

The
Education

FOCUS

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association • October/November 2014



Who Should Lead Oklahoma Public Education?

A pull-out comparison of John Cox and Joy Hofmeister – in their own words – on your most important issues.

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OEA Recommends Joe Dorman for Governor

“Legal” Marijuana? Not in Oklahoma

Putting education first

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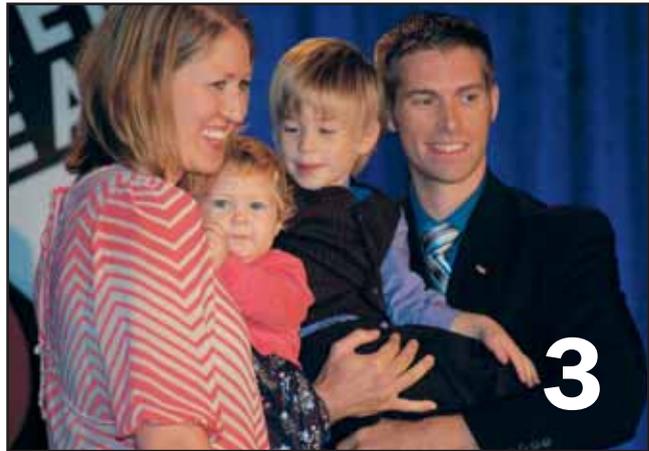


Photo by Doug Folks.

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Photo by Bill Guy.

The Education Focus

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OEA
Oklahoma Education Association
putting education first

You make a difference for our students and our profession

By Linda Hampton
OEA President

In this issue, we celebrate and honor those chosen as the top 12 finalists for Oklahoma's Teacher of the Year. What an honor, and what a great group of educators! You each represent our profession very well. Special congratulations to OEA member Jason Proctor for being selected to represent Oklahoma as the 2015 Teacher of the Year. Way to go, Jason!

I think it is equally appropriate to honor all Oklahoma public education employees. You work tirelessly for your students, ensuring they have an education that will be their key to a successful future. At a time when public education is underfunded, attacked by those who know nothing of working in a public school, and in a seemingly constant state of flux, you, Oklahoma public education employees, step up daily to do the right thing for Oklahoma's more-than 678,000 students.

I've listened to debates from the floor of the House and Senate telling us what's "best" for our profession. One of the more outrageous suggestions was the Third Grade Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA), which would have based a third grade student's ability to pass third grade on a one-size-fits-all test.

I've seen our schools operating on a budget that is \$200 million less than it was in 2008. I've seen our governor and legislature flip flop over what type of standards we should be using in Oklahoma. Most recently, I sat in on a press conference and heard Rep. Jason Nelson say redirecting nearly \$30 million dollars from this year's school budget is a "non-event event."

What I haven't heard is you being asked for meaningful input – you, the person who lives public education daily. You know your students' strengths and weaknesses. You have dedicated your professional life to public education. You

are the education professional.

But, what I have seen is you making your voice heard. You weren't silenced because you weren't asked for input. You just rallied at the Capitol in record numbers last spring. You put pressure on your legislators and they overrode the governor's veto of the RSA. You invited legislators into your classrooms during GLEE week to give them a first-hand experience with the reality of public education. You were the key to getting our current State Superintendent of Public Education defeated in the primary.

Just as you make a difference every day for your students, you also make a difference for our profession. A great public school for every child is worth the fight.

I hope you are beginning to see why



President Linda Hampton

I am so proud of you. I'm proud of your willingness to work long, hard hours for your students. I am proud of you for making your voice heard. I am proud of you for loving, nurturing and valuing each of your students and not just considering them a test score.

One of my long-time favorite quotes is from Pat Conroy's "The Prince of Tides," "There's no word in the language I revere more than 'teacher.' My heart sings when a kid refers to me as his teacher, and it always has. I've honored myself and the entire family of man by becoming a teacher."

You, my friends, have earned the title Teacher. Thank you!

Duncan ESP establishes new local

The Duncan Education Support Association (DESA) has more than doubled its membership and negotiated a stronger contract since winning a bargaining challenge election last May. DESA won the right to represent Duncan support employees by defeating ESPO (Education Support Personnel of Oklahoma).

The OEA local now has 47 members, up from 23 last year.

As the new bargaining agent, DESA renegotiated the entire contract. Major gains included:

- 30-cent raise and 20-cent steps for all employees.
- Steps 32-36 added to the salary schedule.
- Paid leave for the Thursday and Friday of Spring Break.
- Two additional days of emergency leave to be used when school is closed for bad weather.



DESA members (top row) Steve Hervey, Melissa Massie, Machel Zimm, Tim Yancy, (bottom row) Sec./Treas. Nikki Garrett, Pres. Paula Freel, and VP Sheryl Chapman.



get connected



Shares, Likes, Comments!

FACEBOOK: *Oklahoma Education Association*

OEA, 10/3/14: OEA members can now find discounts at more than 75,000 businesses, in your neighborhood and around the country. Members can find registration instructions in our Members Only section of the website. Through Access, you can find deals online or download the mobile app (for Apple or Android!) to use coupons from your phone.

OEA, 9/21/14: A race to the top is always going to leave some behind. Despite the reformers' rhetoric, the whole standards-and-accountability movement is not about helping all children to become better learners. It is not committed to leaving no child behind. It is just the opposite. A-F is just a sorting instrument, used to separate "good" schools from "bad" ones, while ignoring the obvious impact of demographics, poverty and community culture.



Top Tweets!

TWITTER: *@okea*

OKEA @okea, 10/9/14: This IS a big deal. Students' and teachers' lives are directly affected by these test results. #okea #NEA <http://bit.ly/1sB6Tby>

Coopmike48, @coopmike46, 10/2/14: Big Education Ape: Children are more than test scores: Beyond Achievement Gap, or it's the Opportunity Gap people! bit.ly/1vAmE2b



Simply Said ... With Linda!

OEA President Linda Hampton's Blog

9/30/14: Double, Double Toil and Trouble: All Oklahomans need to say loudly and clearly that our children and their education should be our state's top priority. And as our top priority, education must be adequately funded. It is not okay for Oklahoma to be 49th in the nation in what we spend to educate our children or what we pay our educators. Our children deserve better.

Affordable Online Education Master's Degrees

This section from www.thesimpledollar.com is a perfect starting point for educators looking to develop advanced skills and knowledge in specialty areas such as education administration, curriculum and instruction, early childhood education, or special education, among many other options. They calculate rankings on a strict value-for-money basis, accepting only reputable universities that rank highly in nationwide surveys of academic quality and student satisfaction. All schools are fully accredited and award the very same degree to both online and on-campus students. <http://bit.ly/1vRBekT>



Ten Ways to Support Coaches

Teacher coaching programs often struggle simply because coaches and administrators don't share an understanding about the coaching model. When the principal evaluates the coach, the already-present complicated power dynamic between the two is heightened. Complications may arise if the principal is also the coach's evaluator. Whenever possible, districts should consider opting for a model where someone other than the site administrator evaluates the coach. The suggestions in this article, by Elena Aguilar in *Education Week's*, The Art of Coaching Teachers blog, apply regardless of who evaluates the coaches. <http://bit.ly/1uR6PUF>



Conference Time: Chatting with Parents

Just as you've finally settled into a rhythm in your class, it is now time for parent/teacher conferences. This event can cause dread for some teachers. Teachers are scared that they might have to face the angry parent who wants to question all of the practices that take place in the classroom. It's true that you never know what's going to happen when the parents show up, but this article by Nicholas Provenzano on Edutopia's website features some really effective tips to help any teacher survive those parent/teacher conferences. <http://bit.ly/1vPNaUj>

Teaching with endurance

Tahlequah's Jason Proctor named State Teacher of the Year

By Doug Folks

Numbered runners' bibs from three different marathons hang on the wall behind Jason Proctor's desk at Tahlequah High School. They serve as conversation starters with his students, but the bibs also quietly symbolize the never-give-up determination of an outstanding teacher.

As Oklahoma's 2015 State Teacher of the Year, he will serve as the state's ambassador of the teaching profession, traveling the state and telling everyone who will listen why public education is so important.

While many teachers know early on that working with young people is their calling, it was a teacher strike and a simple need to find some running partners that eventually led Proctor to the profession.

When he arrived at Ferris State in Big Rapids, Mich., Jason found the college teachers on strike and the cross country program he planned to run for eliminated to meet a Title IX requirement. While killing time running, he came across the local high school cross country team and asked the coach if he could volunteer some time with the team.

"I was really just looking for people to run with," Proctor says of his motivation to help the team. "But it turned out the coach, Brad Kahrs, turned into a huge mentor and friend and leader for me. He took me under his wing and taught me the ins and outs of coaching. A lot of what he does and believes in, I think you can see in what I do on a daily basis."

Proctor was a pre-pharmacy major, but after a year-and-a-half, he realized, "I had this tug that I really felt like I needed more interaction with people ... I felt this draw to teach teenagers."

With so much chemistry already under his belt, he stayed the course and graduated with a bachelor's in chemistry education and a minor in mathematics. Later, he earned a master's in the Art of Teaching at Marygrove College in Detroit.

His arrival in Tahlequah was almost as serendipitous as his path to teaching.



Photo by Doug Folks.

Jason Proctor (second from left) with some of his AP Calculus students at Tahlequah High school, Allison Hickman, Keara Miller, Isaiah Starr.

Jason's wife, Alissa, accepted a one-year optometry residency at Northeastern State University. But that one-year lap around the track became a long run in Northeast Oklahoma for the Proctors when she accepted the job full-time.

Now, Jason is National Board Certified, teaching geometry, algebra II, pre-calculus and AP calculus at THS. And he coaches the cross country team, still running with his athletes, never asking

them to do something he won't do or hasn't done.

"Running with kids is awesome. It's different than (being with them) in the classroom," he said. "Here you are, spending an hour next to them, running and hurting together. It opens a whole new level of dialogue and trust. You get to share something unique with them that way."

During Jason's first marathon, things were going as planned until about mile 21. He hit the wall, as they say, but kept pushing and willed himself to finish.

Teaching, he says, has a lot of parallels to running a marathon.

"That idea of teaching with endurance. There are times when it's really easy and things go really smoothly," he said. "And there are times when you think, 'I can't keep going.' You just have to pick one foot up, and then the other, and just keep pressing on because it can really be tough sometimes."

Jason's path to teaching began with a simple search for running partners. Now, after 12 years in the classroom, he's realized

what the finish line is for his students.

"I can see this is the process the kids are going through," he said. "Success can be measured in different ways. It not the idea that every kid should run a 4-minute mile or that every kid is going to be an engineer. But if I can get them to improve from the first time I met them, then that's successful ... I see things on a much grander scale."

“Success can be measured in different ways. It's not the idea that every kid should run a 4-minute mile or that every kid is going to be an engineer.”

Meet OEA's State Teacher of the Year Finalists

Romney Nesbitt

Jenks West Intermediate School – Art

“The art room is a laboratory of life where students express their creativity and learn about living in the present and the future. Connections to real life provide incentives for students to give their best.”

What's right with public education?

“The thing that is right with public education is that it is public. It teaches everyone. We are not exclusive. I feel that we have the same expectation for all students, regardless of their backgrounds or their parents' knowledge or lack thereof. I'm proud to be a public school teacher. Our democracy is based on public education. If we don't have public education, where we are educating the populous, then only those who have education will have the power.”



Photo by Doug Folks.

Tonya Boyle

Rhoades Elementary School, Broken Arrow – Fifth Grade

“My philosophy begins with a belief that all

children can learn. It means that children can learn on their own time schedule, in their own style, starting at their own level.”

What's your secret to get parents involved?

“Communication. I try to connect (at the first of the year). I want to establish a contact point (at the very beginning): Do you want to email? Do you want a phone call? Do you want to text? Do you want me to write notes in the planner? How do you want me to get hold of you? I do go out of my way at the beginning of school to send a couple of positives home before I have to come up with anything that needs to be discussed. It's very important to connect and for them to know that I truly care about their child. I know they do and I respect the fact that they have way more influence on their child than I do. ... I think it's a communication thing and getting off on the right foot and making sure they know that I want what's best for their child.”

Diane Walker

Muskogee High School – All-Honors Oklahoma History, World History, Government and Geography

“As a teacher, I am a guardian of the future. Those I teach and touch today will be leading our communities and world tomorrow.”

How do you feel about the A-F Grades and what do you do with that information?

“Researchers at OU and OSU show that 70 percent of the A-F scale is not something I can control in my classroom. I worry about all of it because I want to make sure my kids are fed; I want to make sure my kids have enough sleep. Regardless of whether they are 4 or 14, that's still applicable in a learning environment. If they're not safe at home – food, clothing, all that – then they're not going to be learning at school. It doesn't matter what happened in 1776 if they don't have food in their stomachs.

I agree with accountability. I think that's important, but the measurements need to be things I can be accountable for.”



Photo by Doug Folks.

Photo by Bill Guy.



Monica Hodgden

Woodward Early Childhood Center –
Pre-Kindergarten

“I begin my first day of school each year teaching my children the routines and expectations of our classroom. I call it ‘training the troops.’ The children quickly learn their responsibilities and my expectations for the classroom.”

Why are you a member of the Oklahoma Education Association?

“Association membership is vitally important in that it provides the collective voice to support our profession. Through my local chapter, the Woodward Education Association, and by my membership in OEA and the National Education Association, I and my fellow members have the opportunity to share ideas and concerns. We can accomplish so much more as a united group of concerned professionals than we could ever achieve as isolated individuals.”

Photo by Bill Guy.



Amber Elder

Dennis Elementary School,
Putnam City – 1st-2nd Grades

“There are several main components in successfully guiding students to realize their potential: creating a safe and loving classroom environment, building one-on-one relationships, and differentiating learning based on the various needs of students. Students learn and develop at different rates, and I focus on pinpointing exactly where a student is developmentally.”

Why should teachers be involved in politics?

“As the professional experts in the field of education and with our direct connection to students, it is absolutely crucial that teachers understand and become active in regards to education in politics. Teachers should be guiding conversations, researching current educational issues, and be an active participant in everything that affects public education.”



Photo by Doug Folks.

LeeAnn Wyrick

McCall Middle School, Atoka –
6th-7th Grade Geography

“Teachers must strive to create a classroom environment that is inspiring, respectful and conducive for in-depth learning.”

How do you make time to teach what is not tested?

“What are we doing if we just teach kids to take a test and they cannot apply anything to real life? That would be a tremendous waste of time. Whatever we’re teaching, the methodology should be to apply it to the real world. When you do that you take it farther. My goal is that they can use these concepts not only in school but in real life. So you just take everything deeper, you take it farther, whatever you’re teaching.

I try to wrap it all in. For instance, if I’m teaching about the Renaissance, I try to find (related) things the kids are interested in and wrap it all in. Basically, I’m tricking them.”

Who do you think should be our next State Superintendent?

Dr. John Cox and Joy Hofmeister, candidates for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, participated in a question and answer session with the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education in late September. On these two pages you will find their answers to some of those questions.

On funding ...

John Cox – “First of all, we’ve got to get the \$200 million back (cut since 2008), and then I think we really have to be aggressive to go and get that money. I’ve been really bold and have said a teacher’s starting pay should be \$40,000. I think what that does is entices young people to come into the business. I really believe we need to look at pay and look at it seriously. If our legislators don’t agree with us, we need to go out to their territory and we need to talk to the teachers in their area and get them rallied to go. I think legislators need to represent their people.”

Joy Hofmeister – “...we don’t have what we need. We’re operating on money based on 2008 and we have 40,000 more students. That’s an easy thing for people to understand. We’re trying to do more with less. I do think that having competitive teacher compensation is going to be a significant portion of our education funding dollars, so that would certainly have to be a very large part of that discussion. We are at a tipping point and a crisis when it comes to competitive professional compensation for teachers. I do think there is traction to address that very soon.”



Photo provided.

Joy Hofmeister

On tests scores as part of teacher evaluations ...

John Cox – “It doesn’t do us any good to have a value added model on there. I want to give that responsibility back to the principal and the teacher to improve the skills just on the qualitative portion. The quantitative portion is just something we came up with to say we’re doing something. I want to get that stopped.”

Joy Hofmeister – “I don’t really know a percentage that is fair. I don’t know the answer because I don’t know what the evidence says. We have to act on evidence and if there is feedback coming that says, ‘You know what? We’re seeing a ripple effect that is negative and is not providing for strong professionals and high student outcomes,’ then we need to fix it. This should be about finding a way to customize and fit ... high expectations, but also providing the supports to achieve them and having the transparency and accountability, (but not as) a punitive thing. It should be about helpful information.”

See videos of the candidates’ complete answers to questions from the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education Steering Committee at youtube.com/oeahq.

On testing special education students with the same tests all students take...

Joy Hofmeister – “I’m not sure what we’re doing makes a lot of sense. We cannot come at this without common sense. It doesn’t make a lot of sense to waste time that could be used to teach life skills to a student to satisfy something like an algebra II test for a child who has the capabilities of a child who’s maybe 18 months old. I have a hard time calling that anything but nonsense. This is where we need to advocate for common sense. We shouldn’t have to legislate that.”

John Cox – “(I would propose) taking the testing away from special needs kids; actually go back to allowing the IEP to be the driver of the growth of the student. That’s what IDEA is all about: allowing the team, the parent, the school psychologist and the teacher and principal to drive (that child’s) education. We’re just setting them up to fail.”

On high stakes testing ...

John Cox – “We just (test) too much. Our focus is on looking at a child as a test score and not as an individual. My plan is to streamline our testing. Really go back and look at math and reading. I really love the ACT Aspire family. If we can look at that (for) 3rd through 10th grade math and reading, we can actually (prepare) our students going up through the grade levels to take the ACT in high school. We can actually save money by doing away with all this other testing that we do that serves no purpose. We can use the ACT Aspire family and then give every student the ACT, regardless of where they’re going (college or career tech).”

Joy Hofmeister – “... high stakes testing is really out of balance. We are creating a toxic environment in our classrooms. It affects our teachers as well as our students. I do think there is a place for having assessments that can be comparable across state lines so that we can get good information to our local schools, to our communities, to our teachers. ... A good assessment will align with the goal we’re wanting to achieve. So for students in Oklahoma – we’re an ACT state – it would make sense to have testing that will eventually lead to our students having success with college and career tech readiness and prepared to enter the workforce when that time comes.”

On combining TRS with the public employee pension system and forcing new teachers into a 401(k) type system ...

Joy Hofmeister – “First and foremost, I do believe Oklahoma has a duty to keep its promises. Whether or not there is merit in other (methods of) streamlining of the administration or different (types of systems), I think this is something that I would be asking those affected. I think part of this (pension) discussion has to be part of a much broader discussion about teacher compensation packages. This is one of those things where I feel like we have to rely on ... experts in financial planning. I would want to hear a lot of views before I would have a position. This is about getting great people and keeping great people.”

On charter schools ...

Joy Hofmeister – “I don’t know that there is an interest in local communities (to create charters). I don’t want to stand in the way of a local community that is clamoring to offer a portfolio option of a charter school. If that is so important to them, then they’ll go to their legislator and work to change (the law). I do think there is room for charters. Charters are incubators of innovation and we can learn from those in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Charters do need to have the same kind of accountability, transparency and assessments, that public school students have. And yet my interest again is not to give up on our strong neighborhood schools. Stronger schools mean stronger neighborhoods, stronger communities, and ultimately a stronger Oklahoma.”

John Cox – “Charter schools are the first step to privatizing public schools ... What I’m really concerned about is these for-profit charters that want to come into our state and get all through our rural areas and really destroy what we have. In public education, we take every child at the door step. I really think our focus needs to go back to the 95 percent of kids who are in public schools. This position is the State Superintendent of *Public* Instruction and I think our focus should be on getting our money into *public education* (*Editors Note: emphasis added for clarity*). What’s so upsetting is that there is \$33 million sitting there for virtual charter schools and we don’t know the accountability of the systems. Why can’t we put that money back into public schools?”



Dr. John Cox

Photo provided.

A message from Pres. Linda Hampton on why the OEA Fund did not recommend a candidate for State Superintendent:

“After meeting with Dr. Cox and Mrs. Hofmeister, the Fund for Children and Public Education Steering Committee had a long conversation about whether to recommend one of them, both of them or neither one. Like OEA members, the Committee was divided on who to support. Both candidates are qualified and hold favorable positions on many issues. The Committee decided the best role OEA could play would be to provide members with in-depth opportunities to inform themselves about each candidate and to make their own decisions on whom to elect.”

Education leadership needed at the top

OEA recommends Dorman for governor

The governor's office on the second floor of the State Capitol may seem a world away from the school hallways you walk each day, but our state's highest officeholder has a daily impact on your classrooms. And these days, there is a lot of room for improvement in the governance of common education.

One enormous improvement will be the inauguration of a new State Superintendent in January. But Oklahoma's governor can have an even bigger impact on your profession when he or she chooses to, and one candidate in this year's gubernatorial race has made education his top priority.

Joe Dorman is OEA's choice for the next Governor of the State of Oklahoma. His three-phase "Classrooms First" education platform articulates a vision that our members advocate for every day.



Photo provided.

Here's a summary of Joe's vision for public education.

Phase One of "Classrooms First" consists of a direct infusion of resources into our classrooms without raising taxes. He would direct the franchise tax, which currently goes into the general revenue fund, into the education funding formula.

He believes local boards should then direct their portion toward their district's most significant needs. This phase also puts protections in place for the future to avoid the massive budget cuts we've endured since 2008.

Phase Two addresses testing. He *See "Dorman" on the next page*

HD 87 race impacts every school in Oklahoma

Regardless of where you live, one Oklahoma City House race this year could have the biggest impact on your local school than any legislative race in the state.

House District 87 in northwest Oklahoma City is currently held by incumbent Rep. Jason Nelson, who works tirelessly to divert money from public education to private schools in the form of vouchers. At times, his legislation comes straight from the infamous American Legislative Exchange Council (Want to know more about ALEC? Visit alecexposed.org.)

Nelson authored the divisive "Parent Trigger" bill of 2013, which stated that upon acquiring parent signatures, a school could be forced to change to a for-profit charter, fire half its faculty or shut down permanently. His most recent failing came when he held a press conference in tandem with State Superintendent Janet Barresi, touting that the loss of Oklahoma's NCLB waiver and the resulting diversion of \$30 million from our classrooms was – literally – "not a big deal."

Seeing money diverted from our public school classrooms isn't a big concern to someone who fights every session to do just that. Fortunately, on November 4, the voters of HD 87 have a better choice.

Collin Walke, an Oklahoma City attorney, is the Democratic challenger for HD 87. Walke campaigns on the message that we need more bipartisan partnerships at the Capitol. His wife, Lori, is a Republican pastor, so Collin jokes that he's already very familiar with bipartisan leadership.

Collin sought the recommendation of OEA this year and the team of OEA members who interviewed him in-depth recommended we give him our full support. He recognizes that Oklahoma schools aren't failing, but they are struggling. He pledges to empower teachers in their own classrooms, rather than forcing them to teach to a test.

Last session, Rep. Nelson moved into a leadership role in the House and his influence is only expected to grow. His legislation affects schools well beyond the border of HD 87. Our public schools need Collin Walke leading that district. And OEA needs your help to make that happen. If you can donate a couple of hours of your time making phone calls to voters in that district, Collin will win this race, and public education will win back HD 87. To volunteer, email Lisa Cobb at lcobb@okea.org or call her at 800/522-8091.

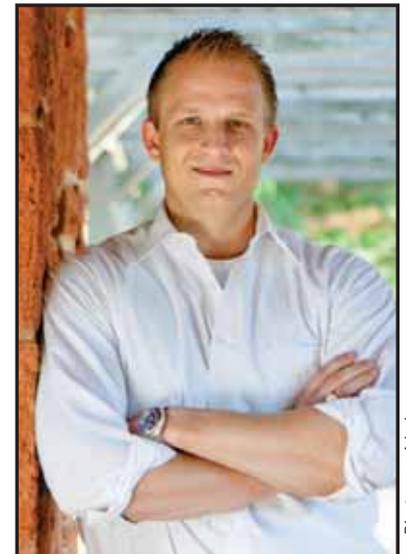


Photo provided.

HD 87 Candidate Collin Walke

FCPE recommends these pro-education candidates

Following is a list of other pro-education candidates who have been recommended by the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

Kevin Black (D, Elk City) – Senate District 26. Kevin is a 24-year educator who currently teaches AP U.S. History and Government at Elk City High School. Kevin understands the importance of public education to the continuing development of western Oklahoma. A long-time OEA member, he recognizes the need for a public education advocate in the Oklahoma Senate.

Toni Hasenbeck (D, Elgin) – House District 65. Toni has deep connections to southwest Oklahoma and has taught in rural schools since 1991. A long-time OEA member, she understands how public education links the multiple factors of rural communities and economies.

Rep. David Perryman (D, Chickasha) – House District 56. David has been a strong advocate for education during his time in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. He has been a valuable voice of reason during floor debates on issues such as funding, testing and employee rights, and has a near-perfect voting record on OEA issues.

Rep. Justin Wood (R, Shawnee) – House District 26. Justin, whose family is deeply rooted in education and public service, has been a very vocal proponent

for our public schools. He has been a valuable ally in promoting education policy and always has an open door for educators.

Jack Reavis, (D, Muskogee) – House District 14. Jack is a 19-year teacher at Muskogee Public Schools where he teaches AP History, Government and Politics and coaches girls basketball and volleyball. Jack, who serves on the Muskogee EA negotiations team, and his wife Lora are both long-time members of MEA and OEA. Jack will bring our most important issues to the State Capitol and support public education.

Chris Kannady (R, Moore) – House District 91. Chris is a 10-year Marine vet-

eran. After serving our country, he came home and attended the OU School of Law and now practices in his home district.

Chris, whose sister teaches and coaches at Southmoore High School, is committed to supporting public education.

Rep. Chuck Hoskins (D, Vinita) – House District 6. Chuck is a former Vinita High School teacher and Locust Grove administrator. He is also an elected member of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council. Since his election to office in 2007, Rep. Hoskins has been a public education champion who has supported and voted for pro-public education issues and against the harmful reforms without fail.

Dorman running on education platform

Continued from Page 8

would trade EOI's for the ACT and replace the third grade reading exams with measuring progress throughout the year. He gets it – tests should be used to inform instruction, not to label and punish.

Phase Three tackles setting our new standards. His Blue Ribbon Commission recognizes the most critical detail to ensuring the creation and implementation of new standards is done right: it gives teachers a seat at the table.

We in education have a long, hard road ahead of us as we create and imple-

ment new standards, move away from the toxic testing culture, develop a meaningful way to evaluate educators and school districts, and fight for desperately needed funding for our classrooms. We need a leader who understands our priorities, and will work with us to make them our reality. Between now and November 4, talk to your friends and family about why you'll be voting for Joe Dorman for governor, and they should to!

For more information or to help Joe get elected, go to joedorman.com, or call your LPO staff at 800/522-8091.

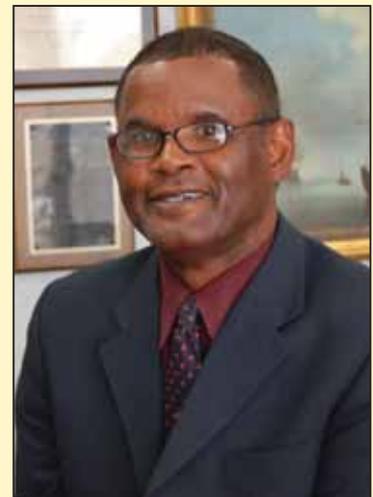
McCauley family establishing endowed scholarship

The family of Charles McCauley, long-time associate executive director of the Oklahoma Education Association, is establishing an endowed scholarship fund in partnership with the Oklahoma City Community Foundation.

Charles spent his entire career as an educator and was passionate in establishing relationships and being an advocate for his community. He taught for five years in the Oklahoma City Public Schools and worked as a teacher advocate for more than 36 years at the OEA. Charles retired in 2009 and passed away earlier this year.

A scholarship has been established in his memory to provide an opportunity for college students pursuing a career in teacher education to continue their educational advancement. The Foundation has a goal to endow the fund with a minimum of \$20,000 through the help of donors, friends, family and colleagues who wish to assist in honoring and continuing the legacy of Charles McCauley.

This scholarship fund will be administered by the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. Online contributions to the Charles B. McCauley Memorial Scholarship Fund can be made at <https://occf.org/onlinegiving/>. For more information, contact Cathy Nestlen, OCCF Director of Communications, at 405/606-2913 or at c.nestlen@occf.org.



Charles McCauley

“Legal” Marijuana? Not in Oklahoma

By Richard Wilkinson
OEA General Counsel

Several questions have come up in our office about the recent events in Colorado and other states legalizing the use of marijuana for medical or recreational purposes. As you may be aware, Colorado passed a law that legalized the use of medical marijuana beginning in December 2012, and on January 1, 2014, it became legal in Colorado for any person over 21 to purchase marijuana at licensed retail stores. Colorado residents are allowed to purchase up to one ounce at a time and non-residents are allowed to purchase up to one quarter of an ounce.

The fact that Colorado passed a law legalizing the recreational use of marijuana; however, does not make it legal to possess the Colorado-purchased product in Oklahoma. In fact, Colorado law prohibits the transport of any legally purchased marijuana out of state, even if you are transporting to another state where marijuana is legal. Second, Oklahoma law still prohibits the possession of marijuana. Third, and perhaps most important, the possession of marijuana remains a federal crime, and even the medical use of marijuana in those states that permit such use is not permitted under federal law.

Why is this relevant to an Oklahoma Public School employee? The recreational use of marijuana, and more recently the possible medical benefits for certain conditions, have been part of the societal dialogue on several fronts:

- Whether the recreational use of small amounts should be legalized, taxed, and regulated or whether the current criminal penalties in the majority of states should remain;
- Whether the recreational use of marijuana by adolescents creates permanent impairment or operates as a “gateway” to other drug use; or
- Whether the occasional use of marijuana by adults is akin to having your favorite libation at a sports bar on a weekend, and should be treated accordingly.

Regardless of your point of view, there undoubtedly will be (or have been) adventurous souls (or whatever label is appropriate) who will adopt the “When in Rome” philosophy the next time they travel to Colorado, or other states with similar laws.

If that occurs, you need to be aware of several issues. Most school districts in Oklahoma have adopted policies that prohibit the use of any illicit drug. Those districts will also likely have drug testing policies that allow “for cause” testing of school employees who are employed in non-safety sensitive positions.

The recently amended Standards for Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Act now allows an employer to test an employee based on the conduct of an employee that suggests impairment or “a report” of drug or alcohol use. Since marijuana can remain in your system for several days, or even weeks, after use – even with the single use of a small amount – you can test positive for cannabis and be subject to discipline under the drug testing policy even though you were not impaired at work or consumed anything while at work or on duty.

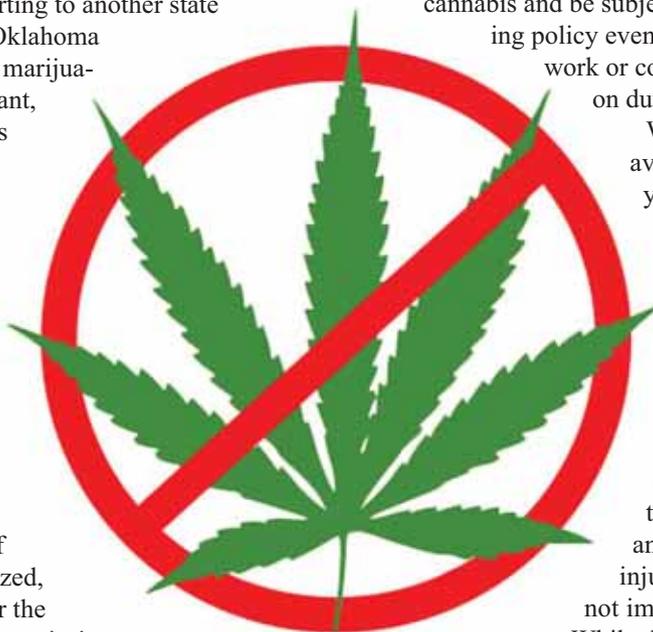
While there may be several defenses available under the above scenario, you will likely be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, if there is a positive test under the district’s drug testing policy. If you have been injured on the job and seek medical attention, an immediate drug test is typically the protocol for all injuries that may involve a worker’s compensation claim and a positive test may prohibit you from receiving any compensation for your on-the-job injury, despite the fact that you were not impaired at the time of the injury.

While the law in this area remains uncertain and there will likely be litigation to resolve several of these issues, you need to be aware of your local school district policies – particularly the policies dealing with workplace drug testing. Those policies are subject to the collective bargaining process and local associations that are designated bargaining agents may also want to consider reviewing those policies and updating them during the bargaining process as appropriate. This issue is not as simple as it might seem – so beware of “legal” marijuana.

If you have questions about this issue, you can contact our office or your OEA Regional Advocacy UniServ Specialist for additional information.



Richard Wilkinson



Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Required by 39 USC 3685)

The publication's title is *The Education Focus* (Publication No. 1542-1678). The filing date of the statement is August 18, 2014. It is published monthly, with the exception of five issues which are published bimonthly. Seven issues are published annually, in October-November, December-January, February, March, April-May, June-July and August-September. The annual subscription price is \$5.00. The complete mailing address of the known office of the publication and of the General Business Office of the Publisher is: Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3117. Sheryl Piccinino (405/528-7785) is the contact person. The publisher is the Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3117. Doug Folks is the editor and Amanda Ewing is the managing editor. Owner of the publication is the Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3117. There are no bondholders, mortgagees, or other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax have not changed during the preceding 12 months. The name of the publication is *The Education Focus*. The issue date for the circulation data which follows is August-September 2014. The data is classified as follows: a. the average number of copies of

each issue during preceding 12 months, and b. the actual number copies of the single issue published nearest the filing date. Total number of copies: a. 19,571; b. 21,800. Paid or requested circulation through (1) outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541: a. 18,797; b. 18,643; (2) in-county subscriptions: a. none; and b. none; (3) through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: a. 639; b. 3,022; (4) other classes mailed through the USPS: a. none; b. none. Total paid distribution: a. 19,436; b. 22,665. Free or nominal rate copies for (1) outside-county: a. 110; b. 109; (2) in-county: a. none; b. none; (3) other classes mailed through the USPS: a. none; b. none. Free distribution outside the mail: a. none; b. none. Total free distribution: a. 110; b. 109. Total distribution: a. 19,546, b. 21,775. Copies not distributed (office use, leftovers, spoiled): a. 25; b. 25. Total printed: a. 19,571, b. 21,800. Percentage of paid and or requested circulation is: a. 99.44% and b. 99.49%. The statement of ownership will be published in the October-November 2014, issue of the publication. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions. Doug Folks, editor.

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