintendent recommends that I be dismissed or nonrenewed?"

As with many legal questions, the answer depends upon a variety of different factors, the foremost of which is the employment status of the individual employee.

Generally, teachers, administrators and education support professionals are entitled to some form of "due process" (i.e. a hearing) prior to dismissal or non-reemployment. However, how the position is defined plays a prominent role in determining what kind of hearing is required.

For purposes of this article, the following definitions are the most relevant:

- Teacher – a duly certified or licensed person who is employed to serve as a counselor, librarian or school nurse or in any instructional capacity.

- Career teacher – a teacher who has completed three or more consecutive, complete school years in one district.

- Probationary teacher – a teacher who has completed fewer than three consecutive, complete school years.

Both career and probationary teachers are entitled to notice of the reasons for the proposed action, underlying facts in support of the reasons for the proposed action, and some form of hearing before the local school board. However, the type of hearing required varies.

First, career teachers are entitled to a fairly broad range of rights. Due to a change in statute in 2003, the hearing before a local board for a career teacher was modified to a

"pretermination" due process hearing.

The pretermination due process hearing for the career teacher consists of the following:

1. The superintendent or designee specifies the statutory grounds and the underlying facts and provides an explanation of the evidence supporting the recommendation for the dismissal or non-reemployment; and

2. The career teacher or designee has the opportunity to present reasons, either in person or in writing, why the proposed action should not be taken.

If the local board votes to accept the superintendent's recommendation, the career teacher has the right to file a petition for trial *de novo* in district court within 10 days of receiving notice of the decision. (A trial *de novo* is a non-jury trial in district court, handled like any other civil litigation.)

Probationary teachers, however, do not enjoy the same rights. A probationary teacher is entitled to a full evidentiary hearing before the local board of education before any termination or nonrenewal. Witnesses typically testify for both parties at such hearings and, after considering the evidence, the board votes to either accept or reject the recommendation of the superintendent. The decision of the board is final and, unlike a career teacher, a probationary teacher does not have the right to a trial *de novo*.

Administrators also enjoy fewer protections than career teachers. An "administrator" is defined by statute as "a duly certified person who devotes a majority of time to service as a superintendent, elementary superintendent, principal, supervisor, vice-principal or in any other administrative or supervisory capacity in the school district."

Similar to the protections afforded probationary teachers, administrators

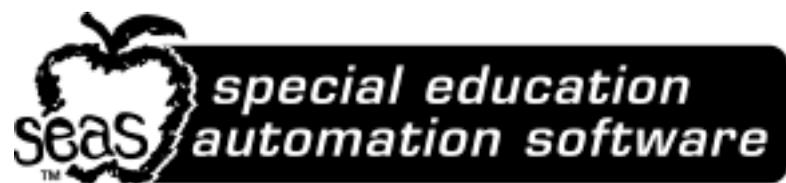
are entitled to a statutory hearing procedure including a written statement of the reasons for the proposed dismissal or non-reemployment and an opportunity to appear before the local board for a hearing. As with probationary teachers, the decision of the board is final.

Support employees who have been employed by a school district for more than one year are entitled to protections similar to those afforded probationary teachers and administrators. For due process purposes, a "support employee" is defined by Oklahoma statutes as "a full-time employee ... who provides those services not performed by professional educators or licensed teachers ..."

Support employees are entitled to a

hearing before the local board if they face termination or nonrenewal, but they must request the hearing in writing within 10 days of receiving the notice of such termination or nonrenewal. As with probationary teachers and administrators, a decision of a local board is final.

The fundamental precepts of due process consist of reasonable notice and a reasonable opportunity to be heard before a fair and impartial decision maker. While the due process protections afforded school employees vary depending upon employment classification, the law ensures that all employees have the opportunity to invoke the discretion of the decision maker (i.e. the board) before a final decision is made on their case.



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# OEA Helps Keep 1st Year Teacher's Career on Track

*By Laurie Maib-Maberry  
El Reno Schools*

The first semester of my entry year couldn't have been more pleasant. I had met with my university assigned professor, the district-assigned mentor teacher and my principal, all of whom had observed me several times and given me wonderful evaluations. My childhood dream of being a teacher was almost a reality.

Everything seemed to change soon after the second semester began. I'm not sure what happened to this day. I've heard several different stories.

The facts are that when my university professor came to observe one day, my principal called her into her office for a private meeting. My mentor decided to visit with the professor following her meeting with the principal about things that had been going on in our building recently. The professor shared with my mentor that my principal had informed her that she would not be approving me for certification and the professor wanted to know if my mentor had any concerns about my qualifications as a teacher. Neither had concerns.

I received a poor second evaluation from my principal with two unsatisfactory marks and was placed on a plan of improvement. I was shocked and very disheartened. I called OEA at the advice of a colleague. Not only did OEA write a letter on my behalf to be placed in my file as a response to the poor evaluation, but also gave me encourage-



*Laurie Maib-Maberry*

ment and a hope that my dream of becoming a teacher still existed.

When the final meeting took place with the entry year teacher certification committee I was given certification because my mentor and university professor believed I was a qualified teacher. The following year, under the same principal, I was given satisfactory evaluations. I've taught with four different principals in my 11 years and have received satisfactory evaluations every time.

Thank you OEA for your support through one of the roughest times in my teaching career.

Do you have a story of how you used OEA/NEA benefits? Stories can be from any time during your membership with the OEA. If we print your column, you will receive a \$25 gift certificate.

Columns should be from 400-450 words long. E-mail your stories to Patti Razien at [prazien@okea.org](mailto:prazien@okea.org).