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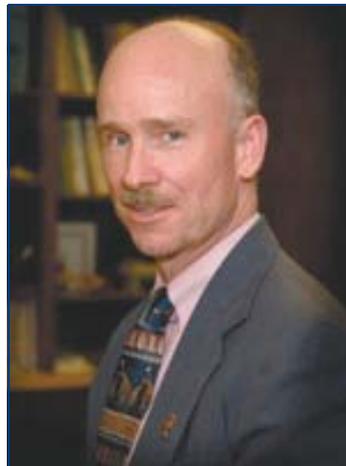
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**The Education Focus**  
OEA's all-member publication



Foyil Superintendent Michael McGregor



Jenks Superintendent Kirby Lehman



Western Heights Superintendent  
Joe Kitchens

# Uncommon courage

## A&E plaintiff schools win OEA Friend of Education Award

*By Adrienne Covington*

Invaluable friendships – they mean the world to those who have them and the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) has three invaluable friends this year.

For their efforts to go above and beyond the call of duty, OEA has given the prestigious Friend of Education Award to the three school districts that signed on to OEA's Adequacy and Equity (A&E) Lawsuit.

Superintendents Dr. Kirby Lehman of Jenks, Joe Kitchens of Western Heights and Mike McGregor of Foyil, along with

their board presidents, received the award during the OEA Awards Banquet April 28 in Oklahoma City.

The Friend of Education Award is the highest honor given by the Association. This year's nomination statement reads: "During a time when education and school funding are at a crisis state, the leadership of the Foyil, Jenks and Western Heights school districts stepped forward to make a difference in their schools, community and for all of Oklahoma."

"These three school districts really

See "Foyil, Jenks" on Page 4

## House vote insults teachers

*By Adrienne Covington*

House leadership continued to insult Oklahoma's teachers when they passed a floor version of Senate Bill 1644 with nearly 100 Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) members watching.

Teachers from across the state joined OEA elected officials and lobbyists in the House gallery on April 18 to voice their opposition to the "strings" attached to SB 1644. Amendments were made to the bill that will take away teachers' rights and allow an inexperienced individual to begin teaching in state classrooms.

House leadership destroyed a bill that would have given teachers and support professionals a much-needed and well-deserved pay raise. Subjective language including insubordination, "acts not befitting a teacher" and the State Board's ever-changing Standards of Conduct were added to due process for reasons why a teacher can be fired.

See "House adds anti-teacher language" on Page 13

# Hold your state representative accountable

By Roy Bishop  
OEA President

As I write this column, Speaker Hiett and his House Leadership team have not only failed to act on one bill that would send a "\$3,000 pay raise with no strings attached" – and \$1,000 for support professionals – to the Governor, but they've also amended another bill that would include the raise, plus a whole host of new regulations and hoops for teachers to jump through in order to get the raise.

Additions to Senate Bill 1644 will make it easier to fire teachers, removes teacher input from the mentor teacher selection process, and further expands merit pay. However, it only gives a small percentage to our teachers.

The attack on teacher due process is of serious concern. Not only does the bill add extremely subjective criteria in which you could lose your job, but it added the Standards of Conduct section found in the State Board of Education Regulations.

These "standards" can be changed at any meeting by the State Board of Edu-

cation. In fact, they were changed at a recent meeting and then withdrawn.

They would create a moving target of expectations that could vary month to month. It's not fair and it's not right.

The elimination of bargaining unit input for mentor teacher selection is a direct attack on our locals who have worked in collaboration with their administrators in this process. While the local doesn't select mentor teachers, to take away teacher input weakens the process.

Expanding the current merit pay plan to only a few teachers is wrong. We can talk about merit pay after we've reached the regional average in pay and if it is fair and open to all of our teachers. The best incentive pay plan we have is the National Board Certification process. There is proven research that shows the strengths and successes of National Board Certification.

Why doesn't the legislature look at ways to increase the scholarships available so that teachers can afford to go through this process? We don't need pilot programs that will only ben-



President Roy Bishop

efit some when we have a program that will benefit all of our teachers and their students.

Over the last few weeks, many of you have been calling your representatives. Those calls are making a difference. Don't just let them tell you that they support the \$3,000 raise.

House members are going to have to decide whether to support the pay raise with no strings attached or continue to play games that disrespect us and our profession. Be polite, be professional and be vigilant at getting a response to our message.

Please make sure that you continue to check our website at okea.org. The page is constantly updated to provide you with information. If you would like to receive legislative updates, please send me your name and home email address and you will be added to the weekly updates.

## OEA members challenge TABOR signatures

The Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) is taking a lead role in the effort to keep TABOR, the so-called Taxpayers Bill of Rights, from reaching the ballot.

OEA members are helping other Stop State Question 726 Committee members challenge all 300,000 signatures on the petition, which was completed in December.

OEA members are volunteering weeknights to pore over pages of petitions, comparing names and addresses with a computerized voter registration

data base. Oklahoma City area locals are working in an office building downtown while Lawton, Moore, Tulsa CTA and the Tulsa Regional office all have computer banks set up in their offices.

"I'm so proud that our members are dedicating their nights after long days in the classroom," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "Our teachers recognize the damage that could be done to education if TABOR were to become a reality. They are working not only to challenge the initiative, but to save the future of Oklahoma."

The challenge must be completed by the end of July. Lawyers for Stop State Question 726 and volunteers who find invalid signatures will present evidence before a referee of the State Supreme Court every Friday during the challenge period, beginning April 28.

TABOR places a cap on government spending and has been detrimental to Colorado, the only state to enact a TABOR measure. Oklahoma already requires a balanced budget and it is nearly impossible to raise taxes be-

See "State law" on Page 14

## The Education Focus

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### 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

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

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# OEA

Oklahoma Education Association

# Hiding in plain sight

## 65% is a monster that hurts all schools

By Doug Folks

A great horror movie is always about something people can visualize happening. Most of us realize we won't meet a fateful end at the claws of a being from outer space, but the maniac next door, hiding in plain sight, is a different topic.

How many Baby Boomers still have trouble taking a shower since seeing *Psycho*? Is there anything creepier than Robert DeNiro's character in *Cape Fear*?

Education is currently living its own nightmare, with a number of disturbing "monsters" lurking right in front of us. Most of them have benign or even inviting names, though none of them are what they seem.

TABOR, the so-called Taxpayers Bill of Rights, is one of those misnamed beasts that sounds good to the average person after a quick description. An in-depth look at TABOR scares even the fiscally conservative.

Last year, the legislature had an opportunity to debate and vote on the "Teacher Protection Act" which actually removed protections already on the books. Thankfully, OEA was able to help slay it before it reached the light of day.

One of the most insidious of these new villains is the encouraging sounding "65% Solution." Its supporters, who are passing petitions to get it on a future ballot, want to force school districts to dedicate 65 percent of their budgets to the classroom. That thought sounds good even to educators – that is until they hear what is included in that "classroom."

According to the 65% Solution, a classroom *does not* include counselors and nurses, transportation, custodial and maintenance workers, or teacher training and curriculum. With 65%,

there may be more and newer textbooks and even more teachers, but who will be cleaning these well-stocked rooms or how good the quality of food is in the cafeteria will be anyone's guess.

***"For every complex problem, there is a solution that is simple, neat and wrong."***  
***H.L. Menken***

"The 65% idea is no solution, it's a delusion," says OEA President Roy Bishop. "It would do so much harm to our schools and the average person may not ever realize what this proposal would do until its too late."

Like the well-meaning laboratory assistant who inadvertently lets loose the deadly virus, unknowing citizens voting on 65% could unleash a very dangerous plague on public schools.

And regardless of size, 65% would have a negative effect on every school.

### No Longer Secure

**Frontier Public Schools**  
**Students: 410 (preK-12)**  
**Faculty: 48**  
**Support Professionals: 31**  
**Administrators: 3.5**  
**Current Classroom Expenditure according to 65% description: 50.5%**

Frontier is a district well-known for its financial health, benefiting greatly from a local power plant. Even so, Superintendent Terri Taflinger says 65% would cripple this small Noble County school in north-central Oklahoma.

"I would have a reduced counseling program and be limited on additional curriculum offerings," said Taflinger, a longtime OEA member now in her third year as Frontier's superintendent.

Transportation would take the biggest hit under 65%, and in Frontier that hit could be devastating. The school campus sits a mile out of town and ev-

ery child rides the bus. Last year, Frontier buses traveled a collective 105,000 miles.

Like everyone else, the district's transportation costs have skyrocketed over the last year, as has its utility

costs. Frontier is totally electric and owns its own water well, so it has the added cost of water treatment.

"Initially, 65% sounds like a good idea. Of course we want to use the maximum amount of our funds for instruction, but we also need to make sure our kids are learning in a clean, safe environment coupled with the most up to date materials and highly qualified instructors," Taflinger said. "Real small rural schools are going to be hurt if it passes. Many schools are not going to be able to open their doors, utility and transportation costs will eat them alive."

### Misguided Intentions

**Newcastle**  
**Students: 1,320 (preK-12)**  
**Faculty: 85**  
**Support: 55**  
**Administrators: 5**  
**Current Classroom Expenditure according to 65% description 61.76%**

Newcastle Superintendent Robert Everett says that 65% is the perfect example of what H. L. Mencken was talking about when he said, "For every complex problem, there is a solution that is simple, neat and wrong."

"65% is misguided. Not enough thought has gone into it," said Everett.

The transportation equation of 65% riles Everett just like it does Taflinger.

Newcastle transports more kids than its policy calls for because of safety.

Highway 62 runs through the middle of town, leaving an entire neighborhood within 1.5 miles of the campus, but separated by heavy traffic. The district provides school bus service to that nearby neighborhood so kids don't have to walk across Highway 62.

According to 65% rules, extracurricular activities are included in "classroom," but transportation is not.

"It seems ludicrous to count a 200 mile bus trip for football as an instructional expense, but you can't count transporting kids to school every morning," he said.

Newcastle sits just south of the Oklahoma County line in McClain County. It's growing by leaps and bounds (30% in the last five years). Last November, patrons passed a \$14.5 million bond issue to build a new middle school that Everett says must be done by Fall 2007 or the district will be hunting for classroom space anywhere it can find it.

For Everett, 65% represents outsiders meddling in local affairs.

"I don't go into somebody's oil business and tell them how to get oil out of the ground," he said. "But everyone knows how to run a school because they all went to one."

Supporters of 65% claim it will get rid of waste in public schools, but Everett doesn't buy that.

"Where is that wasteful spending?" he asked. "Are we talking about the amount of software we're buying? We bought a classroom program that cost \$45,000 two years ago. Our elementary kids sold candles and candy so we could buy that software. You have to keep up with technology, and it's very expensive."

Everett said the best way to meet the 65% mandate is to pay teachers more. At the same time, a district can't forget its support professionals.

"We're growing more support personnel than staff," he said. "You have to keep up and maintain buildings. Having the people to do that is imperative. Keeping up with day to day operations is vital."

# 2006 Award Winners

## Foyil, Jenks, Western Heights show courage to fight for public education

*Continued from Page 1*

stepped up to accept the challenge in our efforts to increase school funding in Oklahoma," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "The Adequacy and Equity Project is not something that can be

### Friend of Education

resolved in a few short months. The dedication shown by the leadership in the Foyil, Jenks and Western Heights school districts to sign on to a long-term project that will improve Oklahoma's education system is admirable. They deserve this important honor."

The A&E Project has been in the works for several years. OEA first began speaking with members in 2003. The '04 Delegate Assembly approved a \$5 dues increase to fund the project. In January of this year, OEA and the three school districts filed the lawsuit in Oklahoma County District Court against the Oklahoma Legislature to force adequate funding of public education as mandated by the state Constitution.

"I have witnessed a steady slip in the legislature's commitment to public schools during my tenure as a superintendent," said McGregor, who has been in education for over 29 years.

"I have lived through the underfunding just like every other teacher in this state. I signed on to the A&E Project because I want to see a rise in the state's commitment to our students, teachers and schools," he said. "I look forward to things changing so that Oklahoma can continue to offer a high quality education to our children."

The purpose of the A&E litigation is to seek a court ruling that will provide adequate and fair funding of public education in Oklahoma and which will allow school districts to meet the education standards set by the state. Surveys of Oklahoma public schools verified that students are without textbooks, instructional materials are outdated, students must share desks, and classrooms are overcrowded. To have appropriate school supplies and instructional tools, students are burdened with fund-raising for the things they need to receive an education today.

"Jenks Public Schools values the positive working relationship we have with the Oklahoma Education Association, and together we can advocate quality education for all students across the state of Oklahoma," said Jenks' Lehman.

"The Western Heights Board of Education is honored that the OEA has selected the board for its very prestigious Friend of Education Award. With the enormity of the problems that face our schools, it is extremely important that all education stakeholders remain united in their pursuit of common objectives to improve education in Oklahoma and America," said Kitchens.

OEA has given the Friend of Education Award in the past to those who have truly made a difference in Oklahoma's education system. Honorees have included Gov. Brad and First Lady Kim Henry, former Gov. Henry

Bellmon, journalist and education advocate Frosty Troy, and Tulsa philanthropist Henry Zarrow.

"It took a great deal of foresight and courage for each of these school districts to join with us in this lawsuit. We clearly share the same interests in seeking to improve the education opportunities for Oklahoma's children. It has been an absolute pleasure working with these superintendents and their respective boards of education as we have progressed in this litigation," said Richard Wilkinson, OEA General Counsel.

"It is such an honor to call Foyil, Jenks and Western Heights OEA's Friends of Education. They truly have exemplified what it means to go above and beyond the call of duty for Oklahoma's children," said Bishop.

## OEA Friend of Education through history

- 2006 Foyil, Jenks and Western Heights School Districts  
(for signing onto the A&E lawsuit)
- 2005 Brad and Kim Henry, Governor and First Lady of Oklahoma
- 2004 Bob Mooneyham, former Executive Director of the Oklahoma State School Boards Association
- 2003 Henry Zarrow, Tulsa philanthropist
- 2002 Kirk Humphreys, Oklahoma City Mayor, and Cliff Hudson, Oklahoma City School Board President (MAPS for Kids)
- 2001 John Rex, President/COO of American Fidelity Assurance
- 2000 Lewis Long, Glenpool, State Senator
- 1999 Darryl Roberts, Ardmore, State Senator
- 1998 Betty Boyd, Tulsa, State Representative
- 1997 Albert Johnson, Lawton
- 1996 Paul Barby, Woodward
- 1995 State Sen. Pro Tem Robert Cullison and State Speaker Steve Lewis
- 1994 Mike Synar, U.S. House of Representatives
- 1993 Robert McCormick, Vice-Chair of Task Force 2000
- 1992 Terry Almon, Executive Director of Growth Oklahoma, a citizens' coalition formed to uphold HB 1017
- 1991 No recipient selected
- 1990 Henry Bellmon, Governor of Oklahoma
- 1989 No recipient selected
- 1988 Frosty Troy, editor & co-publisher, *Oklahoma Observer*



*Foyil Superintendent Michael McGregor addresses the media at a press conference announcing the A&E Lawsuit in January. Nancy McKay, Jenks's chief financial officer, and Joe White, of the White and Weddle PC Law Firm and co-counsel for the lawsuit; stand behind McGregor.*

## 2006 Award Winners

# Faithful service benefits Eugene Field

*Tulsa's 1st United Methodist Church honored for 15 years of dedication*

By Patti Serio

Good things come and go, but if you ask the staff and students at Eugene Field Elementary School in Tulsa, they will tell you outright that the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) has been consistent and faithful in its support for over 15 years.

That dogged determination to give Eugene Field students better lives has earned FUMC the Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award, one of the Oklahoma Education Association's Human and Civil Rights Awards.

In 1995, Don and Emily Renberg visited Eugene Field and discovered a need to help the students and staff there. Thus, FUMC teamed up with the school in a Partners in Education program. The church sends between 75 to 100 volunteers into the school weekly to mentor children.

"Eugene Field Elementary is an inner-city school with a 97 percent poverty rate and has extreme needs, both socially and academically," said Principal Cindi Hemm. "These church members and volunteers have stepped up to the plate for the past 15 years, volunteering at the very least well over 100,000 hours of community service."

Among some of the programs the church provides these eager children and their parents are:

- **Touch a Teacher and Cherish a Class:** A group of volunteers adopts a class and assumes a role similar to a homeroom parent. A friendship is established with the teacher and special needs of the class are met.

- **School Store:** Volunteers stock and staff a store where "Big Bucks" (awarded by the teachers for achievement or good behavior) can be used to "buy" school supplies,

### Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award



*Eugene Field Elementary Principal Cindi Hemm (back row, left) and TCTA member Sandy Connor (back row right) join Tulsa First United Methodist Church's Dr. Connie Cole (center) with students from Eugene Field. Cole's church, OEA Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award winner, donates thousands of volunteer hours every year to the school.*

clothing, toiletries and toys.

- **Birthday Club:** Four fantastic birthday parties for students are held each year at the FUMC facility. Every student has the opportunity to attend one party. There is roller skating, games, pizza, soda and birthday cake is served. On top of this event, each stu-

dent receives a birthday present bag.

- **Kanakuk "Kids Across America" Camp:** In the past two years, FUMC has provided full scholarships (including transportation, clothes and supplies) for children to attend this Christian sporting camp. In 2006, all 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will be at-

tending at an estimated cost of \$20,000 for the 80 students.

- **VIP Reading Program and Alphabet Club:** Volunteers come to the school weekly to listen to a child read for 20 minutes or work on pre-reading skills.

- **Shuttle to Wal-Mart:** Every Wednesday, a free shuttle is provided by FUMC. There is no grocery store within walking distance for most families in the area and many do not have transportation.

- **Rummage Sales:** Every parent who attends parent/teacher conferences receive "Eugene Field Bucks," which can be spent on items at the rummage sale.

In addition, there are members who sponsor bike clubs, sewing clubs, hiking clubs and more for the students.

FUMC mentors offer guidance, love and friendship. They are a constant source of encouragement and support for the entire school and community. The teachers, students and families of Eugene Field Elementary are forever thankful for the kind deeds and generous hearts of the people of the First United Methodist.

## Zone OKC-C wins political action award

The 2006 Stan Bryant Political Action Award has been won by Zone Oklahoma City C, which includes Edmond Public Schools and Oklahoma City Public Schools.

The award is given annually to the Oklahoma Education Association zone that generates the highest significant contribution per member to the OEA Political Action Committee (PAC).

Martha Wissler, a math teacher at Edmond Memorial High School, is the

### Stan Bryant Political Action Award

zone director. Dewayne Huff, a fifth grade teacher at Oklahoma City's Westwood Elementary, is the zone's PAC representative.

Wissler said the two locals include PAC sign-up forms in membership material that building representatives take to their members at the beginning of the school year. They also ask members to give whatever cash gifts they

can afford.

"What really makes a difference for us is a large number of members who are continual givers to the OEA PAC," Wissler said.

Other with high finishers in last year's PAC drive included Zones Southeast A (\$2.80), Southwest A (\$2.78), Northeast C (\$2.66), and Southeast C (\$2.31).

## 2006 Award Winners

# Yukon bargaining team perseveres through impasse

By Patti Serio

Some things are worth fighting for and bargaining team of the Yukon Professional Educators Association (YPEA) pointedly made the argument this year that the quality of the teachers in Yukon warranted taking a stand.

The YPEA team has been awarded the Oklahoma Education Association's Collective Bargaining Award for sticking to its principals and ideals during a challenging bargaining year, communicating with YPEA members, and earning a well-deserved raise for all Yukon teachers.

YPEA president Alicia Priest was

### Collective Bargaining Award

joined on the team by Wade Smith, Carol McKinley, Cal Ware and Clay Bedell. The team spent countless hours of its time to promote the needs of YPEA members. They conducted a survey of members' needs and attended training at the OEA Advocacy Conference and the Northwest Region Leadership Training

With a new superintendent at the helm, the bargaining team went into negotiations with an open mind. Non-money issues were bargained first.

Among the issues brought to the table

were the options for the delivery of

paychecks in a discreet manner, the selection process for mentor teachers, the selection process of the Professional Development Committee, and how many professional development points should be acquired each year. There was give and take language that both sides could agree upon.

However, negotiations broke down when it came to discussing monetary compensation.

For the first time since the late 1980s, the YPEA found it was unable to reach an agreement with the admin-

istration and an impasse was declared. The board's team wanted to see a small percentage increase that would trickle down through the salary schedule and offer very little to career teachers. The YPEA team wanted to structure the salary scale based on Governor Henry's plan, increasing compensation for career teachers.

The bargaining team quickly informed their members what was happening and encouraged them to attend the next Yukon School Board meeting. After a large turnout, another meager offer was reluctantly made by the superintendent. After caucusing, YPEA politely refused.

With help from Putnam City ACT, the bargaining team had buttons printed for every teacher that promoted their slogan: "We're Worth It! \$\$\$." Teach-  
See "Communication" on next page

# Runnels takes Lawton local to higher level

By Doug Folks

To say Judy Runnels has immersed herself in the job of president for the

### Kate Frank Award

Professional Educators' Association of Lawton (PEAL) is like saying the sun is a little bright. Both are tremendous understatements.

Runnels took over as PEAL president in 2000 and the organization has exploded in membership and scope. Under her leadership, PEAL has become a real player not only in Lawton Public Schools, but in the community as well.

In honor of her hard work and success of building PEAL, Runnels has been named winner of the OEA's 2006 Kate Frank Award. The honor is presented to "an OEA member or local Association for rendering outstanding and significant service to advance the cause of member wel-

fare, rights and professionalism."

Runnels has accomplished a great deal in all areas outlined in the Kate Frank Award, which is one of

the OEA's Human and Civil Rights Awards. Her successes for PEAL are almost too many to list, but include:

- Winning a release time grant for PEAL, which she now fulfills as the local's first full-time release president;
- Increasing membership in PEAL to some 600 certified members. After a recent merger with Lawton's support professionals, PEAL is one of Oklahoma's largest locals with nearly 730 members;
- Creating several fund-raisers, including a highly successful golf tournament, which allows PEAL to provide members with grants for classroom supplies; and
- Building a relationship with the Lawton administration based on pro-

fessionalism and mutual respect.

In addition, the local media recognizes Runnels as a trusted "voice" of public education and the OEA. And, she has established such a rapport with local legislators that several know her on a first-name basis.

"I cannot possibly list all the great things that Judy has done to improve the quality of the PEAL organization," said Todd Richards, Southwest C Zone director and a special education teacher in Comanche. "She continues to amaze and inspire me."

In her letter of recommendation for Runnels, NEA Director Linda Hampton talked about how Runnels nurtures and encourages others to realize their potential. While it would be easy for a full-time release president to shoulder all the responsibility, Runnels finds a way to get many others involved.

"Under Judy's direction, our association has grown from merely an en-



Judy Runnels

tity to becoming a thriving organization that is active in all 45 school sites in our district, our central office, our support staff, our bus barn, and every facet of our educational system," said Patsy Stoll, PEAL vice president and one of those Runnels has fostered into a leadership roll.

# 2006 Award Winners

## Colleagues inspired by Mendenhall's leadership

By Patti Serio

The Oklahoma Education Association (OEA), the National Education Association (NEA) and the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) all believe that every student deserves a quality education and that teaching is the single most important component of a quality education.

Each year, the NEA chooses one U.S. teacher who symbolizes this excellence and presents him or her with the \$25,000 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence and a commemorative plaque. Cash awards also are presented to five finalists.

Oklahoma's 2006 nominee for this prestigious award is Ponca City's Ginger Mendenhall, a fourth grade teacher at Liberty Elementary. Among her numerous accomplishments, Mendenhall is a National Board Certified Teacher and has national certification as a Learning Style Instructor from St. John University.

Her colleagues are quick to point

out her outstanding leadership and willingness to share her techniques and learning styles that have energized her



Ponca City's Ginger Mendenhall

classroom and increased the level of accomplishment of her students.

"Ginger has inspired our staff as well as myself to see the relevance and importance in teaching students according to their learning style," said Liberty principal Sharon Jones. "She is an innovator and has taken the concept

### NFIE Award

of learning styles to new and important heights. She's fun to watch and has endless energy."

Mendenhall has more than 12 years of classroom experience behind her. After making the decision to teach and work with children she overcame difficulties and hardships, but never changed her dream or determination to make a difference in the lives of the children she encountered in her classroom.

"I see myself as a stepping-stone for children," said Mendenhall. "I am determined to make this step in their lives a successful one."

Her belief that all students can learn if they are taught according to their learning style preference leads one to see Mendenhall's classroom as a very organized circus with learning happening in many different ways. She first gives an individual learning style inventory that shows how each student learns best. She then takes groups that

are unable to successfully master a standard in the classroom and takes them to another dimension with her learning style expertise.

This may include swatting correct answers with a fly swatter, using a skeleton grabber for an answer, sitting in a rocking chair which facilitates learners in need of continuous movement, or sitting on a stationary bike with a homemade desktop. These activities are orchestrated to match the learning style of the student.

"It's very flexible, yet controlled. Even the most difficult behavior problems are minimized when I teach lessons that match the students' learning preferences. I truly leave no child behind," Mendenhall states.

Ginger Mendenhall is a model of a teacher who can close the achievement gap and meet the needs of diverse learners. Every child matters to her and she exemplifies the best that teaching has to offer.

## Communication was key to winning impasse

*Continued from previous page*  
ers proudly wore them for several weeks. With the help of the Northwest OEA team, 200 signs were made in school colors that stated "Yukon Teachers are worth it! \$\$\$" and placed in yards throughout Yukon.

Over the next few weeks the team presented a PowerPoint presentation discussing the different proposals that included a question and answer session.

"Keeping members informed was of great importance, as was keeping the rumor mill quiet," said Priest, "so updates were sent out one to two times per week until an agreement was reached."

With the help of the NW Advocacy Specialist Mary Pratz, the team met with the school board, the ad-

ministration and their two lawyers and agreed upon a mediator in an open forum meeting.

After acknowledging the preparedness and knowledge of the YPEA team, an agreement was reached that

kept the salary schedule intact and split the difference in what the administrative team was offering and what the YPEA team was requesting.

"Their success is due to their preparation and continual communi-

cation to YPEA members to keep their support base informed and involved," said Pratz.

Yukon teachers ratified the new contract with a 96 percent approval rate.

### History nominations due May 15

History teachers at every level are eligible for the 2005-06 National American History Teacher of the Year Award. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and *Preserve America* recognize outstanding American history teachers from elementary school through high school and the crucial importance of American history education.

State winners will receive \$1,000 and a "History Teacher of the Year" plaque in a ceremony in their home state. The Institute also presents their schools with an archive of primary historical materials, named in honor of that teacher, for use in the school library or resource center.

The due date for Oklahoma submissions is May 15. All applications must

be postmarked by May 15, or hand-delivered to the Oklahoma State Department of Education by 4:30 p.m. May 15. A nomination packet can be found at [www.sde.state.ok.us](http://www.sde.state.ok.us) (click the "Curriculum" button and select the "Social Studies" page).

For more information, contact Kelly Curtright, State Coordinator, at 405/522-3523 or [kelly\\_curtright@sde.state.ok.us](mailto:kelly_curtright@sde.state.ok.us).

# 2006 OEA Award Winners

## Friend of Education

**Foyil Public Schools**  
Michael McGregor, Superintendent;  
Larry Mallory, Board President

**Jenks Public Schools**  
Dr. Kirby Lehman, Superintendent;  
Mike Baab, Board President

**Western Heights Public Schools**  
Joe Kitchens, Superintendent;  
Jann Davenport, Board President

**NFIE Award for Teaching Excellence**  
*Recognizing an OEA/NEA member for excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession.*  
**Ginger Mendenhall, Ponca City**

**Collective Bargaining Award**  
*Presented to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement of education through the collective bargaining process.*  
**Yukon Professional Educators Association**

**Human and Civil Rights Awards**  
**Kate Frank Award**  
*Presented to an OEA member or local Association rendering outstanding and significant service to advancing the cause of member welfare, rights, and professionalism.*

**Judy Runnels, Professional Educators' Association of Lawton**

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

**First United Methodist Church of Tulsa in partnership with Eugene Field Elementary**

**Stan R. Bryant Political Action Award**  
*Given annually by the Board of Directors to the OEA Zone with the largest per member contribution level for OEA-PAC.*  
**Zone OKC-C**  
**Martha Wissler, Zone Director;**  
**Dewayne Huff, PAC Representative**

## 5 Star Local Program 5 Star Locals

Bartlesville EA  
Professional Educators' Association of Lawton  
McLoud ACT  
Moore ACT  
Ponca City ACT  
Putnam City ACT  
Sand Springs EA  
Tulsa CTA

**4 STAR LOCALS**  
Edmond ACT (Communications, Advocacy, Legislative & Political Organizing, Organizational Development)

Enid EA (Communications, Advocacy, Legislative & Political Organizing, Teaching & Learning)

Professional Educators of Norman (Advocacy, Legislative & Political Organizing, Teaching & Learning, Organizational Development)

**3 STAR LOCALS**  
Broken Arrow EA (Communications, Advocacy, Organizational Development)

## Golden Apple Awards

**Special Communication Projects**  
"TCTA New Teachers' Recruitment Folder"  
Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association,  
Steve Stockley, President

"4<sup>th</sup> Annual PEAL Golf Tournament"  
Professional Educators' Association of Lawton, Ruth Ritter, Golf Tournament Committee Chair

"TargetTeach Report"  
Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association,  
Steve Stockley, President

**Internal Communications**  
"the TCTA Connection"  
Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association,  
Steve Stockley, Denzel Kesterson,  
Linda Hendrix and Dr. Deborah Bendler

"BAEA News Leader"  
Broken Arrow Education Association,  
Greer S. Nichols, President

"JCTA Newsletter"  
Jenks Classroom Teachers Association,  
Keri Marlin, President

**External Communications**  
"TABOR is wrong for Oklahoma" Op-Ed  
by Greer S. Nichols, Broken Arrow EA,  
as published in the *Broken Arrow Daily Ledger*

"EACT Website"  
Melanie Dry, Webmaster; Edmond  
Association of Classroom Teachers

"www.tulsateachers.org" Website  
Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association,  
Steve Stockley, President

## Marshall Gregory Awards

### Professional Division Print - Single Event Coverage

**Photojournalism**  
"Authentic Education," Randy Stotler, *The Lawton Constitution*

**Feature Story**  
"Back to School," Kristi Hayes, *The Ponca City News*

### Year-Round Coverage

**News Stories**  
Jennifer Griswold, *The American, Chickasha*

**Education Series**  
"Teacher of the Year," Helen Barrett, *Alva Review-Courier*

**Feature Stories**  
Danaline McPhail Bryant, *Lawton Constitution*

### Broadcast - Single Event Coverage

**Feature Story**  
"Owasso's Mr. Floyd," Ashli Sims, KOTV 6, Tulsa

**Feature Story**  
"Band Cuts," Janna Clark, KOKI-Fox 23 News, Tulsa

**Photojournalism**  
"Wayside Elementary Opens Doors," Carly Danek, KOKI-Fox23 News, Tulsa

**News Story**  
"PE Cuts," Janna Clark, KOKI-Fox23 News, Tulsa

### Year-Round Coverage

**News Stories**  
Ashli Sims, KOTV 6, Tulsa

**Photojournalism**  
Aaron Primmer, KOKI-Fox23 News, Tulsa

**Feature Stories**  
Janna Clark, KOKI-Fox23 News, Tulsa

## Student Division Single Event Coverage

**Feature Story**  
"Loving to Read," by Lacy Kelly and Kate Callahan  
*Ruff Draft*, Edmond Memorial High School

**Editorial**  
"Attendance Policy Allows Too Many Exceptions" by Nimisha Verma, *Ruff Draft*, Edmond Memorial High School

**Editorial**  
"Freshman Academies: Asset or Obstacle," Jansen Martin, *Ruff Draft*, Edmond Santa Fe High School

**Photojournalism**  
"Head to Toe, Models Shine in DECA Show," Kiley Stone, *Ruff Draft*, Edmond Memorial High School

**News Story**  
"Wood Tech Students Come to Classmate's Aid," Jenna Negley, *Ruff Draft*, Edmond Memorial High School

### Year-Round Coverage

**Overall Excellence**  
Staff of the *Ruff Draft*, Edmond Public Schools

**News Stories**  
Jansen Martin, *Ruff Draft*, Edmond Santa Fe High School

**Photojournalism**  
Paula Torres, *Ruff Draft*, Edmond North High School

### Broadcast Coverage

**News Story**  
"Poetry Reading," Bao Lu, Norman North High School, TimberWolf Tracks, Channel 18

**Feature Story**  
"Effects of Internet Pornography," Amina Benalioulhaj, Norman North High School, TimberWolf Tracks, Channel 18

**Feature Story**  
"Big Brother," Dillon Hart, Norman North High School, TimberWolf Tracks, Channel 18

**Year-round Excellence**  
Broadcast Production Class of Norman North High School, TimberWolf Tracks, Channel 18

# Bishop and Felts win re-election

## NEA Director Johnson gets second term, too

President Roy Bishop and Vice President Becky Felts were unopposed in their bid for second terms in office. NEA Director Greg Johnson, of Mustang, kept his seat by defeating

Checotah's Lawrence "Train" Lane. Bishop and Felts will serve their second three-year terms through 2009. Johnson will also serve another three years as the Oklahoma Education Association's junior delegate to the National Education Association Board of Directors.

The OEA Board will see five new faces when newly elected members take office in July. Sarah Cooper, Union CTA (Tulsa Metro D); Jill Dudley, Moore ACT, (OKC-A); Kimberly Meigs, Tahlequah EA (NE-C); Linda Reames, Enid EA (NW-A), and Cindy Young, Edmond ACT (OKC-C) won board seats for the first time.

Former board member Becki Munholland, Healdton ACT, returns after running unopposed for the SW-D seat.

Bishop and Felts start their new terms on July 15, the same day the new board members will take office. Johnson's second term starts September 1.

## 2006 OEA Election Results

### OEA President/NEA Delegate

Roy Bishop, Stillwater EA  
(unopposed)

### OEA Vice President/NEA Delegate

Becky Felts, Tahlequah EA  
(unopposed)

### NEA Director/NEA Delegate

Greg Johnson, Mustang EA 6,871\*  
Lawrence E. Train Lane,  
Checotah EA 3,587

### OEA Board of Directors

(NEA Delegate 1st & 2nd years  
of 3-year term)

#### Zone Northeast A

Steve Hawkins, Vinita CTA  
(unopposed)

#### Zone Northeast C

Kimberly Meigs, Tahlequah EA  
(unopposed)

#### Zone Northwest A

Linda Reames, Enid EA  
(unopposed)

#### Zone Oklahoma City A

Jill Dudley, Moore ACT 410\*  
Mary Jane Chiles, Moore ACT 295

#### Zone Oklahoma City C

Cindy Young, Edmond ACT  
(unopposed)

#### Zone Southwest A

Linda Long, Elk City EA  
(unopposed)

#### Zone Southwest D

Becki Munholland, Healdton ACT  
(unopposed)

#### Zone Tulsa A

Lynn Stockley, Tulsa CTA 886\*  
Jennifer Thornton, Tulsa CTA 150

#### Zone Tulsa D

Sarah Cooper, Union CTA  
(unopposed)

#### Zone Tulsa E

Janet Brewster,  
Broken Arrow EA 387\*  
Keri Marlin, Jenks CTA 299

#### Administrator At-Large

Todd Crabtree, Byng EA 16\*  
Russell Parker, Tulsa Technology  
Center, TM-D 7

### 2006 OEA Delegate Assembly

#### Ethnic Minority Delegate-At-Large

Carolyn White, Idabel EA 3,628\*  
Monique Reed, Edmond ACT 3,343\*  
Marilyn Jackson,  
Okmulgee CTA 2,502\*  
Kari Taggart, Mid-Del ACT 2,455\*  
Denise Rhodes, Quapaw CTA 2,403\*  
Eugenia Renae Means,  
Sallisaw ACT 1,510\*  
Lori Wakefield,  
Ketchum PEAK 1,329\*  
Kandi Reavis-Osborn,  
Kechum PEAK 1,066\*

#### Administrator At-Large

Raford Ulrich, Poteau EA 17\*  
Russell Parker, Tulsa Technology  
Center, TM-D 5\*



President Roy Bishop and Vice President Becky Felts each won second terms in office.

#### NEA Retired Delegate-At-Large

Joy L. Dennis, Enid

### 2006 NEA Representative Assembly

#### NEA Category I Delegates-At-Large Northwest Region

Mike McIlwee, Chisholm EA\*

#### Tulsa Metro Region

Ana Ortega, Tulsa CTA\*  
Sarah Cooper, Union CTA\*  
Lynn Stockley, Tulsa CTA\*

#### Northeast Region

Sue Lamb, Claremore CTA 899\*  
Tom Osburn, Cave Springs EA 774\*  
Denise Rhodes, Quapaw CTA 701  
Cindy Dronyk, Bartlesville EA 631

#### Oklahoma City Metro Region

Katherine Bishop,  
Putnam City ACT 1,299\*  
Kelly Fry, Mid-Del ACT 1,155\*  
Elise Robillard, Moore ACT 897  
Monique Reed, Edmond ACT 757

#### Southwest Region

Terrie Keck, Marlow ACT 774\*  
Cheryl Dowell, Comanche EA 727\*  
Becki Munholland, Healdton 506  
Linda Long, Elk City EA 378

(no delegate election in the South-east Region)

#### NEA Retired Delegate-At-Large

Joyce Drew Parsons,  
Oklahoma City 312\*  
Tommy Fulton, Del City 287\*  
Joy L. Dennis, Enid 203

\* — won the election or a seat at Delegate Assembly or Representative Assembly.



Mustang's Greg Johnson

# Adequacy and Equity in school funding litigation update

By Richard Wilkinson  
OEA General Counsel

Three Oklahoma school districts and the Oklahoma Education Association filed a lawsuit on January 11, 2006, against the State of Oklahoma, *ex rel.* the Oklahoma Legislature, alleging that the legislature has failed to provide adequate or sufficient funding for common schools in Oklahoma. Foyil, Western Heights, and Jenks Public Schools are the three districts who have joined the OEA and its members in filing this lawsuit.

The plaintiffs represent a diverse demographic array of school districts, student population, parents and education employees – all of whom are directly affected by the failure of the legislature to adequately fund Oklahoma's public schools.

The lawsuit seeks a declaratory judgment from the District Court in Oklahoma County, declaring that the current system of funding education in Oklahoma is inadequate. The lawsuit also seeks injunctive relief which will force the legislature to comply with its constitutional mandate to adequately fund education.

The plaintiffs allege that the legislature has an obligation under the Oklahoma Constitution to establish and maintain a system of free public education wherein all of the children in the state may be educated. The lawsuit claims that the current levels of education funding are not sufficient or adequate to pay for the education standards that have been set by the state. The effect of these funding problems results in the inability of many school districts to meet state mandated class size limitations; provide every student a textbook or to provide updated textbooks and other instructional tools; provide an education curricular that is uniform in opportunity;

and other similar education services.

Oklahoma's children are obviously impacted by the challenges faced by Oklahoma school districts; particularly when they have to attend a school that is overcrowded, lacks enough textbooks for each student or updated textbooks and other instructional tools, and attend classes that exceed the class size limitations set by the state.

Education "costing-out studies" are used to determine the amount of money that is actually needed to provide the educational services required by the education standards set by the state. Costing-out studies have been conducted in approximately 30 states for the purpose of measuring whether education funding levels are appropriate and adequate to pay for the education required by state standards.

Several costing-out studies have been performed in Oklahoma during

the last two years – including studies done on behalf of the Oklahoma Legislature and studies done on behalf of the OEA. An adequacy in school funding study and a capital needs survey for Oklahoma's schools were completed in January 2006, shortly before the litigation was filed.

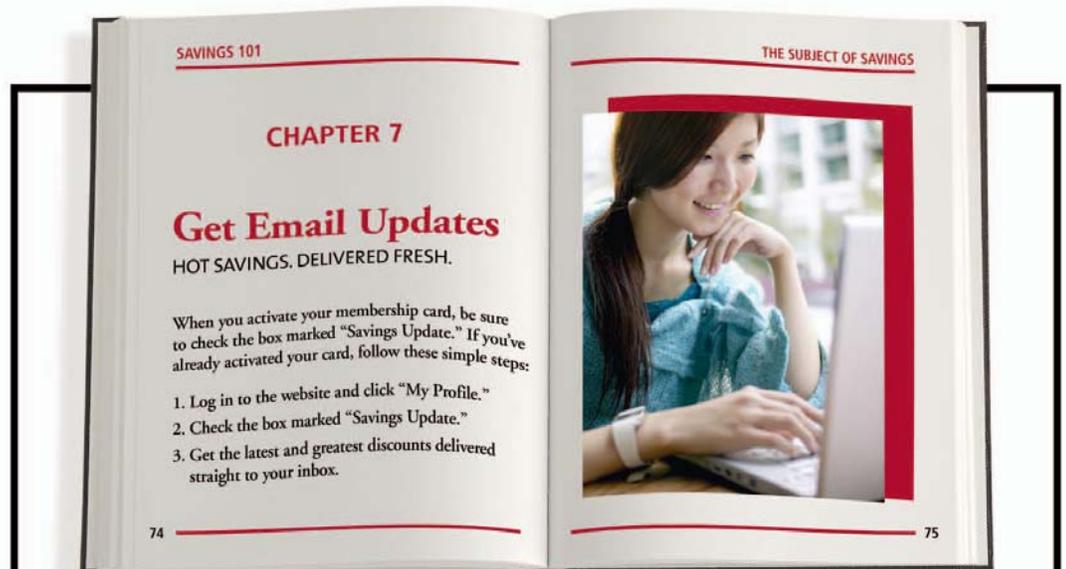
The various costing-out studies that have measured the objective cost of providing the education services required by the standards set by the state estimate that Oklahoma's school funding system is currently underfunded by approximately \$1 billion. The estimates from the capital needs survey indicate that the current infrastructure requirements for Oklahoma's schools will cost somewhere in the range of \$3 billion. The capital survey considered the current needs of Oklahoma's schools to make repairs or renovations required to meet immediate health and safety

concerns as well as capacity needs in the immediate future.

Motions to dismiss have been filed by all of the defendants generally alleging that the judiciary does not have the authority to review or consider whether the legislature has met its obligations under Oklahoma's constitution to establish and maintain a system of education that provides a uniform opportunity for all children to receive at least the basic, adequate education required by the standards set by the state. The plaintiffs have filed responses to the various motions and a ruling on these procedural issues is expected sometime in mid- to late June 2006.

There will likely be an appeal to the Oklahoma Supreme Court at some point in this litigation, depending upon when and how the District Court decides the various procedural issues, and we anticipate that the initial phase of this litigation will take around three years to complete.

We will continue to provide updates on the progress of this litigation as events occur and as we get closer to the evidentiary or trial phase of this litigation.



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# Leading and growing

## Organizational expert Mark Levin headlines Summer Leadership Academy

By Marty Bull

World renowned leadership development and membership growth expert Mark Levin headlines this year's Summer Leadership Academy (SLA).

"Leading the OEA and Helping it Grow!" is the theme of the 2006 leadership training event, which is scheduled for July 26-27 at the Cherokee Casino Resort in Catoosa.

For more than 25 years, Levin has been helping organizations grow and prosper. When he talks about growing membership or developing volunteer leaders, he speaks with the voice of experience.

"This is an exciting opportunity for our members to hear from an expert in the field of leadership development and membership growth," said OEA President Roy Bishop. "I encourage every local in the Association to make plans to send representatives."

Known for his practical approach, Levin will guide participants through such topics as the challenges of membership growth, knowing using the right message, making a commitment to the Association and develop-



Mark Levin

ing leadership teams.

The two day program will include both large and small group sessions that will allow each participant the opportunity to gain new insight into growing a strong volunteer organization.

Registration materials were mailed to all local Presidents and can be found on the OEA website at [www.oeka.org](http://www.oeka.org). Registration should be returned no later than June 15. The registration fee is \$25 if received by May 5 and \$30 thereafter. Registration includes training materials, all breaks and lunch on the 27th.

All other meals are on your own.

Decorated with beautiful historical and cultural styling from the Cherokee tribe and stunning art deco effects reminiscent of historic downtown Tulsa, the Cherokee Casino Resort Hotel provides a variety of amenities, such as an indoor and outdoor pool, hot tub, fitness center, restaurants, live music and the Cherokee Hills Golf Club.

SLA participants staying overnight must make reservations directly through the Cherokee Casino Resort by calling 800/760-6700. Conference rates are \$64 plus tax for single occupancy and \$74 plus tax double occupancy. Please reference the OEA when making your reservations.

For more information contact your OEA Regional Team.

### Leading the OEA and Helping it Grow! SLA At-A-Glance

#### Wednesday, July 26

Lunch on your own  
1:00 p.m. • General Session  
2:00 p.m. • Mark Levin  
✓ Membership Challenges  
✓ The Right Message  
✓ Getting Commitment  
5:00 p.m. • Dinner on your own  
8:00 p.m. • Dance to Zoom City

#### Thursday, July 27

Breakfast on your own  
9:00 a.m. • Mark Levin, cont.  
✓ Retention Wars  
✓ Leadership Teams  
11:00 a.m. • Breakout Sessions  
Lunch (provided)  
2:00 p.m. • Great Ideas for a Great OEA!  
3:00 p.m. • Closing Session

*Summer Leadership Academy is a great place to enhance your skills as a local leader and have a good time doing it!*



## Native American issues conference coming in June

Registration is still being accepted for the American Indian/Alaska Native Issues Conference, which is scheduled for June 2-4.

The conference, sponsored by OEA and the National Education Association, will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 1815 S. Meridian, in Oklahoma City. This unique conference will be held in conjunction with Oklahoma City's Red Earth Festival, an annual exhibition of Native American dance, art and culture.

A reception and dinner will open the conference on June 2. The issues conference will take place on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> when the American Indian Issue/Alaska Native Status Report will be presented. This report will include how to prepare American Indian and non-Indian educators to be effective with native students, and also how to engage American Indian communities in their children's education and the schools they attend.

National and Oklahoma educators will share information about the status of No Child Left Behind as it relates to the American Indian student. Also, a

panel of local leaders and tribal educators will discuss the effects of No Child Left Behind at their individual sites.

Hotel reservations made by May 5 will receive the \$102-plus-tax rate for the conference. Conference registration is \$100 for certified and support professionals, and \$70 for students.

Professional development scholarships are available from the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence at [www.ofe.org](http://www.ofe.org) or by calling 405/236-0006. OEA members are encouraged to contact local professional development committees to apply for conference funding.

To register, make checks payable to the NEA-AI/AN Caucus and mail them to Debbie Hogue-Downing, AI/AN Secretary, 5936 N. Sapulpa, Oklahoma City, OK 73112. OEA members can also contact Debbie at 405/948-7123 for further information.

# Summit produces school improvement ideas

## NBCTs discuss methods to bridge the achievement gap

By *Adrienne Covington*

Teachers are the greatest resource when it comes to answering the hard questions pertaining to education. Recognizing this resource, the Oklahoma Education Association brought together more than one-third of Oklahoma's 1,300 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) to attend a one-day policy summit.

The first-of-its-kind summit was sponsored by OEA and a coalition of education groups and was held at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City March 30. Participants spent the day formulating solutions to one of today's most pressing educational questions – how to attract and retain high quality teachers in schools that are struggling with high teacher turnover and poor student achievement.

"It was exhilarating to see so many of Oklahoma's highly qualified teachers attend this important summit," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "They are a major resource in the state's education system. To allow them an opportunity to be a part of future policy decisions is a giant step toward furthering our progress in the classroom."

Oklahoma currently ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the number of teachers who achieved National Board Certification and a recent report ranks Oklahoma 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation in teacher quality.

"We have some of the best and the brightest in classrooms across the state. These rankings are not a coincidence but evidence that Oklahoma's teachers have worked hard toward improving our education system," added Bishop.

National Board Certification is the highest credential in the teaching profession. A voluntary process established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

(NBPTS), certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes as much as three years to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should do and know. It requires teachers to demonstrate in and out of the classroom how their activities improve student achievement.

Melonie Hau, NBCT at Deer Creek High School, said the certification process made her take an in-depth look at her teaching process and, in turn, made her a better educator.

"I find that everyone I talk to who has been through the process says that it changed their life. Yes, it takes a lot of time and hard work, but it really



*Melonie Hau*

pays off in the end," said Hau.

"Through the National Board Certification, we have become accomplished teachers. We have excellent ideas and solutions about how to improve Oklahoma's education system and to be given an opportunity to relay those ideas to policy makers through the summit really means a lot to me and my fellow NBCTs."

Many recommendations were made at the summit. Among those that will be given to policymakers were:

- Lowering class size;
- Receiving support from a paraprofessional;



*Participants at Oklahoma's first policy summit for National Board Certified teachers discuss ideas to provide low-performing schools with the best teachers possible.*

- Having access to a number of NBCT mentors who have completed a specifically designed professional development institute;
- Supporting beginning teachers for three years with a goal of achieving National Board Certification;
- Providing professional development for administrators and school board members designed and provided

by NBCTs; and

- Allowing NBCTs and administrators to work with the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administrators and the Oklahoma State School Boards Association.

To see a PowerPoint presentation on the recommendations, visit [www.okea.org/nbctsummit](http://www.okea.org/nbctsummit).

## Ed Fair offers new twist

A unique feature of the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) Convention returns this fall, with a slight twist.

The OEA Ed Fair, which allows teachers to share outstanding classroom ideas, will be offered as a two-hour "gallery walk" session during breakout sessions. In the past, Ed Fair participants were asked to staff a booth in the exhibit area throughout the day. Now, those same ideas will be offered in a shorter, more controlled session.

The OEA Convention returns to the Tulsa Convention Center October 19.

June 1 is the deadline for Ed Fair applications, which can be downloaded from the OEA website at [www.okea.org/Convention](http://www.okea.org/Convention), or call the Northwest Region office in Woodward at 800/439-0393.

Ed Fair participants receive a \$200 stipend and lodging at the Convention Hotel, Tulsa's Down-

town Doubletree, the night before Convention. Expectations of Ed Fair grant winners include

- Be an OEA member,
- Be willing to share a successful idea/project you have used in the classroom during the Ed Fair,
- Prepare 500 handouts for distribution during the Ed Fair explaining the implementation of your idea or project,
- Be in attendance at your table or booth in the designated room for the two-hour Ed Fair to explain and answer questions from Convention attendees about your project, and
- Bring some examples of student work related to your idea or project (if feasible) to display or share.

For more information about Ed Fair or the Convention, call Debbie Stine, NW teaching and learning specialist, at 800/439-0393.

# House adds anti-teacher language to SB 1644

*Continued from Page 1*

American Board for the Certification in Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) language was also added to the bill. ABCTE would allow any “professional” to take an online exam and become a certified teacher, circumventing Oklahoma’s nationally recognized certification process.

“It is a disgrace that Speaker Hiatt and his cronies decided to tack negative language on to what was already a good bill. Senate Democrats brought forth a solid proposal and the House leadership destroyed it with their rhetoric,” said Roy Bishop, OEA president. “Oklahoma is at a crossroads. Speaker Hiatt decided to begin campaigning in February instead of doing what is right for Oklahoma.

“We will continue fighting for the

rights of teachers. The battle for the \$3,000 pay raise for teachers and the \$1,000 pay raise for our support professionals is not over.”

There were several amendments on the floor to delete the bad language from SB 1644, but House leaders made a procedural move to advance the bill, killing all unheard amendments.

“Speaker Hiatt is not interested in hearing legislation that will benefit the future of our state – our children. Instead he decided to water down a good bill with offensive language and advance his agenda,” said Bishop.

“The Senate has demonstrated its leadership and support of the no-strings-attached education pay raises. It is unfortunate that the House is using education as a political pawn.”

## You be the judge

Those who **voted against teachers**  
YEAS: 56

Adkins	Liebmann
Armes	Liotta
Balkman	Martin
Banz	D. Miller
Benge	K. Miller
Billy	F. Morgan
Bingman	Nance
Blackwell	Newport
Calvey	Perry
Cargill	Peters
Case	P. Peterson
Coody	R. Peterson
Cooksey	Piatt
Cox	Richardson
Dank	Reynolds
Denney	Roggow
DePue	Smaligo
DeWitt	Steele
Duncan	Sullivan
Hastings	Terrill
Hickman	Thompson
Hiatt	Trebilcock
Ingmire	Wesselhoff
Jackson	Wilt
Jett	Winchester
Johnson	Worthen
Jones	Wright
Kern	Young

Those who **voted to protect**  
teachers’ rights:  
NAYS: 42

Askins	McCarter
Auffet	McMullen
Blackburn	McPeak
Braddock	R. Miller
Brannon	D. Morgan
Brown	Morrisette
Carey	Nations
Covey	Plunk
Deutschendorf	Pruett
Dorman	Roan
Ellis	Rousselot
Gilbert	Shelton
Glenn	Sherrer
Hamilton	Shoemake
Harrison	Shumate
Hilliard	Smithson
Hyman	Staggs
Kiesel	Sweedden
Lamons	Toure
Lindley	Turner
Mass	Walker

Members are encouraged to take time to thank the House members who voted to support teachers and protect their rights. Also, continue to phone those representatives – and House Speaker Hiatt – who voted against teachers. The House phone numbers are 800/522-8502 or 405/521-2711.

# State Testing

*By Glenda Puett*

State testing  
“learning disabled”  
Twelve year olds  
Drumming fingers  
Panicked eyes searching  
Squinting  
Hoping concentrating on shapes of letters  
Will bring eurikas to their confusion.  
Squeezing foreheads  
As if answers will ooze through their arms  
To tools  
Of pencils ready and oh so willing to answer  
Questions.  
Questions which reflect paragraphs  
Made of words, mysterious symbols  
Created to measure the worth of a twelve year old mind  
If only reading were possible.

State testing  
“Learning disabled”  
twelve year old terrified to admit  
His confusion.  
Two hours trying to  
Fill in bubbles slowly  
As if to make the effort create success.  
Each minute sinking deeper into  
The despair of self loathing.  
The garble on the pages pointing their  
Defiant arrows toward his inward  
Feeling of stupidity  
If only he could read.

Testing  
“learning disabled”  
Reading...  
Like everything would come together  
If effort prevailed  
Twelve year olds  
Teachers  
Parents  
Even the president says it’s possible  
Too bad  
That touted belief  
Couldn’t heal  
The helplessness  
In twelve year old’s eyes.

*Glenda Puett, Gifted and Talented teacher in Peters Elementary in Tulsa Union Public Schools.*

# Why Do I Need Insurance?

By Liz Picone

NEA Member Benefits Consultant

Insurance is all about protecting you and your money from the costs associated with many of life's routine activities. Part of creating a sound financial plan is making sure you have all the insurance coverage you need and that you actually need all the coverage you have.

If you have any kind of insurance policy, a good place to begin is to read it. If you don't understand it, call your insurance agent (or the insurance company's customer service line) and ask for an explanation.

## Basic Questions to Ask

As you review each policy, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I need this policy?
- Is the maximum coverage adequate for my situation? For example, many people find that they never increase the replacement cost coverage on their house, even as the value of the house rises dramatically.
- Am I getting the best value for the premium I'm paying? For example, would I save money and still keep adequate coverage if I raised my deductible (which will lower your premium)? Should I spend a little time searching for the same coverage at a lower price with another insurance company?
- Are there gaps in coverage? In other words, are there situations that very possibly could occur, but that my policy wouldn't cover?
- How much of a discount would I get if I bought all my policies from the same insurance company (assuming I could get coverage as good as or better than I have now)?

Be careful about filing claims for small issues. Small claims may lead to premium increases or possibly even to having your policy cancelled as too risky for the company to insure. Having a high deductible is one way to stop yourself from filing too many claims.

## Life Insurance

If your spouse or partner died, would you be able to live comfortably on your own? If you passed away, would your family members have enough financial support? If not, you may want to consider buying life insurance.

Life insurance provides money for your loved ones, or actually anyone you designate, after you are gone. The person you designate is called the *beneficiary*. In particular, life insurance proceeds might be used to pay debt, the cost of the funeral, estate taxes, future college tuition, or any other current or anticipated expense.

There is individual and group coverage. You may be able to buy group insurance if it's offered by your employer, union or association. Otherwise, you can buy individual coverage. Generally, group coverage is cheaper because of the group rates.

**Term insurance** pays a death benefit if you die within a specific period of time (the term of the policy). Like auto and homeowner's insurance, term insurance only covers you during the time you're making payments. For this reason, it is less expensive than permanent life insurance. There are four different varieties of term insurance:

- **Convertible** term insurance lets you convert the policy into a permanent one at any time. There is no medical exam, but premiums may increase.
- **Term** insurance lets you sign on for a new term policy without a medical exam, although the premium may be higher.
- **Level** term insurance lets you pay the same premium every year for the length of the term and be entitled to the same amount of proceeds if you die during the term. If you want to renew it at the end, your premium may rise significantly, since you'll be older.
- **Decreasing** term insurance pays a death benefit that gradually decreases in value over time. Premiums usually re-

main the same throughout the term.

Permanent insurance continues until you die (as long as you make timely payments) and may provide a savings feature that builds up a cash reserve you can use while you're alive. This insurance is more expensive than term insurance. There are a few varieties of permanent insurance:

- **Whole** life lets you pay a fixed premium for a fixed death benefit. There is a cash savings feature that, over time, provides you with a cash reserve.
- **Universal** life is a little more flexible than whole life. It may let you change the amount of insurance as your needs change. Some changes may require a medical exam.

- **Variable** life invests some of your premiums in stocks, bonds and money market funds. The upside is that your investments may perform well and provide a larger cash reserve. The downside is the risk that the investments will lose money, but a minimum cash value is seldom guaranteed. Most insurers guarantee a minimum death benefit, although it may not be what you had hoped to receive.

- **Variable-universal** life combines the premium and death benefit flexibility of universal life with the investment flexibility and risk of variable life insurance.

## How Much Insurance Do I Need?

To answer this question, go to the NEA Members Insurance Trust Life Insurance Need Estimator at [www.neamb.com/estimator/calculator/test.jsp](http://www.neamb.com/estimator/calculator/test.jsp).

## First Lady Kim Henry joins mentoring initiative

First Lady Kim Henry has endorsed the new David and Molly Boren Mentoring Initiative, a program of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence designed to encourage the growth and development of school-based mentoring programs around the state.

The mentoring initiative, named in honor of Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence founder and chairman David Boren and his wife, Molly, will draw on the statewide resources of the foundation to promote the estab-

lishment and growth of school-based mentoring programs.

Recently, the foundation launched a new mentoring section on its Web site with tools and resources for prospective mentors and for those interested in creating safe and effective mentoring programs in their communities.

For more information about the David and Molly Boren Mentoring Initiative, visit the foundation's Web site at [www.ofe.org/mentoring](http://www.ofe.org/mentoring) or call Charlotte Jones at 405/236-0006.

## State law makes TABOR unnecessary

*Continued from Page 2*

cause statute requires a vote of the people or 75 percent approval in both chambers of the Legislature.

"TABOR is an unnecessary issue that will lock Oklahoma's education system in the cellar," said Bishop.

"I'm very proud of the time our hard working teachers are willing to dedicate to this challenge. I'm also thankful for our teachers as well as

other associations working with us to prevent TABOR from destroying Oklahoma."

Other teams working on the signature challenge include members from the Oklahoma Retired Teachers Association (OREA), Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration (CCOSA), and the Oklahoma Public Employees Association (OPEA).



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OEA members Marcy Woodson (left) of Moore and Shelley Howell of Norman were guest of the Oprah Winfrey Show during a recent education-related episode.

## Two Oklahomans get front row seats for Oprah episode

By Adrianne Covington

Imagine receiving a personal invitation from Oprah Winfrey – one of the most famed hostesses in the country. Marcy Woodson, freshman world history teacher at Central Junior High in Moore received such an invitation ... well, sort of.

Woodson was approached by the Oprah show and given two tickets to sit on the front row during Oprah's two-part special report, "American Schools in Crisis."

She took with her Shelley Howell, part-time Gifted Resource Director at Adams Elementary in Norman. The two OEA members have been friends since attending seventh grade together at Moore's Highland West.

"Just seeing a taping of the Oprah Show was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Woodson. "Add in that we were seated front row and center and the fact that it was a topic so important to any educator, it was an experience of a lifetime and seemed too good to be true."

The two-episode special, which aired in mid-April, examined the "alarming" dropout rate among high school students (Winfrey partnered with TIME magazine to produce a poll regarding this issue). The special

also addressed the "appalling conditions" of various high schools across the country, highlighting the differences between urban and suburban schools within a one-hour drive of one another.

Howell said Winfrey was very supportive of teachers during the taping.

"Her bottom line was that kids are underachieving, for whatever reason, and a lot of them aren't being given equal opportunity," Howell said.

The first episode focused on the dropout rate, the underfunding of some schools, and the overall lack of preparedness of many high school graduates. The second show highlighted schools that are successful – including a KIPP school and the Saint Hope Academy.

"This is a problem that we all share, not just those living in the communities of schools with low graduation rates or low test scores. If we don't care about the student who is struggling or the one who dropped out to help support his family, it will grow into a problem larger than addressing low student achievement," Woodson said.

"Going to the Oprah Show not only was a great experience, but was an eye opening experience," she said. "I came home refreshed and driven to make a difference in my classroom."