

# OEA

An affiliate of the  
National Education Association

## In this issue

Take advantage of  
Personal Legal  
Services Program

Page 4

When 47 equals 1

Page 5

Professional  
development puts  
quality in classroom

Page 6

Members create  
successful legislative  
year

Pages 7

Regional team and  
contact information

Page 8

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

August 2006

## Unwavering support

### Support member leans on OEA in worst of times

By Doug Folks

After 27 years in parts and service with Sears, Ron Valentine retired. Instead of puttering around the house or traveling the country in an RV with his wife, he took a job as a custodian in a suburban school district near Oklahoma City.

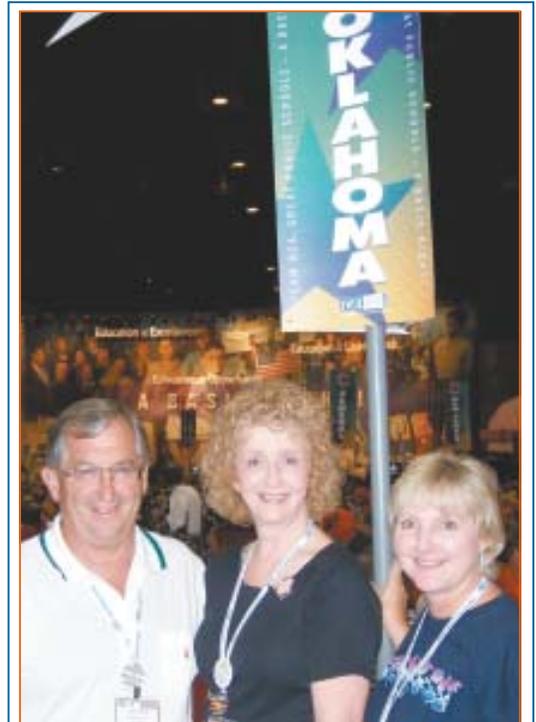
He worked nights at an elementary school after coming on board in the spring, but when school started the next fall Valentine was assigned as day custodian at the same building.

It was a job he enjoyed, even though it was mostly cleaning up messes. As with anyone who meets Valentine, faculty and students quickly grew fond of the grandfatherly man.

But life changed forever in his second full year at the school. Three fourth graders, ages 10 and 11, accused Valentine of molesting them. They alleged that the abuse occurred regularly over a long time. The sheriff was called and his boss told Valentine to go home.

"That's when I called my wife and told her what happened and she said, 'Well, you better call the OEA,' and that's what I

See "Jury needs only five minutes" on Page 3



#### Representing the great state of Oklahoma...

Seminole's Jack Tinsley, NEA Director Linda Hampton of Pleasant Grove in Seminole County and Judy Chaffin, zone director for Southeast A from Seminole were part of Oklahoma's 120-member delegation to the NEA Representative Assembly in Orlando. See Page 12 for more on the RA.

## Join the OEA today!

Just like professionals across our community who are members of their respective professional organizations, every educator should belong to the Oklahoma Education Association.

No other professional education association fights harder for its members or for public education. The OEA is the voice of public education and the staunchest advocate for education employees.

If you already belong to the OEA, thank you for being part of Oklahoma's most influential education association. Public education faces continual challenges, and we appreciate that you are part of our efforts to protect and improve public education for our students.

As a member, you can enhance the abilities of your professional organization by recruiting your colleagues. Not only will our voice be stronger, but many of your colleagues have a great deal to offer the Association.

If you aren't a member, we invite you to join us. This issue of *The Education Focus* is full of stories of how members utilized OEA services, stories of how the Association works for you and your students, and lists of products and services that can be accessed only by OEA members.

For membership information, see the OEA representative in your building, visit our website at [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org), or call us at 800/522-8091.

# Together, we make things happen

By Roy Bishop  
OEA President

The start of a new school year has always been the most exciting time of the year for many teachers. Much like author Robert Fulghum has written, while the world celebrates the start of a new year in January, teachers celebrate that same new year in August.

As we start another year, we should remember that great public schools are a basic right for every child. For a child to have a successful school year, whose responsibility is it? While there is a great deal of responsibility on the classroom teacher for success, all of the significant “others” in a child’s life must also take an active role in fostering that success.

All teachers hope that kids come to school excited and ready to learn. While many children do, some don’t. For whatever reason, some children don’t have the same advantages as other children. It doesn’t matter why, what matters is that teachers recognize the situation and find ways to make those children successful. And while there are programs that can help children, in the long run, parental involvement is vital.

Research shows that the number one indicator in measuring success is a quality teacher in the classroom. Oklahoma teachers rank 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation in teacher quality, and we’re a top 10 state in the number of teachers with

National Board Certification. We make a difference each and every day in our classrooms.

OEA members, elected leaders and staff wake up every morning with the single goal of making a difference in every student’s life. We strive to accomplish that goal through everything we do as an organization, because if teachers and support professionals have good working conditions and competitive pay, it will be students that reap the benefits.

The OEA prides itself in holding our members to high standards, creating teacher quality and demanding respect for the profession. All three tenets are reached for with children foremost in our minds.

From our efforts at the State Capitol, to the high quality professional development we offer, to the protection and support we provide our members everyday, we work hard to make public schools great. Our critics like to point fingers and misrepresent what we do, but we won’t apologize for protecting and supporting public education. We won’t apologize for demanding the best for our education system.

Along with the dedication and hard work of our members as ambassadors for the Association, we’re also very good at what we do. Just this past legislative session, we were able to guarantee every teacher a \$3,000 raise. At one point, the State House of Repre-

cash payments are still accepted as well. However, new members and returning members can click on the “Join OEA” icon on the first page of the website. The registration automatically figures national, state and local dues and charges your VISA or MasterCard.



President Roy Bishop

sentatives wanted to add anti-teacher language to the pay raise bill, but our “no strings attached” message was loud and clear. When it was all said and done at the end of a special legislative session, teachers had received state-paid raises and vague reasons to fire them were left in the waste bin.

Even the *Daily Oklahoman*, in its own backhanded way, said the \$3,000 raise happened only because of the “teacher union.” This victory joins other great OEA successes of this session, such as blended health insurance rates (a very important financial benefit for retired teachers), raises for support professionals, and changes in the Teachers Retirement System that will modify the cap on retirement earnings and enhance retirement benefits for many Rule of 80 members.

It might be easy to look at these successes on the surface as wins just for school employees, but if you look deeper it is the children that benefit the greatest. Our wins keep quality teachers in the classroom. Better pay and benefits attract and keep quality graduates in the profession.

Without our work at the Capitol everyday, without our diligence to ensure public education is protected, without the unwavering support of our members, working in Oklahoma schools would be much less appealing. And without quality in the classroom, children would suffer.

That’s why we need you as a member. Together we’re stronger, together we make things happen for the better.

## The Education Focus

Volume 23, No. 9  
A production of OEA’s  
Communications Center

Roy Bishop, President  
Becky Felts, Vice President  
Lela Odom, Executive Director  
Dr. Dottie Caldwell, Assoc. Exec. Dir.

Doug Folks, Editor  
Contributing Editors  
Marty Bull  
Adrienne Covington  
Jeff Savage  
Patti Serio  
Bruce Treadaway  
Maureen Peters, Center Assistant

*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 Oklahoma City, OK, and additional mailing offices.

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

## Need Help?

Do you need assistance with a personnel matter? Would you like to invite an OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist to provide a training in your building? Does your local Association need organizing help? Call your regional office and ask for help.

### Oklahoma City Metro and Southwest Teams

800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

### Northeast and Tulsa Metro Teams

800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

### Northwest Team

800/439-0393 or 580/256-0071

### Southeast Team

800/563-4230 or 405/275-4060

## Join today!

Membership in the OEA provides security, symbolizes professionalism and brings with it a wealth of benefits.

Visit [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org) for more information, and call 800/522-8091 to find out how to join today.

**OEA**  
Oklahoma Education Association

## Online membership now available

Education professionals now have another option when joining the Oklahoma Education Association.

The OEA is offering credit card payment of dues and registration through its website, [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org).

Payroll deduction is still the best way to pay for membership, and

# Jury needs only five minutes to find Valentine innocent

*Continued from Page 1*

did," Valentine said.

He called the local Association of- fice and they told him to call his advocacy specialist, Pam Westbrook, at Oklahoma Education Association head-

a hug even when they were with their parents and saw him away from school. While the facts never supported the allegations, Valentine credits the OEA and attorney Joe White for his vindication.

appoint you a lawyer, but they wouldn't have done the job that my lawyers did for me.

"The OEA treated me as if I was



**"If I hadn't had OEA, I'd be in jail right now."  
Moore's Ron Valentine**

quarters. She told Valentine not to worry. The district was following normal procedures and that he'd be alright.

Valentine was assigned to another school, but before he could report, he was asked to meet with administrators who placed him on paid administrative leave. The charges had been leaked to the media and the story was showing up on television news.

For the next several months, Valentine suffered the stigma that comes with such serious charges. But throughout the entire ordeal, the OEA stood beside him.

"Nothing was ever said that wasn't positive," he said. "Pam was always positive that OEA would be there and stand behind me."

The case came to trial seven months after the charges were first filed. Justice was served when the jury spent only five minutes in deliberation, quickly finding Valentine not guilty. After the trial, two jurors sought out Valentine to tell him the charges should never have been filed, much less gone to trial.

The alleged molestations were said to have taken place at lunch in the cafeteria, in front of teachers and students. Valentine never approached the students, they always came to him for

"They picked a very good lawyer, let me tell you that,"

Valentine said of White, who handles some criminal cases for the OEA as well as the Association's Personal Legal Services Program (PLSP). "And not because he got me off; it was just the way he treated me. He never one time asked me if I did it. He just said, 'Tell me what happened.' I told him and he said, 'That's ridiculous. Don't worry about it; we'll take care of it.'"

Even after being cleared on any wrongdoing, Valentine's ordeal wasn't over. The district was willing to return him to work, but only as a night custodian.

OEA Associate General Counsel Brandon Webb went to bat for Valentine one more time. He told the district that working nights would be detrimental to Valentine and his family, and that since he had obviously not done anything wrong, Valentine deserved a regular assignment.

The district agreed. After working days this summer in the administration building, Valentine will receive a day-time assignment at a school this fall.

Valentine will be forever grateful to the OEA, he says.

"If I hadn't had OEA, I'd be in jail right now," Valentine said. "Nothing against the judicial system; they would

be the only person who had any problems. I'm a nobody; I'm a little cog in the wheel. (But) OEA proved to me that they don't care who you are, they're going to take care of you because you belong to this organization."

Valentine is sure that only OEA could have defended him so well.

"If I had belonged to the other organization, I wouldn't have gotten a dime (from them). I'd been hung up to dry," he said. "OEA will stand behind you. They won't take your

money and say too bad."

The ordeal has changed Valentine's outlook on life and how he does his job. He still hugs his granddaughters and a couple of children at church whom he has known since they were babies, but every other child is kept at arm's length.

"I don't get into any situation where there is any suspicion. In this day and age, it's sad to say, people will misconstrue what you're doing," he said.

Valentine has some sage advice for other education employees in his same position.

"Be cordial with kids; give them high fives, or a pat on the head. People need to be aware that even if kids approach you, anything can happen," he said. "The biggest thing I can say to people is a high five is better than going to jail."

In spite of the innocent verdict on criminal charges, Valentine still faces a civil trial. One of the students is suing the district, the principal and the counselor of the school, and Valentine. The district is obligated to defend him, but even if the courts dismiss the suit against the district, Valentine knows he won't be alone.

"Life throws you a lot of curve balls, but when you've got something to (fight), OEA will stand behind you," he said.

## Have a member rights issue?

Contact your regional advocacy specialist

### Northeast Team

Paul Gayowski

pgayowski@okea.org  
800/331-5143, 918/665-2282

### Southeast Team

Jackie Davis

jdavis@okea.org  
800/563-4230, 405/275-4060

### Northwest Team

Mary Pratz

mpratz@okea.org  
800/439-0393, 580/256-0071

### Southwest Team

TBA

### Oklahoma City Metro Team

Pam Westbrook

pwestbrook@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

### Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association

Linda Hendrix

lhendrix@okea.org  
918/749-2544

### Oklahoma City Metro Team

David Williams

dwilliams@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

### Tulsa Metro Team

Susan Stowe

sstowe@okea.org  
800/331-5143, 918/665-2282

# Take advantage of your Personal Legal Services

By Joe E. White, Jr.  
White & Weddle, P.C.

The Personal Legal Services Program (PLSP) was designed and implemented by your OEA General Counsel's Office and White & Weddle, P.C. Great care was taken to ensure PLSP would be easily accessible and offer the type of legal services that would meet the needs of OEA members and their families.

Teachers and education support professionals (ESP) across the state who maintain an active OEA membership receive a variety of valuable legal services, typically at *no charge*. For example, drafting of wills (including amendments), uncontested divorces, uncontested modifi-

cations to divorce decrees (including child support), consultation and assistance in creditor disputes, name changes and misdemeanor cases are fully covered and require no out-of-pocket costs to an OEA member, his or her spouse or dependent children.

Other legal services are provided at a substantially reduced rate resulting in a huge savings to OEA members and their families. Reduced rate services include personal injury cases, nursing home negligence and insurance bad faith, just to name a few.

White & Weddle, P.C. takes great pride in the legal service we provide to our clientele. We have had the pleasure to represent OEA members and their families through this pro-

gram for over nine years. Since 1996, we have represented over 6,800 teachers or their loved ones in a wide variety of cases. The level of service that we provide to all OEA members and their families has led numerous OEA members to recommend us to their friends and other family members. Even with this large volume of cases, White & Weddle, P.C. takes the time to provide personal service to each client we help.

We carefully evaluate each case to ensure that we obtain the maximum compensation for the loss suffered by our client. Our results in helping clients with personal injury, nursing home negligence and insurance bad faith cases by way of judgment or settlement currently exceed \$50 million dollars. We have found that juries across this great state appreciate the teachers and ESPs in their communities that are working hard to educate the next generation of Oklahomans.

Personally speaking, any time I am fortunate enough to represent a teacher who has been injured through someone's negligence, juries appear

more willing to fully compensate that person because of who they are and what they represent.



Joe White

Please familiarize yourself with all of the available benefits that accompany your OEA membership. I particularly encourage you to review the OEA membership benefits associated with the PLSP. White & Weddle, P.C. maintains four attorneys and one paralegal – all of whom are ready, willing and able to assist at a moment's notice.

In closing, every education employee should know the ABC's of protecting themselves and their loved ones and who to turn to when help is needed. We are proud to be associated with the OEA and the members it represents. Our goal is to keep you informed that we are here for you and to keep PLSP in mind the next time you need help.

## PLSP offers unique security

The OEA is the only state organization in the NEA family to offer legal assistance to its members for off-the-job legal problems. Through the Personal Legal Services Program, members have access to free legal services, or services at discounted costs.

If you need help for one of the following services, call OEA's Center for Legal and Corporate Services at 800/522-8091, or 528-7785 in central Oklahoma.

### Free services include:

- Wills, including amendments
- Name changes
- Uncontested modifications to divorce decrees
- Defense of misdemeanor charges
- Child support enforcement

- Powers of attorney
- Uncontested divorces
- Uncontested adoptions (stepparent adoptions only)
- Consultation and assistance in creditor disputes, and
- Identity theft consultation and advice.

**Other situations allow a member five hours of free legal service**, with any additional time covered at a reduced rate. Those situations include:

- Personal injury
- Felony charges
- Contested modifications to divorce decrees
- Wrongful death
- Nursing home neglect, and
- Contested divorces.

## If trouble shows up at the door

Only a small percentage of OEA members ever need legal help, but when a situation arises take comfort that someone is there to help.

If you have a work-related problem and need help, call the Advocacy Specialist in your geographic region immediately (see the box on Page 3).

If the matter requires a lawyer, the OEA staff person will inform Legal and Corporate Services of your situation, and an attorney will contact you.

For legal situations away from work, access the Personal Legal Services Program by calling Legal Services at OEA Headquarters in Oklahoma City at 800/522-8091, or 528-7785 in central Oklahoma.

However large or small the problem, help is only a phone call away.

## Legal and Corporate Services

**General Counsel**  
Richard Wilkinson

**Legal Assistant/Paralegal**  
Melanie Eng

**Associate General Counsels**  
Heath Merchen  
Brandon Webb

**Legal Administrative Assistant**  
Jo Davis  
**Legal Assistant/Secretary**  
Lillia Castillo

*If you think you need legal assistance, call your regional advocacy specialist first (see page 3). They'll help you contact Legal and Corporate Services if the situation cannot be otherwise resolved.*

# When 47 equals 1

## Edmond support come together as one unit

By Adrienne Covington

Imagine having 47 different flavors of ice cream and making them in to one tasty sundae. That is exactly what Ed Whitson, president of the Support Employees of Edmond (SEE), does on a daily basis.

There are 47 different support job descriptions in the Edmond district and Whitson has managed to make a cohesive unit of support members.

With membership increasing approximately 12-15 percent each year, Ed not only does a great job of making such a diverse group feel unified, he does a great job of making other support employees want to be a part of that group.

"There are so many different aspects to support locals that you have to take care of – the different departments, multiple contracts, and a very diverse group of individuals. The most important thing is to maintain unity," said Whitson. "I work with my executive committee on a regular basis to



Ed Whitson, president of Support Employees of Edmond (SEE), presents a new bowling ball as a door prize during a recent SEE Family Night at AMF Boulevard Lanes in Edmond. The support professional local works to create unity throughout the year with family events.

ensure they are communicating with support employees in their building and that we are an obvious presence in Edmond Public Schools.

"It is also important to appreciate your members. We have family activities at least twice a year – a bowling night and a bingo night that were both well attended this year. I invite members and nonmembers so that everyone can see what it means to be a member of SEE."

Edmond's is the largest support local in Oklahoma. They have a constitution, dues structure, an executive committee, elections and activities outside of work. One of the biggest challenges facing any support local is the high turnover. Some may be employed for only a year, or even as little as two days, but Whitson does not let this discourage him.

"I understand the high turnover rate and I focus on those employees who



SEE President Ed Whitson

are dedicated to their job. Those core people are the backbone to this local," said Whitson.

According to Whitson, a support local must develop a good working relationship with the district's administration.

"An adversarial relationship will not help your people. If you can achieve a mutual respect relationship with your administration, you will achieve good things for your employee group and they will respond in kind," said Whitson.

Support employees can join their local or if there is not one organized, they can still become a member of the Oklahoma Education Association. With such a diverse group of people, different problems arise on a daily basis. Without the aid of a unified group, a support employee can feel very vulnerable and the administration can take advantage of the employee's situation.

"Problems arise and when they do, we promptly respond. Others see that their coworkers are being represented and want to join the local to have some peace of mind," said Whitson. "It is very important for a support employee to become a member because there will be a time when policies are implemented that are bad for the employees.

"There is an old saying that you can't play the game from outside the fence. Your association puts you inside the ballpark with the administration where you not only have input, but required authority."

## Math expert Toliver to keynote Convention

Kay Toliver, one of the country's most sought-after education speakers, will open the Oklahoma Education Association's fall Convention October 19 at the Tulsa Convention Center.

The OEA Convention is one of the state's largest professional development events for teachers and support professionals, attracting nearly 5,000 people every year. In addition to Toliver's address, attendees will have more than three dozen workshops from which to choose throughout the day.

Toliver taught math and communication arts for more than 30 years at PS 72/East Harlem Tech in New York.

"My educational philosophy is



Kay Toliver

simple: All students can learn," she says. "It is a teacher's job to expand minds and take children from the known to the unknown."

Nationally known for her ideas and successes for motivating young people, Toliver is the recipient of many awards, including Disney's

Outstanding Teacher for Mathematics Instruction, the Presidential Secondary Mathematics Award, and the National Science Foundation's Outstanding Educator of the Year.

OEA members may attend the Convention free by showing their membership card at registration. In addition to Toliver's keynote address and the workshops, *Oklahoma Observer* editor and education champion Frosty Troy will wrap up the event with his traditional afternoon presentation.

The Convention's trade show will feature nearly 200 vendors, who showcase education products and services, as well as jewelry and clothing.

# A quality teacher in every classroom

## OEA meets the challenge of professional development

By Marty Bull

When middle school math teachers were required to have math endorsements to remain in their current positions, the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) met the challenge by implementing Math Professional Development Institutes throughout the state.

When schools wanted to aggressively improve math scores for fifth – eighth graders, OEA Teaching and Learning (T&L) specialists established Math PDIs in each region. Funded by the Legislature and administered by the Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Preparation, the Institutes have proven to be an efficient way to help improve math scores.

“Oklahoma’s kids deserve quality schools and quality teachers,” said OEA President Roy Bishop. “Our Teaching and Learning specialists continue to do an outstanding job of developing effective professional development opportunities that assist our members in maintaining high standards.”

In the ongoing effort to improve math scores at the middle school level, OEA, in partnership with the State Department of Education, developed the Oklahoma Teachers Improving Math in Middle School (OTIMMS) for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. Funded through Gov. Brad Henry’s Achieving Classroom Excellence Act of 2005, the

program is designed to improve student mastery of the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) by enhancing a teacher’s mastery of the subject matter content and process skills. During the past summer, math teachers met at four different sites to improve their teaching skills.

“The math workshops we have offered to Oklahoma teachers have generated a renewed enthusiasm and pride in their profession,” said project coordinator Sharon Moore, T&L specialist for OEA’s Northeast regional team. “It’s been exciting to watch teachers grow as professionals, and know that growth is translating into student achievement.”

But a well rounded curriculum includes more than numbers and formulas, so as teachers embrace the demands of improving test scores in all subject areas, OEA continues to keep pace by developing professional development trainings that meet the needs of a diverse classroom.

One such training is based on Robert J. Marzano’s book *Classroom Instruction That Works*. This comprehensive research-based approach looks at nine broad teaching strategies that have positive effects on student learning, including such areas as identifying similarities and differences, homework and practice, cooperative learning, and nonlinguistic representations.



### Creating quality teachers

Nearly 400 National Board Certified teachers and administrators took part in the OEA’s first-of-its-kind policy summit to brainstorm ways to recruit and retain nationally board certified teachers at at-risk schools. The Summit was just one way the OEA works to ensure every child has a quality teacher in the classroom.

“Although the areas of concern are not new, the research has not always been available for use in the classroom,” said Floyd Cox, T&L specialist for OEA’s Oklahoma City Metro team. “If used correctly, this information can be very helpful when determining percentile gains for students. We believe this training will have a direct impact in the classroom.”

Raising test scores is such a burning issue for both schools and parents,

Teaching and Learning Specialists were prompted to add an additional training on the subject to their repertoire. Based on the Ruby Payne method, participants learn how to identify, based on No Child Left Behind, which students need to improve and in what areas. Among other things, participants learn strategies that help them assign the appropriate length of time needed to meet standards and measure student growth.

### OEA brings training to your school

Whether you need a comprehensive program for mentor teachers or a one hour presentation on a hot topic, the OEA Teaching and Learning Center remains on the cutting edge in providing a wide variety of professional trainings for OEA members. For more information, contact the Teaching and Learning specialist in your region. For a list of trainings offered by the T&L Center, visit [www.oeka.org/ForMembers/professionaldevelopment.htm](http://www.oeka.org/ForMembers/professionaldevelopment.htm)

### Need professional development?

#### Contact your regional teaching and learning specialist

**Oklahoma City Metro Team**  
Floyd Cox  
fc Cox@oeka.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Southeast Team**  
Larry Miller  
lmiller@oeka.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Northeast Team**  
Sharon Moore  
smoore@oeka.org  
800/331-5143, 918/665-2282

**Southwest Team**  
Bonnie Hammock  
bhammock@oeka.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Northwest Team**  
Debby Stine  
dstine@oeka.org  
800/439-0393, 580/256-0071

**Tulsa Metro Team**  
Deborah Brooks  
dbrooks@oeka.org  
800/331-5143, 918/665-2282

**Dr. Dottie Caldwell**  
Associate Executive Director  
dcaldwell@oeka.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

# Members create unforgettable legislative year

By *Adrienne Covington*

There is no way around it – you, the members of the Oklahoma Education Association, are responsible for the 2006 legislative accomplishments.

Your lobbying efforts ensured legislators were fully aware of the presence of Oklahoma educators. You let them know that teachers deserved \$3,000 *with no strings attached*, you let them know that you would not let another year go by when a support professional did not receive a pay raise, and you let them know that Oklahoma's students deserve the basic right to a high quality public education.

"I cannot say enough how proud I am of the members of the OEA. Teachers and support professionals took time from their busy schedules to write letters, send emails and make phone calls to let the legislators know that education has a voice and that voice is loud," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "Thanks to the grassroots

*"I cannot say enough how proud I am of the members of the OEA."*  
President Roy Bishop

efforts of our hometown lobbyists – our members – education received a nod from the state legislature."

OEA members and the team of legislative political organizers were successful in securing pay increases for certified teachers as well as support professionals. However, many other areas of education received attention during this last legislative session.

Insurance premiums for active and retired members were blended, promising a savings for pre-Medicare retirees when rates changes in 2007. While those rates have not been set, retirees could see a savings of \$60-80 a month.

Retired educators will receive a 2 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) beginning with August checks.

"Oklahoma's retired educators are

the ones who make it possible for our current and future teachers to do well in their field. Without their hard work and dedication to build our system to where it is today, Oklahoma's students would not have a foundation for success," said Bishop.

Legislation was approved that will work to close the achievement gaps through professional development. The law requires that all professional development be focused on increasing API scores, closing achievement gaps, increasing student test scores, increasing graduation rates or decreasing college remediation rates. Another bill related to professional development will require yearly training for identification of child abuse, which will be offered through the Department of Human Services.

A special fund was established to provide \$5,000 annual stipends for nationally certified speech pathologists, audiologists and school psychologists.

The Governor's Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) Task Force determined what Oklahoma needed to do in order to further improve our students' high school graduation rate. Current law requires any student "entering into the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2008-09 school year must demonstrate mastery in four out of six subject areas in order to receive a high school diploma."

Currently there are only four exams that will meet that requirement so the law needed to be addressed not only in this area, but many others to ensure Oklahoma's students have the best options available.

Students will now have options when it comes to taking the end-of-instruction (EOI) exams. The bill requires the development of an Algebra II, Geometry and English III EOI exams.

"Our members will reap the successes of their efforts during the 2006 legislative session," said Bishop. "Our members are the backbone of this organization and it is imperative that we continue to grow so we can continue to make accomplishments like the ones this past session."

## Voluntary contributions elect friends of education

Every decision made for education is made by a politician. Whether it is the governor, the State Legislature or the local school board, elected officials determine how our schools are run.

That's why many Oklahoma Education Association members choose to make voluntary contributions to OEA's nonpartisan Fund for Children and Public Education (OEA FCPE). They know that the political environment is a significant factor affecting their jobs every day.

Voluntary OEA FCPE contributions are designed to help elect friends of education to political office. Dues dollars are never used to support political candidates.

The Association uses an in-depth process to find candidates who will vote favorably on public education legislation, using members at every step. First-time candidates complete a questionnaire and incumbents' voting records are examined. Every candidate who participates in the process also sits for an interview with a panel of members.

Recommended candidates typically receive financial support for their campaign expenses, but the contribution amount differs depending on the political race and the needs of the candidate.

By recommending the candidate, OEA is asking members to consider voting for the candidate. But the OEA FCPE knows that its recommendations are but one source for members to consider before entering the voting booth.

"We go through this process so that we can help our members make informed decisions regarding political candidates," said Roy Bishop, OEA president.

## Want to be involved politically?

Contact your regional legislative and organizing specialist

**Northeast Team**  
**Jim Bynum**

jbynum@okea.org  
800/331-5143, 918/665-2282

**Northwest Team**  
**Daniela Newville**

dnewville@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Oklahoma City Metro Team**  
**David Kueter**

dkueter@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Southeast Team**  
**Jerry Johnson**

jjohnson@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Southwest Team**  
**Norman Cooper**

ncooper@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Tulsa Metro Team**  
**Pat Smith**

psmith@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

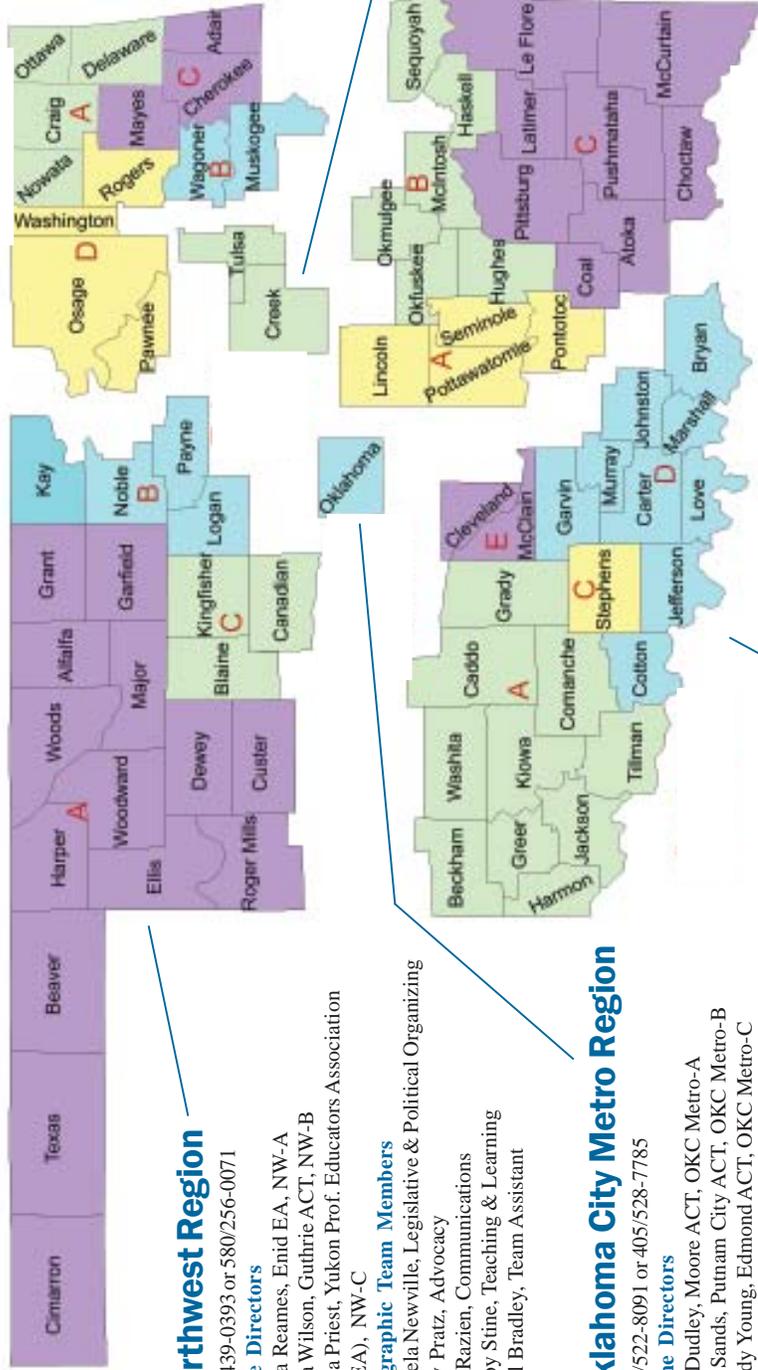
**Nancy Garcia**  
Team Assistant

ngarcia@okea.org

**Joel Robison**

Associate Executive Director  
jrobison@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

# OEA Regional Teams



## Northwest Region

800/439-0393 or 580/256-0071

### Zone Directors

Linda Reames, Enid EA, NW-A  
 Carla Wilson, Guthrie ACT, NW-B  
 Alicia Priest, Yukon Prof. Educators Association (YPEA), NW-C

### Geographic Team Members

Daniela Newville, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Mary Pratz, Advocacy  
 Patti Razien, Communications  
 Debby Stine, Teaching & Learning  
 Carol Bradley, Team Assistant

## Oklahoma City Metro Region

800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

### Zone Directors

Jill Dudley, Moore ACT, OKC Metro-A  
 Jan Sands, Putnam City ACT, OKC Metro-B  
 Cindy Young, Edmond ACT, OKC Metro-C  
 Lori Burris, Midwest City-Del City ACT, OKC Metro-D

### Geographic Team Members

Adrienne Covington, Communications  
 Floyd Cox, Teaching & Learning  
 David Kueter, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Pam Westbrook, Advocacy  
 David Williams, Advocacy  
 Mary Lou Koskie, Team Assistant

## At-Large

### Board Members

ESP – Sherrie Barnes, Union SPA,  
 & Diane Ledford, Sapulpa United Educators  
**Administrators** – Todd Crabtree, Byng EA  
**Retired Teachers** – Dick Neptune, Lawton  
**Ex Officio** – Carolyn Crowder, Mustang EA and NEA  
 Executive Committee

## Northwest Region

800/439-0393 or 580/256-0071

### Zone Directors

Linda Reames, Enid EA, NW-A  
 Carla Wilson, Guthrie ACT, NW-B  
 Alicia Priest, Yukon Prof. Educators Association (YPEA), NW-C

### Geographic Team Members

Daniela Newville, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Mary Pratz, Advocacy  
 Patti Razien, Communications  
 Debby Stine, Teaching & Learning  
 Carol Bradley, Team Assistant

## Oklahoma City Metro Region

800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

### Zone Directors

Jill Dudley, Moore ACT, OKC Metro-A  
 Jan Sands, Putnam City ACT, OKC Metro-B  
 Cindy Young, Edmond ACT, OKC Metro-C  
 Lori Burris, Midwest City-Del City ACT, OKC Metro-D

### Geographic Team Members

Adrienne Covington, Communications  
 Floyd Cox, Teaching & Learning  
 David Kueter, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Pam Westbrook, Advocacy  
 David Williams, Advocacy  
 Mary Lou Koskie, Team Assistant

## At-Large

### Board Members

ESP – Sherrie Barnes, Union SPA,  
 & Diane Ledford, Sapulpa United Educators  
**Administrators** – Todd Crabtree, Byng EA  
**Retired Teachers** – Dick Neptune, Lawton  
**Ex Officio** – Carolyn Crowder, Mustang EA and NEA  
 Executive Committee

## Northeast Region

800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

### Zone Directors

Steve Hawkins, Vinita CTA, NE-A  
 John Lefler, Muskogee EA, NE-B  
 Kimberly Meigs, Tahlequah EA, NE-C  
 Don Ryan, Cleveland EA, NE-D

### Geographic Team Members

Jim Bynum, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Paul Gayowski, Advocacy  
 Sharon Moore, Teaching & Learning  
 Jeff Savage, Communications  
 Tina Townsend, Team Assistant

## Tulsa Metro Region

800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

### Zone Directors

Lynn Stockley, Tulsa CTA, Tulsa Metro-A  
 Patti Ferguson, Tulsa CTA, Tulsa Metro-B  
 Carol Randall, Owasso EA, Tulsa Metro-C  
 Sarah Cooper, Union CTA, Tulsa Metro-D  
 Janet Brewster, Broken Arrow EA, Tulsa Metro-E

### Geographic Team Members

Deborah Brooks, Teaching & Learning  
 Marty Bull, Communications  
 Linda Hendrix, Advocacy (TCTA)  
 Pat Smith, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Susan Stowe, Advocacy  
 Tina Townsend, Team Assistant

## Southeast Region

800/563-4230 or 405/275-4060

### Zone Directors

Judy Chaffin, Seminole ACT, SE-A  
 Lawrence E. Lane, Checotah CTA, SE-B  
 Sharon Hill-Wooten, Idabel EA, SE-C

### Geographic Team Members

Jackie Davis, Advocacy  
 Jerry Johnson, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Larry Miller, Teaching & Learning  
 Bruce Treadway, Communications  
 Kim Holley, Team Assistant

## Charles McCauley Associate Executive Director

OEA Regional Teams  
 cmccauley@okea.org  
 800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

## Southwest Region

800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

### Zone Directors

Linda Long, Elk City EA, SW-A  
 Todd Richards, Comanche EA, SW-C  
 Becki Munholland, Healdton ACT, SW-D  
 Sheri Childress, Prof. Educators of Norman (PEN), SW-E

### Geographic Team Members

Norman Cooper, Legislative & Political Organizing  
 Doug Folks, Communications  
 Bonnie Hammock, Teaching & Learning  
 Advocacy Specialist to be announced  
 Teresa Davis, Team Assistant

# Bishop looks forward to second term

Roy Bishop was re-elected last spring to a second term as president of the Oklahoma Education Association, the state's largest, most influential education professional organization.

During his first term, the 8th grade geography teacher from Stillwater led the Association through membership increases and dynamic successes at the legislature. Bishop recently sat down with the *Education Focus* to look back on the last three years and forward to the next three.

**Education Focus: When you look back over your first term as OEA President, what events stand out as successes?**

**Roy Bishop:** "We've had several high points over the last three years, but I think finally realizing our long-term goal of fully paid individual health insurance for teachers has to be one of the biggest successes. Having the governor commit to a salary schedule that will get our members to the regional average in pay is huge and, internally, our members' commitment to the Adequacy and Equity Project have been important."

**EF: Is there anything you wish you could go back and try again?**

**RB:** "No. You do what you do, and do your best. It's important to learn from success and things that weren't so successful, and you continue to move forward."

**EF: Were there any big surprises during your first term?**

**RB:** "Having to hire an executive director was a surprise I didn't fore-



*Roy Bishop reads to a classroom of children during the Student OEA's Outreach to Teach last spring at Oklahoma City's Westwood Elementary. Bishop is beginning his second term as OEA president.*

see. David DuVall (who left OEA for a similar job with the Colorado Education Association) and I had worked together for a long time and I did not expect him to leave. While the change in the leadership in the State House of Representatives wasn't a total surprise, their refusal to meet with OEA leadership was a disappointing surprise."

**EF: When you came into office, you developed a message of "High Standards, Quality Teachers and Respect." Have you been pleased with the progress the Association has made toward meeting those goals, or promoting them in various arenas?**

**RB:** "It's a sure sign of respect to begin paying teachers what they are worth. When we see that our support professionals and teachers both have fully-paid individual health insurance and our teachers' salaries are moving up, we have to be pleased that our

message is being heard. The Association has always been about high standards as is evident by our commitment to the National Board Certification process. The National Board Certification Policy Summit was a great example of the high standards that we hold for teachers and students alike. I think high standards go hand in hand with quality teachers."

**EF: Do you have specific goals you want to reach over the next three years?**

**RB:** "I think that as Oklahoma and the world changes, we must continue our commitment to creating an education system that meets our children's needs. We'll continue to be committed to a quality teacher in every classroom, and that requires adequately funding our children's education."

**EF: Are the challenges any different now than they were three years ago?**

**RB:** "In the legislative arena, yes, the challenges are different. Because of term limits, we have to establish new relationships."

**EF: What has changed outside of the Association that has most affected your job as president of the OEA?**

**RB:** "The attacks on public education have intensified. There are so many programs being pushed that sound great, but in reality do nothing to

promote quality education. TABOR, the so-called Taxpayers Bill of Rights, has nothing to do with anyone's rights, but adversely affects everything from schools to roads to health care. And the 65 Percent Solution is truly a delusion; a feel-good name for a program that will be devastating to school system budgets if it becomes a reality."

**EF: What is the health of OEA today?**

**RB:** "I think the OEA is very strong today. We have had an increase of more than 1,200 active members over the last two years. Our members are actively engaged in fighting the negative challenges that are out there. They're actively involved in the legislative process as well as teaching and learning issues. We're in great shape."

## Volunteer opportunities

Standing committees of the Oklahoma Education Association provide a great opportunity for members to have a voice at the state level. If you are interested in serving on a state committee, send an email with your request to President Roy Bishop at [rbishop@okea.org](mailto:rbishop@okea.org).

For a look at the charges of each OEA committee, visit [www.okea.org/Governance/committee.htm](http://www.okea.org/Governance/committee.htm).

## OEA Committees

- Affiliate Relations
- Budget
- Collective Bargaining
- Communications
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Convention
- Credentials
- Elections
- Education Support Professionals
- Forces on Education
- Human and Civil Rights
- Instruction and Professional Development
- Legal and Corporate Services
- Legislative
- Member Benefits
- Political Action Committee
- Resolutions
- Review Board
- Standing Rules

## Association governance

**President Roy Bishop**  
[rbishop@okea.org](mailto:rbishop@okea.org)

**Vice President Becky Felts**  
[bfelts@okea.org](mailto:bfelts@okea.org)

**Executive Director  
Lela Odom**  
[lodom@okea.org](mailto:lodom@okea.org)

**Administrative Assistants**  
**Janice Dealy**  
[jdealy@okea.org](mailto:jdealy@okea.org)  
**Lorraine Newton**  
[lnewton@okea.org](mailto:lnewton@okea.org)

**OEA Headquarters**  
Toll-free -- 800/522-8091  
Local -- 528-7785  
Fax -- 523-4324

# Consistent, timely communication is key

By Doug Folks

When Greer Nichols became president of the Broken Arrow Education Association (BAEA), he felt the local needed a consistent communications tool and that the members needed and deserved a regular pat on the back.

He has accomplished both goals by publishing the *BAEA News Leader*, a monthly newsletter for the 560 members of this suburban Tulsa district. The publication won an OEA Golden Apple Award this year for outstanding internal communications.

“One of the things I felt we needed in our association was a form of communication that was dependable and disseminated things to people in a timely fashion,” Nichols said.

The local had a newsletter when he came into office, but it was printed on an irregular basis. By publishing on time at regular intervals, the local Association established a consistent presence with its members.

Nichols added that it was important for members to feel good about themselves and the newsletter provided an avenue for the Association to say thanks for a job well done or to brag about successes of its members.

“I feel that it is very important to build the morale in our members because sometimes that doesn’t come from anywhere else,” said Nichols, a fifth grade teacher at Vandever El-

ementary.

BAEA publishes the *News Leader* each month during the school year. Nichols uses a template for the layout and writes most of the articles himself.

At times, he solicits stories from his mem-

bers or uses material written by Susan Stowe, OEA advocacy specialist for the Tulsa Metro Team.

“It would be easy to fill four pages or more with NEA and OEA things that are already prepared,” Nichols said. He added that it’s important for members to see that membership in the BAEA, OEA and NEA is all the same, and to fully understand the relationship between the three organizations. For the *News Leader*,

Nichols said he prefers to keep most of the material about local Association business and events. State and national publications reach his members and he doesn’t want to re-run something they’ve already seen.

Large issues of the *News Leader* will be four pages (an 11 x 17 sheet folded in half), but most months are

Each issue is printed in time for the monthly Executive Committee meeting, which is attended by officers and building representatives. The building reps leave the meeting with copies for members in their buildings, and Nichols says that helps members realize the connection between BAEA and the building reps.

At last year’s Summer Leadership Academy, Nichols heard of the importance to communicate with younger teachers in a format they embrace. That means using the latest technology, so he recruited BAEA member Tony Taylor as the local’s webmaster. Now the local has a presence on the Internet at [www.baeaweb.org](http://www.baeaweb.org).

To compliment the communications efforts, BAEA has negotiated the right to a regular spot on every Broken Arrow School Board meeting agenda. Also, the local negotiated the right to have time on every building level meeting at which building reps give an update.

Communications is the key to every local’s success. Maintaining an active local, and then telling members and nonmembers alike what the local is doing, is vital. In Broken Arrow, members are always up-to-date.



Broken Arrow’s Greer Nichols and copies of the BAEA News Leader.

the front and back of a single sheet of paper, either 8 ½ x 11 or legal size (8 ½ x 14). The important aspect is that BAEA communicates regularly with its mem-

## It’s easy to stay in touch

Communicating with our members is a top priority, and the Association does so in a variety of ways.

This publication – *the Education Focus* – was recently recognized as the best newspaper among NEA affiliates of similar size to the OEA. It is published nine times a year, covering events that affect our members and public education, personality features of members, and Association programs and happenings.

Another popular communication vehicle is *The Insider*, a weekly e-newsletter sent via home emails every Monday morning. The Insider includes regional news and late-breaking news, as well as information on programs and services not affiliated with the OEA that members may find useful.

See “OEA e-newsletters” on Page 11

## Need communications help?

Contact your regional communications specialist

**Oklahoma City Metro Team**  
Adrienne Covington  
acovington@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Southwest Team**  
Doug Folks  
dfolks@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Northeast Team**  
Jeff Savage  
jsavage@okea.org  
800/331-5143, 918/665-2282

**Tulsa Metro Team**  
Marty Bull  
mbull@okea.org  
800/331-5143, 918/665-2282

**Northwest Team**  
Patti Serio  
prazien@okea.org  
800/439-0393, 580/256-0071

**Maureen Peters**  
Team Assistant  
mpeters@okea.org

**Southeast Team**  
Bruce Treadaway  
btreadaway@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

**Dr. Dottie Caldwell**  
Associate Executive Director  
dcaldwell@okea.org  
800/522-8091, 405/528-7785

# What qualifies as free speech in our schools?



Brandon Webb

By Brandon Webb

Associate General Counsel

With classes getting ready to start back up, it is important to know what material has been deemed unacceptable in a school setting. Let's take a back-to-school quiz and see if you can pick out the statement below which is so offensive that a school district said it was "a grave mistake" to let a high school student utter this quote.

## Quiz #1

A. "Those who can win a war can rarely make good peace and those who could make good peace would never have won the war."

B. "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

C. "I am a soldier, I fight where I am told, and I win where I fight."

D. "Strength lies not in defense, but in attack."

E. "The best defense is a good offense."

Maybe that was too easy. It's obvious which quote is so terrible that a school claimed, "We failed miserably" when we let a student express this thought.

Alright, look at the next set of statements and see if you can identify which one caused the same district to "offer our sincerest apologies for the pain that this situation has caused to members of our community."

## Quiz #2

A. "Everyone lies to his neighbor; their flattering lips speak with deception."

B. "The great masses of people will more easily fall victims to a big lie than to a small one."

C. "In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."

D. "If tyranny and oppression come

## From your counsel

to this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy."

E. "What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is brought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy?"

Perhaps you did better on this quiz than I did. I'm still trying to figure out which quotes "caused hurt and pain" to the students. Maybe it will help if we know the context in which the statements were made.

Like numerous schools, the seniors at Northport (N.Y.) High School (NHS) are allowed to put a quote underneath their yearbook picture. This past spring, two seniors picked quotes which were deemed unacceptable by the school. Unfortunately, it was only after the yearbook was printed and distributed that the school realized the quotes were dangerous.

The district launched an investigation into how something this egregious could happen in its yearbook. Likewise, the district immediately instituted a committee to make sure statements like these would never appear in the yearbook again.

The school is considering compiling a list of people they deem controversial and prohibit students from using quotes from those figures. Another solution offered by the school is to eliminate student comments from the yearbook altogether.

Well, clearly the school is going to clamp down on this type of speech in the future, but what about the harm of the current yearbook. For those who cannot accept the yearbook in its current form, the school provides

two options:

1) Students may bring their yearbooks back to school where staff members will place labels over the quotes; or,

2) The publishing company will replace the two pages where the quotes appeared, and promises the changes will be undetectable. District administrators suggest that all students take advantage of one of these corrective measures, at no charge, of course.

*(Those of you taking this quiz at home, please do not try to cover this quiz with your own marker or sticker. Censorship is a job for trained professionals.)*

The official yearbook, which will be housed in the school archives, will not contain the quotes in question, and the yearbook sponsor who let this abomination slip by, has been required to issue a written public apology.

So, which quotes were clear and present dangers? I personally was not able to identify the offending statements without the answer key. The egregious quotes were both made by Adolf Hitler.

Now that you know who the author was, can you identify the revolting statements in the above quizzes. Do you now

find some quotes repugnant and others not? And if you were not offended by the quote the first time you read it, why does the statement turn unpleasant when you know who said it?

I still believe my history teachers were correct when they taught me what a horrible person Hitler was and condemned the terrible way he suppressed opposing views. I'm just glad I didn't attend a school which brought in a specialist to remove any reference to Hitler from the history books or I may have never known how terrible he was.

Finally, could all of the quotes be from Hitler, or none of them? Would you find the statements okay if someone else had said them? Here are the authors of our quiz quotes: Quiz #1, A) Winston Churchill; B) George Washington; C) George Patton; D) Adolf Hitler; E) Brandon's former basketball coach. Quiz #2, A) The Bible, (Psalm 12:2, NIV); B) Adolf Hitler; C) Winston Churchill; D) James Madison; E) Mahatma Gandhi.

## OEA e-newsletters include the latest news

Continued from Page 10

The weekly legislative updates and a new vehicle, the OEA Campaign Bulletin, are also e-newsletters sent to member homes. These two electronic publications cover the latest legislative and political campaign news relevant to education and OEA members.

OEA's website, [okea.org](http://okea.org), is a comprehensive site covering every aspect of the Association and public education either through articles or links.

No matter where you are in the world, you can always get the latest information on the OEA.

To receive the OEA's electronic newsletters, send your home email address to Brenda Snider at [bsnider@okea.org](mailto:bsnider@okea.org). (Only home emails can be accepted.)

# RA calls for sweeping NCLB reforms

More than 8,500 of elected delegates representing public school employees from across the nation gathered in Orlando, Fla., during the first week of July to conduct the business of the National Education Association. The Oklahoma Education Association had 120 delegates representing you at the 85th Representative Assembly.

Over the course of four days, delegates deliberated through an ambitious agenda for the future of Oklahoma's schools as well as the nation as a whole. Delegates finished with a strong commitment to affording all children their basic right to a high quality education.

"I'm very proud that Oklahoma had such a strong representation at the annual RA," said Roy Bishop, OEA

president. "This year we were faced with some challenging issues, but Oklahoma's teachers can be proud that their views were well-represented in Orlando."

The world's largest deliberative body tackled issues affecting education, including school employee pensions and the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

In all, 80 New Business Items were considered during the RA, in addition to 20 legislative amendments, three amendments to the NEA Constitution, one amendment to the NEA Bylaws, three amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, and an amendment to the NEA Policy Statements.

Not only did delegates work to better the organization and education as a



Oklahoma NEA Director Greg Johnson of Mustang conducts the NEA Choir during July's Representative Assembly. (Photo courtesy of Bill Guy, Tennessee EA and former OEA staffer.)

whole, they also worked to better our government by sending 11,000 messages to Congress and collected more than 1,000 personal stories about NCLB and its impact on schools.

Among the Assembly's most important business was the approval of NEA's Positive Agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization. ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), also known as Pres. Bush's NCLB, will be reauthorized in 2007. The Positive Agenda promotes moving NCLB away from labeling and punishment to providing student accountability through

multiple measures and growth models.

The Agenda also calls for revising the "highly qualified teacher" definition, and funding of the mandates of the law.

"Fully funded pre-kindergarten programs, small classes and increasing parental involvement would be huge steps toward closing the achievement gap, which is what NCLB should be trying to achieve," said Bishop. "The NEA and the OEA have made a commitment to ensure that every child has the basic right to a high quality public education, and the Positive Agenda would help us reach that goal."

## NEA honors SOEA, Cox

The future of the Oklahoma Education Association lies within the hands of those college students aspiring to become teachers. Floyd Cox, student organizer of the Student Oklahoma Education Association (SOEA) and OEA teaching and learning specialist, has taken the student organization to new heights this year.

Cox and the SOEA were honored at the annual National Education Association Student Program Leadership Conference, held June 25-28 in Orlando, Fla., prior to the NEA Representative Assembly.

Cox was the recipient of the NEA Student Program Outstanding State Organizer Award, which recognizes an individual for his or her dedication and service to the NEA Student Program at the state level.

"It was such a great honor to have been nominated by the SOEA members, much less win the award," said Cox.

"We have worked so hard to gain participation within SOEA and this organization wouldn't be the success it is today with-

out the dedication of our students and of our past president, Katy Cook."

The SOEA was awarded the State Excellence Award, which recognizes student programs that have achieved excellence by providing members with leadership and development opportunities through the areas of teacher quality, community outreach and political action.

SOEA's Outreach to Teach program has garnered national attention for the last two years under the leadership of Cook and Cox.

Oklahoma's student program continued its success with the New Local Chapter Recognition award for the addition of Oral Roberts University's student member program.

The conference titled, "Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow," offered students from across the nation an opportunity to develop the professional skills necessary to help deliver on the promise of great public schools for every child. Oklahoma's 15 student participants learned first hand what to expect once they enter a classroom of their own.

## Crowder re-elected to NEA Executive Committee

ORLANDO — Carolyn Crowder, an elementary and vocal music teacher from Mustang, Okla., was reelected to the National Education Association Executive Committee, the nine-member governing body that oversees the 2.8 million-member association.

Crowder, who ran unopposed, was elected by more than 8,500 delegates attending NEA's Representative Assembly. Her three-year term begins September 1.

"America's public schools continue to face many challenges and need our help now more than ever," Crowder said. "Public education should be the number one priority for lawmakers, from the local to national level. I'm honored to continue NEA's commitment to great public schools for every child."

With two decades of teaching experience, Crowder has been a champion for public education and school employees at the state and local levels. Before being elected to the NEA Executive Committee in 2003, she served two terms as president of the Oklahoma Education Association. She was also a member of the OEA Board of Directors for six years, on various state committees, and Chair of the Oklahoma Education Coalition.



Carolyn Crowder

# Life is easier with OEA discount programs

## Financial Services Programs

• OEA Visa Gold Card with fixed interest rate of 9.49 percent and no annual fee, offered through the *Oklahoma Educators Credit Union*. 800/324-8259

• Whole life plans available through *American Fidelity Assurance Company*. 800/654-8489

• Disability Income Protection and Group Life available through *American Fidelity Assurance Company*. 800/654-8489

## Insurance Programs

• Home health care in custodial, intermediate and skilled care with no lifetime maximum through *National Teacher Associates*, which also offers specific dread disease coverage. 800/825-5682

• Permanent cash value insurance and automobile insurance through *Horace Mann Insurance Company*. 800/999-1030

## Investment Programs

All programs provide no-cost, financial planning and tax reform seminars with products that feature choice, consistent performance and flexibility:

- *NEA Valuebuilder* 800/632-8258
- *American Fidelity Assurance Company* 800/654-8489
- *Horace Mann Insurance Company* 800/999-1030

## Your ACCESS to great discounts

OEA membership provides a wealth of discounts on dining, travel, entertainment, services and a variety of goods such as tires, computers and clothing. Your membership card includes a unique registration number which allows you to preview all the discounts at a special website.

Your 2006-07 membership card has a different number than last year, so you will have to re-register with ACCESS using that new number so that you can take advantage of the many discounts.

Enter the ACCESS site from OEA's home page, [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org). Just click on the membership card icon on the opening page.



## Discount Programs

• **Flowers USA** – Send fresh flowers, plants, balloons and gift baskets from Flowers USA. Save 15 percent by referencing department code #1052. Call 800/243-3687 for delivery anywhere in the world.

• **Jiffy Lube** – A subsidiary of Pennzoil Company, Jiffy Lube will honor a 10 percent discount for standardized fluid maintenance services at any participating Jiffy Lube service center. Just show your OEA membership card. 800/252-0554, ext. 6838

• **American Automobile Association** – AAA will waive the one-time enrollment fee of \$15 for any OEA member when joining. Access this discount by contacting Carol Turner Bales at AAA, 800/926-9922.

• **Oklahoma Today Magazine** – Subscribe to *Oklahoma Today* and learn about the people and places of Oklahoma. Members receive six issues full of award-winning stories and photographs for \$17 per year. Call 405/521-2496 or 800/777-1793 and mention OEA to receive this rate.

• **Vantage Deluxe World Travel** – The largest organization providing affinity group travel. As such, it can offer the best values and the highest quality programs in the market to OEA members. 800/634-2180.

• **Oklahoma Breast Care Center** – Providing discounts on mammograms, ultrasound and litescan. 405/755-2273, or 877/349-8677

• **Bose Corporation**, makers of

highly acclaimed audio products, offers special pricing to OEA members on all Bose home-audio products. Whether in your office, classroom or home, just imagine yourself surrounded with Bose concert-like sound! Bose Corporation has the perfect pricing just for you. Special OEA pricing is available through the Educators Direct Group at 800/643-2673, and press 2.

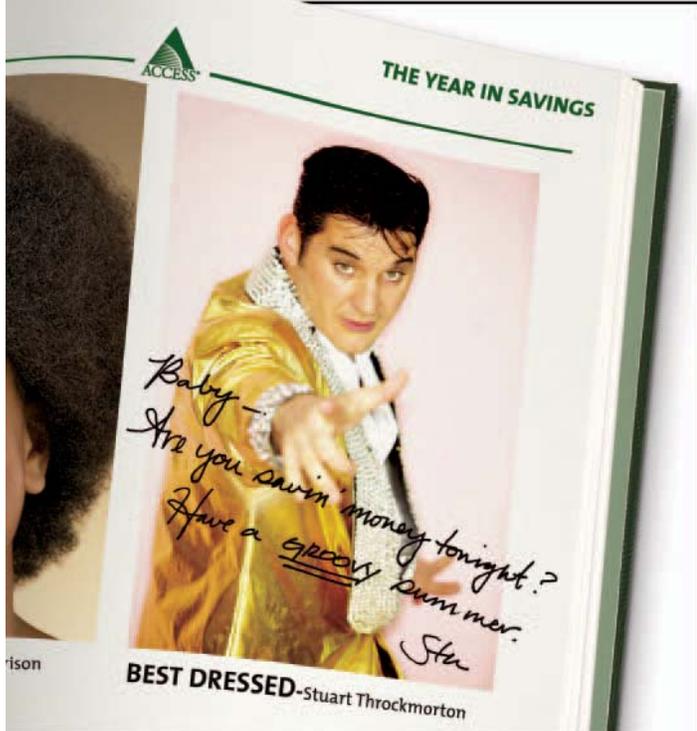
• **Journey House Travel** offers special travel packages and the capability of recommending alternative itineraries with possible lower fares. They can offer some discounted hotel and car rates with their increased buying power through their affiliation with American Express. Journey House provides \$300,000 insurance coverage on every airline ticket issued by the agency at no cost to the traveler. Call 405/843-9447 or toll-free at 800/737-9447 to make your travel arrangements.

• **LaQuinta Hotel** offers an OEA special rate with up to 35 percent off, available at participating hotels. There are over 375 LaQuinta Inn and LaQuinta Inns & Suites locations nationwide. 800/531-5900

• **Alamo NEA Car Rental** program offers discounts up to 25 percent off using I.D. Number 613575 and rate code by coupon DB31. 800/354-2322

• **Hertz NEA Car Rental** offers member discounts at participating locations in the U.S. and around the world. Use discount number 0050655. 800/654-2210

## OEA/Access Presents:



## SAVINGS ARE ALWAYS IN STYLE

Visit [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org) and discover attractive deals from places like:

*Eddie Bauer* *Coldwater Creek* *LOFT* *NEW YORK & COMPANY*

# NEA membership provides value, service

## Association Provided Insurance

Your membership includes \$1 million in civil liability insurance, and \$35,000 in criminal liability. Also, you receive \$1,000 in accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance, plus an additional \$4,000 if the accident occurs on the job with additional coverage available through American Fidelity Assurance. (800/637-8489)

## Life Insurance Programs\* (800/637-4636)

**NEA Preferred Term Life Plan** – Provides \$100,000 to \$500,000 of very affordable life insurance for healthy members.

**NEA Term Life Insurance Plan** – Provides decreasing term insurance with benefit amounts ranging from \$50,000 to \$150,000. Optional spouse and dependent coverage.

**NEA AD&D/AD&D Plus Insurance Plan** – You can cover your entire family with AD&D insurance. Choose from plans with rates starting at \$19 per year and coverage options up to \$520,000.

**NEA DUES-TAB® Insurance** – Free coverage for eligible members. DUES-TAB is a special benefit that pays up to \$50,000 in AD&D insurance or dismemberment that occurs on the job or while acting on Association business, and a \$150,000 benefit for death due to unlawful homicide while actively engaged in their occupation.

**NEA Guaranteed Issue Life Plan** – For NEA members 50 and older – you cannot be turned down for coverage.

**NEA Level Premium Term Life Insurance Plan** – Provides up to \$250,000 of decreasing term life insurance coverage with a premium that does not increase. Receive a special 20 percent discount when you purchase a minimum of \$40,000 or \$100,000, depending on your age.

**NEA Home Protection® Plan** – Life insurance benefits of up to \$300,000 with optional disability benefits.

## Health and Disability Insurance Programs (800/637-4636)

**NEA MemberCare® Critical Illness Program** – Up to \$100,000 protection against the financial disaster caused by catastrophic illness. Pays a lump-sum benefit to member upon first diagnosis of a wide array of critical conditions.

**NEA MemberCare® Long-Term Care Insurance Program** – Provides financial support in paying for necessary long-term care services like nursing home, home health care and assisted living facility care.

**NEA MemberCare® In-Hospital Plan** – Helps you pay the “extra” expenses associated with a hospital stay.

**NEA MemberCare® Medicare Supplement Program\*** – Coverage for hospital and medical expenses not covered by Medicare after age 65. It includes a supplemental discount package and hard-to-beat prices. You get to choose your own doctor.

**NEA Income Protection® Plan** – Helps replace your income if you are out of work due to illness or injury.

## Casualty Insurance Programs

**NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance™** – An auto and home insurance program designed to meet the needs of NEA members, with exclusive rates and excellent benefits. It's all made possible by NEA Member Benefits and a unique collaboration of insurance providers managed by California Casualty. (800/800-9410)

**NEA Homeowners® Insurance** – Provided through Horace Mann, this plan offers inflation-proof protection for owners and renters at school and at home. (800/999-1030)

## Savings, Deposit and Investment Programs (800/637-4636)

**NEA-sponsored, FDIC-Insured Money Market Account** – Superior yields with easy access to your funds.

**NEA-sponsored**

**GoldCertificate® CD** – Some of the highest yields in the nation. FDIC insured up to \$100,000 per depositor, with terms from six to 60 months.

**NEA Valuebuilder® Program** – Build a retirement nest egg with the only annuity and mutual fund program sponsored by the NEA. (800/632-8258)

## Credit Programs (800/637-4636)

**NEA Line of Credit®** – Access a credit line between \$500 and \$25,000\*\* using personalized checks.

**NEA Credit Card Program®\*\*\*** – Superior benefits exclusive to NEA members with the NEA Platinum Plus MasterCard®, NEA Premier Gold® MasterCard®, or the NEA School Days® MasterCard®. Benefits to members include no annual fee, low introductory rates, travel benefits and competitive interest rates.

**New NEA WorldPoints Program** – Earn 1 point for every dollar spent. Redeem points for cash, travel and merchandise rewards.

## Loan and Mortgage Programs

**NEA National Board Certification Loans** – A low-cost line of credit designed to cover the assessment fee for National Board Certification. (800/637-4636)

**NEA Home Financing Program®** – Includes new mortgages, refinances and home equity loans. Handle everything up to closing through a toll-free telephone number. Vacation package bonus with new mortgages and refinances. (800/632-4968)

**NEA Personal Loans** – An unsecured personal loan between \$3,000 and \$25,000 – no collateral needed. (800/525-1211)

## Special Discount Programs (800/637-4636)

**NEA Car Rental Programs** – Enjoy free unlimited mileage and special year-round savings when you rent a car from Hertz or Alamo through the NEA Car Rental Program.

**NEA Magazine Services** – Over

500 titles at up to 80 percent off newsstand prices. Visit our web site at [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com).

## Free Member Education Guides (800/637-4636)

or read online at [neamb.com](http://neamb.com)

- Auto Insurance Consumer Guide
- NEA Homeowner's Insurance
- NEA Tax-Deferred Annuities
- NEA MemberCare Long-Term Care

- A Simple Guide to Home Financing
- Understanding Medicare and Medicare Supplement Insurance
- How Much Income Protection Do You Need?
- NEA Survivor's Guide
- Managing Credit
- 23 Financial Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make
- Healthy, Wealthy and Wise
- Understanding the Taxpayer Relief Act
- Disability Income Insurance Consumer Guide

\*Provided by the NEA Members Insurance Trust®

\*\*Receipt of the maximum credit line is subject to MBNA America's income and creditworthiness standards.

\*\*\*You may contact the issuer and administrator of this program, MBNA America Bank, to request specific information about the costs associated with these credit cards by calling 800/468-7632 or by writing to P.O. Box 15020, Wilmington, DE 19850. Certain restrictions apply.

Platinum Plus is a federally registered service mark of MBNA America Bank, n.a.

MasterCard® is a federally registered service mark of MasterCard International Inc. used pursuant to license.

For more information, contact your NEA Member Benefits Consultant:

**Liz Picone, 800/609-6580**  
[lpicone@neamb.com](mailto:lpicone@neamb.com)

**NEA Member Benefits Member Service Center**

800/637-4636

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (ET)

Hearing-impaired members call 800/445-1269 TTY.



# American Fidelity Assurance Company

*Providing Quality Products and Services to the*

## OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

American Fidelity Assurance Company has been providing financial security solutions to the Oklahoma Education Association since 1969. With insurance products and services developed specifically for the education employee, our commitment to the members of the Oklahoma Education Association is to continue to provide quality products and services.

- **Disability Income Insurance**
- **Accident Only Insurance**
- **Tax-Deferred Annuities**
- **Life Insurance**
- **Section 125 “Cafeteria” Plans**



**American Fidelity Assurance Company**  
A member of the American Fidelity Group®

***Oklahoma City Branch Office***

7510 Broadway Ext., Ste. 202 • OKC, OK 73116  
(405) 416-2116 / (800) 933-1853

***Tulsa Branch Office***

4606 S. Garnett, Ste. 100 • Tulsa, OK 74146  
(918) 622-6994 / (800) 365-2782

***Lawton Branch Office***

1 S.W. 11th Street, Ste. 195 • Lawton, OK 73501  
(580) 248-0011 / (800) 288-1239

# Discount auto insurance for NEA members only.

Protecting America's educators for over 50 years.

 **NEA Members**  
Auto & Home Insurance Program

## Low rates exclusively for NEA members like you.

As an NEA member, you qualify for the NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program. It's an outstanding plan with discount rates negotiated just for you.

For over 50 years, A+ Auto & Home Insurance Plus has been creating unique plans for education professionals. We offer the benefits you need at rates you can afford. You could save hundreds of dollars each year.

### **Comprehensive coverage.**

From \$250 personal property coverage, which includes school supplies you've purchased; to a summer skip payment option, A+ offers unique benefits.

### **Guaranteed lock-in rates for a full year.**

While most auto insurance companies only offer six-month plans, A+ will lock you into a low rate for an entire year.

### **Great discounts for good drivers.**

Educators as a group are responsible drivers. At A+, we believe that excellent driving records like yours should be rewarded with discount rates.

### **Excellent service.**

Our friendly, courteous representatives provide free quotes. And our emergency claims service is available toll-free 24-hours a day.

**Call today for a free quote, toll-free:  
1-888-744-9717.**

[neamb.com/aplus.html](http://neamb.com/aplus.html)



AH390806

# Feds to Require More Hoops for Special Education Teachers

By Doug Folks

The U.S. Department of Education has denied Oklahoma's special education teachers the ability to use a multi-subject HOUSSE as proof of highly qualified status.

The change overrides the requirements previously agreed to by State Superintendent Sandy Garrett and the Oklahoma Education Association. Now, special educators who are providing direct instruction and are the teachers of record must show highly qualified status in each core subject they teach.

Under the new requirements, special ed teachers will now have to complete a HOUSSE (High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation) or pass a test for each core subject by Spring 2007, according to information released by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE). Among the changes, National Board Certified special ed teachers are no longer automatically highly qualified.

The SDE was preparing materials that outline the new guidelines in mid-July, with plans to send them to school administrators as soon as possible.

SDE is suggesting special ed teachers and core academic subject teachers consider a collaborative/co-teaching model as a way to deal with the new requirements. To help reach this goal, SDE is hosting a workshop, "Successful Co-Teaching Strategies: Increasing the Effectiveness of Your Inclusion Program," Sept. 7-8 in Oklahoma City.

These changes reflect requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, also known as President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

"This change in special ed highly qualified status is exactly why the National Education Association is proposing positive changes for the reauthorization of the ESEA," said Roy Bishop, president of the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA).

Delegates to the NEA's Representative Assembly in Orlando in early July overwhelmingly approved the Association's Positive Agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization.

The agenda says that all children have a basic right to a great public education. It also says education's status quo, including NCLB, is inadequate to meet the needs of students in a changing world.

NEA's priorities for the reauthorization – improve student achievement, close the achievement gaps, and provide every child with a quality teacher – are also America's priorities. Among NEA's suggested changes are:

- Replacing the flawed Adequate Yearly Progress model, which is overly focused on labeling and punishments, with comprehensive accountability measuring student learning through multiple measures and growth models;
- Combining a new definition of "highly qualified teacher" with new federal policies and resources, including grants for professional development, stipends for mentor teachers and incentives to attract and retain teachers in hard-to-staff-schools, and
- Matching Congress' commitment to improving student achievement with a commitment to fully fund ESEA.

To see a complete version of NEA's Positive Agenda for ESEA, visit [www.okea.org/PositiveAgenda](http://www.okea.org/PositiveAgenda). Also, to download a copy of the new special ed HOUSSE, visit [www.okea.org/SpecialEdHOUSSE](http://www.okea.org/SpecialEdHOUSSE).