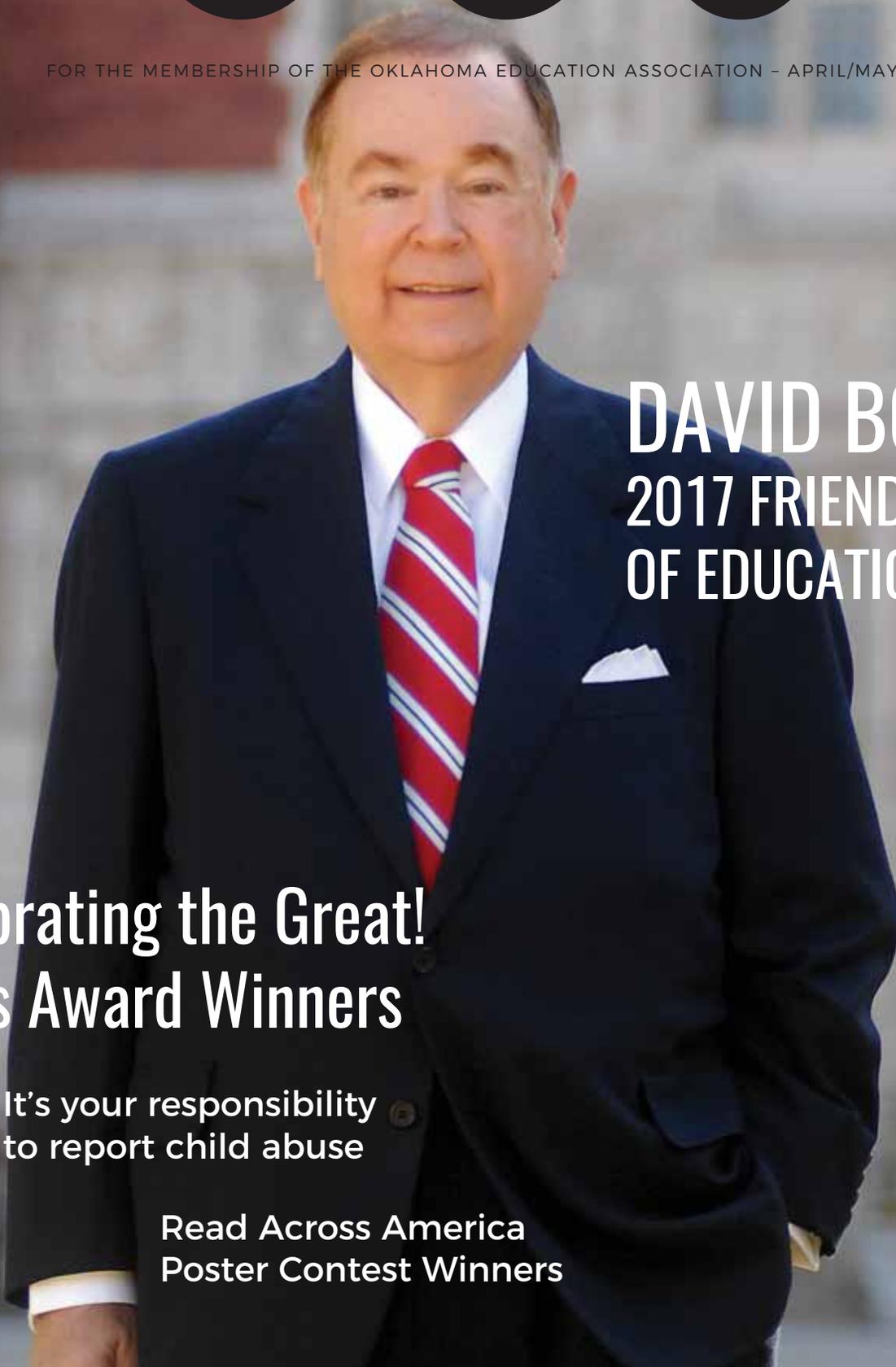


THE EDUCATION

# FOCUS

FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION - APRIL/MAY 2017



**DAVID BOREN**  
**2017 FRIEND**  
**OF EDUCATION**

**Celebrating the Great!**  
**OEA's Award Winners**

**It's your responsibility**  
**to report child abuse**

**Read Across America**  
**Poster Contest Winners**

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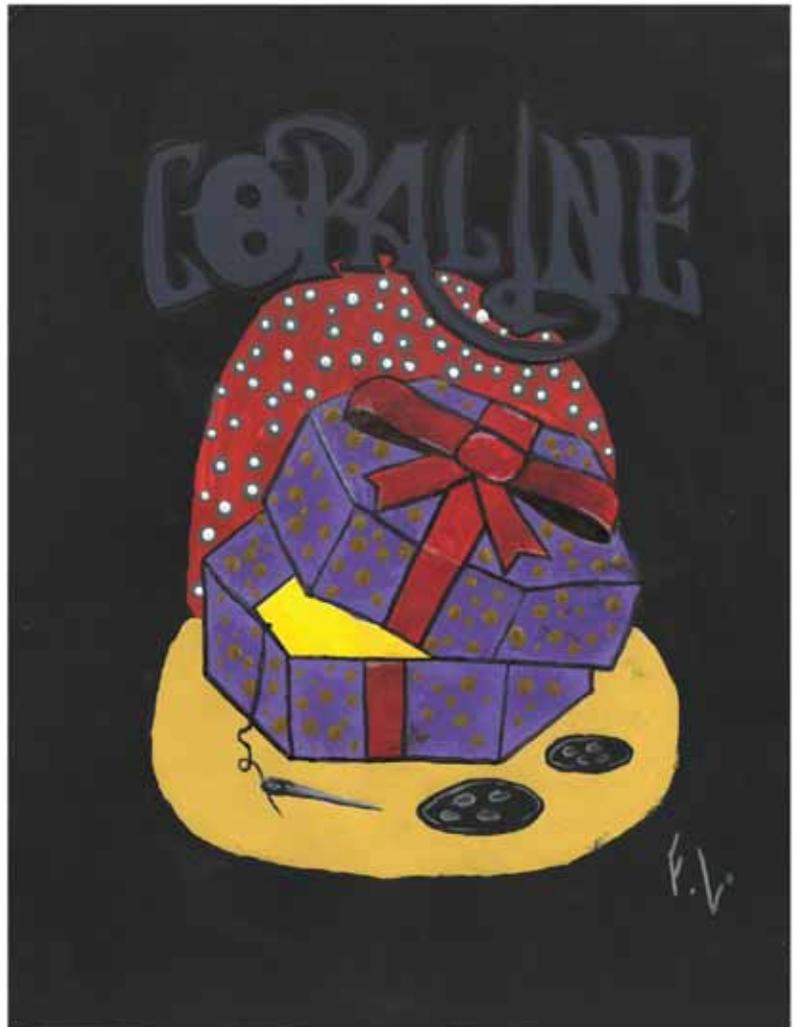
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members to join the association.



Francisco Lobato's depiction of "Coraline" won second place in the high school division of OEA's Read Across America poster contest. Read about all of the winners and see the Best in Show and first place drawings on Page 10.

# Celebrate the GREAT!

By Alicia Priest  
OEA President

*“Your life is a message to the world. Make sure it’s inspiring.”*

This seems to be the motto of every school employee that I meet as I travel across our state. The fruits of this statement are evident to all who open the cover of this magazine.

Go into any staff lounge and you will most likely hear excited chatter about how little Chuck finally got a concept that he had been struggling with. Or, you might hear about how a lesson was thought to be amazing, but in reality, flopped. So, the teacher reflected and modified and brought it back with tweaks creating a les-

son where the students basked in an amazing journey to knowledge.

We know how to celebrate our students’ and colleagues’ successes, but we often shy away from the light when it shines on us personally. We rarely, if ever, stop and celebrate what we did ... that because of our dedication, perseverance, professionalism and creativity, Jimmy learned the concept, or Suzie won first in extemporaneous speech. I wonder why that is?

The Bobby Bones show on 101.9 The Twister does a segment called “I See You,” where the radio talents tell a story about a regular person making a difference. It is one of my favorite spots they do each day. We should do that for each other! I get the unique opportunity to go to schools and give awards. Nothing makes



*President Alicia Priest*

me more proud than to see how amazing our members are with the students they teach! I see you, OEA, and you are AWE-INSPIRING.

I don’t want to borrow from a national radio show, so let’s start our own movement – #CelebrateTheGREAT. Begin by reading some stories about our great members in this issue of *The Education Focus*. Then, start acknowledging yourself and your colleagues via text, postcard, Facebook post, and Twitter, all using the hashtag #CelebrateTheGREAT.

I see you OEA. You step up, go above and beyond and put your heart and soul into educating our kids.

I #CelebrateTheGREAT that is YOU!

## *Save the date for summer leadership training*

**Northwest Leadership Training**  
8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m., June 20  
Indian Creek Winery; Ringwood, OK

**Southwest Leadership Training**  
July 14 (Time TBD)  
Simmons Center, Duncan, Okla.

**Southeast Leadership Training**  
Lucy Smith Center (new McAlester HS)  
**Emerging Leaders**  
10 a.m. - 7 p.m., July 20  
**Leadership Day**  
9:45 a.m. - 4 p.m., July 21

**Northeast Leadership Day**  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m., July 24  
Northeast Technology Center;  
Claremore, OK

*OKC Metro and Tulsa Metro times,  
dates and sites TBD.*

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Alicia Priest, President  
Katherine Bishop, Vice President  
David DuVall, Executive Director  
Amanda Ewing, Associate Executive Director  
Doug Folks, Editor  
Bill Guy, Communications  
Carrie Coppernoll Jacobs, Social Media

**Need help? Contact your regional team.**  
Oklahoma City Metro, Northwest, Southeast  
and Southwest Teams  
323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK 73105  
800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

Northeast and Tulsa Metro Teams  
10820 E. 45th, Suite. 110, Tulsa, OK, 74146  
800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

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**OEA**  
Oklahoma Education Association  
putting education first

# OEA joins unique coalition to push legislature for better funding of core services

A coalition of unlikely allies joined together in mid-April to form Save Our State to put pressure on the State Legislature to raise revenue for core services, including education, public safety, health care and transportation.

The Oklahoma Education Association partnered with nearly 20 other nonprofits, including Stand For Children, Oklahoma Policy Institute, the Institute for Child Advocacy, VOICE, the Oklahoma Public Employees Association, the Mental Health Association, the Oklahoma Science Teachers Association and others.

Tulsa CTA and The Education Association of Moore (TEAM) were the first two local associations to sign on as partners. Eleven other locals had joined at press time.

SOS has developed and distributed a Blueprint for a Better Budget, a three-year plan designed to address the overall budget situation with enough revenue to prevent further budget cuts and invest in key priorities. The plan calls for \$1.44 billion for Fiscal Year 2018 to fill the budget hole and provide money for teacher

pay raises and K-12 initiatives, bonds for transportation, money for the Department of Health and Human Services and other state agencies.

To reach that figure, the Blueprint outlines a number of sources of one-time and recurring revenue for FY '18. The plan calls for higher income tax rates for people earning more than \$200,000 a year, increasing the tobacco tax, raising sales

taxes on selected services, and reducing or eliminating sales tax exemptions.

Detail is provided for FY '19 and FY '20 as well.

"We want our students' time in our classroom to be meaningful and valuable," OEA President Alicia Priest said during a press conference introducing the coalition and the Blueprint. "However, the growth of a child into a healthy, productive citizen of our state takes more than a fully funded education. It takes funding all the vital services upon which our children depend."

Individuals can join the effort at [saveourstateok.org](http://saveourstateok.org), where they can also find a copy of the Blueprint and tips and a sample script for calling legislators.

Local associations can add their names

to the coalition list by emailing OEA LPO specialist Nick Singer at [nsinger@okea.org](mailto:nsinger@okea.org). OEA's web page Will You Help Save Our State at [okea.org](http://okea.org) provides updates, a complete list of locals that have joined the coalition and other resources.



OEA President Alicia Priest (left) was one of the speakers at the Save Our State press conference in mid-April. Stand For Children's Amber England introduces the SOS Blueprint for a Better Budget.

## 2017 OEA Elections Results

### OEA Zone Director Positions

The three-year terms expire in 2020 and include serving as NEA Delegates in 2018 and 2019.

**Vicki Vaughan, OKC Metro B**, representing Bethany, Oklahoma City University, Putnam City, Southern Nazarene University and Western Heights.

**Peggy Bryant, OKC Metro D**, representing Choctaw/Nicom Park, Crutch, Deer Creek, Jones, Luther, Midwest City-Del City, Millwood and Rose State College.

**Lawrence Lane, Southeast B**, representing Haskell, Hughes, McIntosh, Okfuskee, Okmulgee and Sequoyah Counties.

**J. Paul Lane, Southeast C**, representing Atoka, Choctaw, Coal, Johnston Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg and Pushmataha Counties.

**Cari Manzer, Southwest B**, representing Cleveland and McClain Counties.

**LeeAnne Jimenez, Tulsa Metro B**, representing Tulsa CTA.

**Brendan Jarvis, Tulsa Metro D**, representing Oral Roberts University, Oklahoma State University/Tulsa Langston University, Sand Springs, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Tech, Union and University of Tulsa.

### Statewide Positions

**OEA Delegate Assembly Positions:**

**Todd Crabtree**, Administrator Delegate-at-Large to 2017 DA.

**Becki Munholland**, NEA Retired Delegate-at-Large to 2017 DA.

### NEA Representative Assembly Positions

**Cheryl Dowell**, NEA Retired Delegate-at-Large to the 2017 NEA RA (successor delegate only)

#### Regional Positions:

**Category I Delegates-at-Large, 2017 NEA Representative Assembly**

**Krista Farris**, Southeast

**Cari Manzer**, Southwest

**Katherine Holland**, Tulsa Metro

(No Category I elections were held in Northeast, Northwest and Oklahoma City Regions)

# OEA Connected

## Where is everyone *online*?

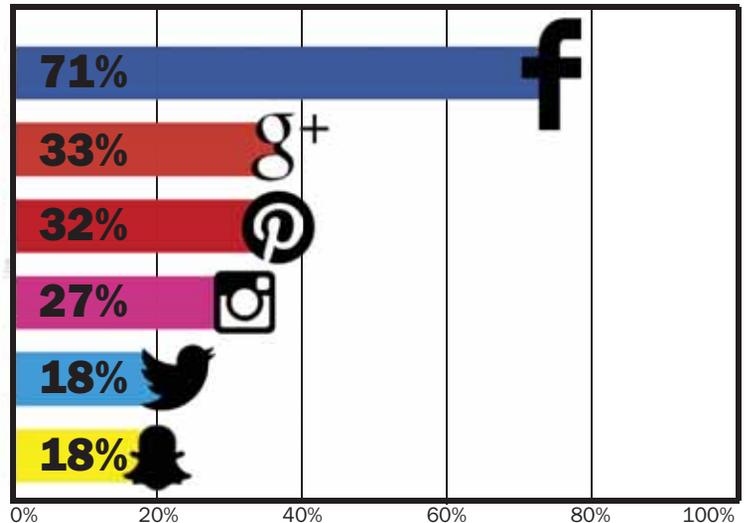
The debate about social media use for educators will likely continue as long as we interact online through social networks. Some teachers, support professionals and administrators use social media for work; others use it for their personal lives. Our students, however, are using it in all kinds of ways every day, often at school (whether it's against the rules or not). Here's a look at how educators and students use social networking.

### Teachers Facebook

The most popular social media platform among educators is Facebook, according to a recent survey by Front Row Ed. It's also the most frequently visited network, with 82 percent of users logging on at least weekly.

Pinterest, however, is most popular for work. Of teachers who use Pinterest, 69 percent use it for work reasons, compared to just 44 percent of Facebook users. When it comes to communicating with students, about 13 percent of educators use Twitter, and 12 percent use Facebook.

Younger teachers are more likely to use Pinterest, while Google+ is more popular for older educators. Snapchat wasn't part of the survey, but 18 percent of adults use it.

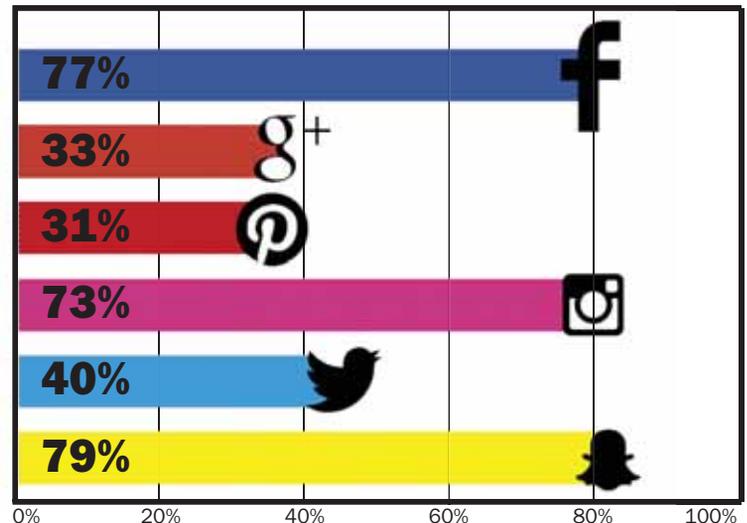


### Students it all

The most popular social media platform among teens and young adults is Snapchat, with Facebook and Instagram close behind, according to a recent survey by Statista.

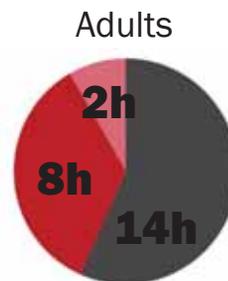
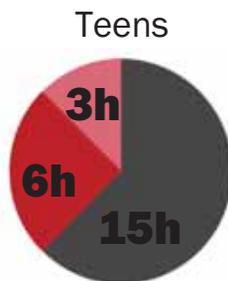
The rest of the major social platforms are pretty far behind the top three. Twitter was the fourth most popular network, followed by Google+ and Pinterest. Google+ wasn't part of the Statista survey, but a study by Pew Research showed 33 percent of young people use the platform.

Like most users, young people are accessing social media through mobile devices more frequently. Teens access social media on mobile devices about 60 percent of the time.



### So who's *online* more?

Teens may spend more time on social media, but adults spend much more time in front of screens than teens do.



-  Hours spent using screens, including TVs and smart phones
-  Hours spent using any type of social media platform each day
-  Hours spent doing other activities, such as eating and sleeping

# David Boren

## OEA Friend of Education

By Bill Guy

David L. Boren, who became the thirteenth president of the University of Oklahoma in November 1994, has also served Oklahoma as governor and U.S. senator. He is the first person in state history to have served in all three positions.

He is widely respected for his academic credentials, his lifetime support of education and his distinguished political career as a reformer of the American political system.

Most recently, Boren served as the spokesperson and driving force behind State Question 779, a bold plan to raise millions of dollars for teacher raises as well as funding for common education, career tech and higher ed. It was a tremendous plan, one that OEA wholeheartedly endorsed just a year ago and one that association members and supporters of public education worked very hard to pass.

While, unfortunately, 779 did not pass, it generated a loud and passionate discussion about education and the need for better funding that continues to this day. It took a great deal of courage and energy to lead the campaign – an effort that only David Boren could have taken on and pulled into the statewide spotlight in a way it so richly deserved.

Majoring in American history at Yale



Photo by Doug Folks.

OEA President Alicia Priest and 2017 Friend of Education David Boren at a press conference announcing the petition drive that would become SQ 779.

University where he graduated in the top one percent of his class, Boren was selected as a Rhodes Scholar and earned a master's in politics, philosophy and economics from Oxford University in England.

After that, he earned a law degree from the OU College of Law and went on to serve in the Oklahoma legislature. Becoming the youngest governor in America when he led our state from 1974 to 1978, he then served as one of Oklahoma's U.S. Senators from 1979 to 1994. When he left the Senate in 1994, his approval rating of 91 percent was the highest in the nation.

Throughout his career, David Boren has been a champion of public education, both higher education as well as common ed.

As governor, he established the Oklahoma Arts Institute, the Scholar-Leadership Enrichment Program and the Oklahoma Physicians Manpower Training Program, which provides scholarships for medical students and medical per-

sonnel who commit to practice in underserved rural areas. Under his leadership, Oklahoma became the first state to provide funding for Gifted and Talented classes.

With Boren at the helm, the University of Oklahoma has developed and emerged as a pacesetter university in public higher education, with 20 major new programs initiated since his inauguration. The number of new facilities started or completed on the campus during the Boren years has matched the explosion in new programs. Since 1994, almost \$1 billion in construction projects have been completed or are under way on OU's three campuses.

One of Boren's most far-reaching projects in promoting quality education at all levels is the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence that recognizes outstanding public school students and teachers and helps establish private local foundations to give academic endowment grants to local public schools.

Teaching a freshman-level course in political science each semester, David Boren is one of the few presidents of a major university to maintain a presence as a classroom educator.



Photo provided.

Boren lectures during his freshman-level political science class at the University of Oklahoma.

# James Suttles

## Education Support Professional Award

By Doug Folks

While it's not uncommon for an education support professional to wear several hats, Lawton's James Suttles has a unique skill set. His days include time as a building custodian, a bus driver and a head coach.

Suttles joined Lawton Public Schools (LPS) in 1990, working as a custodian in several schools through the years. He is now assigned to Tomlinson Middle School, keeping classrooms and hallways clean. He also drives a bus route.

Five years ago, Suttles volunteered to help coach Tomlinson's seventh grade boys basketball team. He came well prepared, bringing 26 years of experience as coach for boys and girls summer youth basketball teams.

LPS hired him this year to serve as head coach for the seventh grade boys basketball and track. His success as a volunteer coach has drawn students to Tomlinson so they can play for him in middle school.

Suttles makes sure Tomlinson's teachers know which of his players are also their students, and he holds the students to a high standard.

"All I have to do is mention his name in my English classes to one of his players, and any poor behavior usually improves immediately," said Arlene Cudd, a teacher at Tomlinson and president of the Professional Educators' Association of Lawton.

"James builds character on his teams, and students want to come to Tomlinson just because he is a coach here," she said. "He sets a fine example for everyone because of his work ethic."

Suttles is a proud employee of LPS, always wearing his service pins on his ID badge. A longtime OEA member, he encourages his coworkers to join the association.

As OEA's 2017 ESP Award winner, Suttles will be nominated for the NEA ESP of the Year award for 2018.



Photos by Doug Folks.

*Lawton's James Suttles is not only a custodian and bus driver, but head coach for seventh grade boys basketball and track.*

## OEA, SDE partner to find State ESP of the Year

In addition to being named OEA's top education support professional, James Suttles will be named the first Oklahoma ESP of the Year this summer by State Superintendent Joy Hofmeister.

The OEA and the State Department of Education recently announced a partnership to annually recognize an ESP of the Year. The venture comes in response to a new business item passed during the 2016 Delegate Assembly and

conversations between OEA President Alicia Priest and Supt. Hofmeister.

The criteria for finding an award winner each year will mirror OEA's ESP Award criteria. Future nominations will need to show:

- Innovations to support the day-to-day educational process;
- Professional achievements in his or her job classification;

- Involvement in promoting public education in the community; and
- Enhancement of the education support professional's image in the work site or community.

Suttles will be honored with the state award on July 11 at the SDE's EngageOK on the Road summer conference stop at Union High School in Tulsa.

# Tandra Morris

## Teachers Teaching Students

About 70 percent of students at Tandra Morris's school are English language learners, and all students are eligible for free/reduced lunch.

"Many of them have multiple family members in jail or prison and are cognizant of the constant risks and dangers of their neigh-



Photo by Doug Folks.

Tulsa's Tandra Morris has introduced the national park system to sixth grade students, including (from left) Yovana Calderon, Alexis Gomez and Michael Kelly.

borhood," said Morris, a sixth grade English and science teacher at Springdale Elementary in Tulsa Public Schools. "The national parks represent the beauty of their futures while offering feasible career paths and ways to break these vicious cycles."

Morris is being honored with the "Teachers Teaching Students Award for her lessons "Get to Know Your Parks / Conozca Sus Parques."

Her students learned about a variety of subjects through project-based learning that centers on the National Parks Service. They cover everything from geology to ancient languages to the Civil Rights Movement, all while meeting curriculum standards for English language arts, science and social studies.

Morris's projects challenge students to direct some of their own learning when evaluating the quality of website and resources. They used a variety of sources of information, even participating in live ranger talks with a park ranger at Devil's Tower and another one who scuba dives in the Pacific Ocean.

"One of our most pressing challenges as teachers is to create impactful lessons for our students," Morris said. "This unit teaches across the curriculum and incorporates life lessons while accounting for the needs of English language learners, special education students and other important factors."

Morris is a second-year teacher who is pursuing her master's degree at Northeastern State University.

If you're interested in seeing Morris's lessons and projects, they are available on her website: [springdale6.weebly.com](http://springdale6.weebly.com).

By Carrie Jacobs

# Rhonda Wyble

## Teachers Teaching Students

Rhonda Wyble received the Teachers Teaching Students Award for her African drumming program.

The Kendall-Whittier African Drum Corps is in high demand in Tulsa, with outside groups often requesting student performances. They've performed for many groups throughout the state, including Desmond Tutu when he visited Oklahoma.

Wyble herself is also in high demand. She offers professional development to her fellow Tulsa teachers during the school year, and she coaches teachers from other districts during summer institutes.

Wyble is the music specialist at Kendall-Whittier Elementary School in Tulsa. Now in her 19th year, she coordinates the Tulsa Public Schools Elementary Music Festival and has twice been named her building's Teacher of the Year.

Wyble "has almost single-handedly taken us from ignorance about drums to a district in which nearly every elementary school has djembe or Tubano drums," said music teacher Sheryl Miller, who nominated Wyble. "I can't imagine a better example for every Oklahoma teacher to see and follow than Rhonda."

Wyble teaches more than musical elements like rhythm and tempo. She infuses her program with lessons in teamwork, cooperation, language arts and self-worth. She uses the Orff

approach – a hands-on style that encourages students to use their entire bodies. Her younger students start out with simple songs, like "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe," and her older students do more complex arrangements of popular and African songs. She incorporates history into her lessons, including lessons about the American Revolution, the Bill of Rights and slavery.

By Carrie Jacobs



Photo by Doug Folks.

Kendall-Whittier third graders Yesenia Luna (left) and Milly Carmona follow Rhonda Wyble's drumming rhythms.

# LeeAnne Jimenez

## Teachers Teaching Teachers

LeeAnne Jimenez faced a room full of experienced, frustrated science teachers, and now she had to teach them about a Walt Whitman poem.

It wasn't the best scenario.

"My objectives had to be modified on the fly in order to be able to have any of the district expectations met," Jimenez said. "... In order for students in our district to be inspired to do their best, their teachers need to feel respected and listened to."

Jimenez is the academic coordinator for K-12 science at the Wilson Teaching and Learning Center in Tulsa Public Schools. She's been a teacher for 20 years.

Jimenez is being honored for her presentation titled "Engaging Learners with Complex Text: Close Reading Across the Content Areas." Her task was to help science teachers align their practices with district goals, which were to focus on incorporating complex texts while allowing students to do "the heavy lifting in the classroom," Jimenez said.



Tulsa's LeeAnne Jimenez.

After two days of training and some miscommunications by outside vendors and district leadership, Jimenez had a group of 20 frustrated science teachers – most of whom were career educators with plenty of experience.

Jimenez helped de-escalate their frustration and worked with them to identify resources that were specific to their needs as science educators. They shared best practices from their own experiences. Even though she was coaching science teachers, Jimenez had been assigned to teach complex text strategies with poetry. She helped them look past the subject matter and focus on the skills they could translate into their own complex texts.

After the session, participants gave feedback to district leaders.

"LeeAnne Jimenez was perfect," one teacher wrote. "She broke the wall down after that horrific auditorium presentation. The intelligent group of educators in the room was a real plus, but LeeAnne's personality and guidance was spot on."

In fact, Jimenez was nominated for the "Teachers Teaching Teachers" award by Gerald Griffin, one of the session participants.

By Carrie Jacobs

# Cari Manzer

## Gene Rochelle Political Activist Award

Leading by example is the best form of leadership, and the winner of the 2017 Gene Rochelle Political Activist Award sets a very high bar. Cari Manzer, a fifth-grade teacher from Norman and president of the Professional Educators of Norman, has immersed herself in the political process, encouraging her members to join her.

She has forged solid relationships with two of Norman's representatives, Democrat Emily Virgin and Republican Scott Martin. Both legislators seek out Cari for her input on education issues.

Martin, a regular participant in IMPACT Norman, said it is a joy working with Manzer because of the passion she brings to her education advocacy.

"It is without doubt that the driving force behind Cari's energy is the love she has for her students and her desire to strengthen initiatives and programs that will help them achieve success," Martin said.

During the 2017 election cycle, she volunteered a great deal of time for Rep. Mickey Dollens' campaign because she believed in his message. At PEN building rep meetings, Manzer always has a call to action, many times asking her reps to pull out their smart phones and contact legislators on important topics.

Last year, Manzer formed IMPACT Norman, which stands for Individuals Mending Public Assumptions about Classroom

Teachers. IMPACT's mission is to advocate for all students, education professionals and public education through uniting the Norman community to fulfill the promise of quality public education. That group has hit the ground running.

During the legislative session, Manzer is prominent at the Capitol, lobbying for important education bills, monitoring education committee meetings and keeping her members back home in Norman fully informed about the process and the progress being made.

By Bill Guy



Photo by Bill Guy.

Cari Manzer has developed a professional relationship with Sen. Scott Martin (left) through frequent conversations on education.

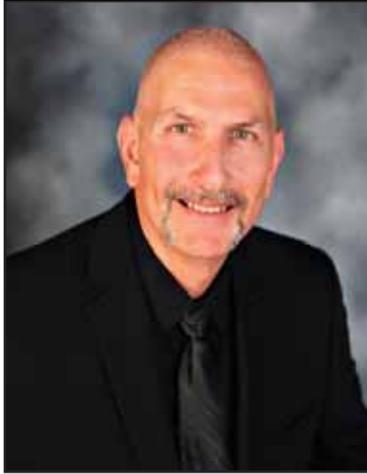
# Jon Hazell

## NEA Foundation Excellence in Teaching

Jon Hazell has been teaching for 34 years, but you'd never know it by looking at how he approaches his job. Never one to be satisfied with how he's done things in the past, Jon is constantly re-inventing his classroom and his teaching and looking at new ways to do old things.

Hazell is OEA's nominee for the 2018 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. The award program is the NEA Foundation's highest award, recognizing professionals for their creativity in the classroom, advocacy of the teaching profession and dedication to the association.

A science teacher at Durant High School – biology, anatomy, and environmental science for ELL and special ed students –



*Durant's Jon Hazell.*

Hazell allows his students to “run the show.” They are allowed to change the assignment as long as it meets the goal of the lesson and the standard.

For instance, when students said a traditional activity of building a cell cookie was boring and something they did in middle school, Hazell listened. He partnered with the art teacher for a unit on building a “Monster Cell.” His students taught cellular mechanics to the art students, who taught art techniques. The two groups then joined forces to create a room-sized cell that hangs from Jon's classroom ceiling.

Hazell was named Oklahoma's 2017 State Teacher of the Year last August. He used his new-found notoriety to help educate the public on the need for better education funding during the State Question 779 campaign.

As Teacher of the Year, he received a \$5,000 cash gift from the Masons of Oklahoma. He created a scholarship for Durant students with that money and then recruited the local Chamber of Commerce to partner with him to keep the scholarship program going into the future. That program now has larger donors and promises a larger balance for more scholarships in the future.

“Jon's drive, passion and commitment make him a worthy nominee for the NEA Foundation Award and the excellence it reflects,” said Alicia Priest, OEA president. “As Jon travels across our great state, he brings one simple message to educators, future educators and the communities we serve: ‘Stay and fight. Our children and our profession are worth it.’”

*By Doug Folks*

# Amy Castro-Braun

## Claude A. Dyer Memorial Award

After Oklahoma lost the Race to the Top federal grant competition, many of the changes implemented to earn that grant money still lingered long after the prospect of additional federal funding was gone. One of those changes was the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness evaluation system, which, at the time, required both qualitative and quantitative measures.

The quantitative measures of TLE were called the Value-Added Model, which tied teacher evaluations to student test scores. In fact, a teacher could be terminated because of poor test results.

From early on, teachers and administrators began to push back.

“While Amy Castro-Braun is humble about the role that she personally played in the construction and passage of this bill, do not let her behind-the-scenes work go unrecognized,” said Cari Manzer, president of Professional Educators of Norman. “Amy was instrumental in on-the-ground organizing, reaching out to her colleagues in other districts to rally contact to the Legislature so that this bill could be passed.”

Lawmakers and teachers began working together to fix TLE, and the result was HB 2957.

HB 2957 eliminated that Value-Added Model requirement, meaning local school boards and administrators could create their own teacher and leader evaluation system. Districts could still use test scores, but goals would be set by local leaders. (Today, only Tulsa Public Schools chooses to use Value-Added and must do so at its own cost.)

The bill allowed districts to use qualitative measures observed in the classroom. It also shifted the focus of professional development away from only low-performing teachers to all teachers, ensuring all students benefit.

The bill passed unanimously in both houses, and the governor signed it May 16, 2016. The bill was estimated to save the Oklahoma State Department of Education about \$500,000, and local school districts would save millions more.

Castro-Braun's “work helps to prove that relationships can be formed with legislators,” Manzer said, “and when educators go about making legislative change slowly and carefully, amazing things can happen.”

*By Carrie Jacobs*



*Amy Braun's (center) work to improve the state's TLE system made life easier for her faculty, including (from left) Robert Webb, Leslie Kidd, Karen Bradford, Tammy Patrick and Denise Dailey.*

*Photo by Doug Folks.*

# UAW Local 952 Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award

**A**fter the United Aerospace Workers (UAW) Local 952 raised \$6,200 at a golf tournament, the union members decided they wanted the proceeds to go toward helping another union, specifically the union representing Tulsa public school teachers.

After conducting a little research, UAW found the Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association and a partnership was born.

TCTA helped Local 952 identify TCTA members with projects in need of funding through DonorsChoose.org. The projects chosen included a cross-section of grade levels, subjects and geographic areas in an effort to spread the donation throughout the district. Local 952 concentrated on fully funding projects, donating between \$150 to more than \$1,000 to fund 14 different requests.

Members of Local 952 work for Spirit AeroSystems in Tulsa building airplane wing components under a contract for Boeing. Spirit matches charitable donations, so Local 952 was able to fund \$12,400 worth of classroom projects.

The partnership didn't end there. Local 952 made its union hall available to TCTA twice last year for the association's "Give 'n Grab" project. The event provides retiring teachers with an opportunity to donate their classroom supplies to newer educators.

"Not only did UAW make its space available, but they donated

file cabinets, bookshelves, desks, chairs and computer monitors," said TCTA President Patti Ferguson-Palmer. "They graciously stayed in the hall so we could be there to set up, operate and take down. They even carried items to cars."

Ferguson-Palmer added that the partnership has created friendships and a sense of collegiality and cooperation between the two unions.

The Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award is one of OEA's Human and Civil Rights Awards. It is presented to a business or group that has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

*By Doug Folks*



Photo by Doug Folks

*UAW Local 952 President David Brewer (right) and Vice President Scott Callis worked with TCTA to fund teachers' projects listed at DonorsChoose.org.*

# Dr. George Henderson Glenn Snider Award

**F**or nearly 56 years, Dr. George Henderson has dedicated his life to promoting ethnic diversity and interracial understanding not just on the University of Oklahoma campus but nationwide as well.

Dr. Henderson joined the OU faculty in 1967 and founded OU's Human Relations program and designed its curriculum in 1969, the same year he received the Sylvan N. Goldman Professorship.

When Dr. Henderson moved from Wayne State University in Detroit to Norman with his wife Barbara, their seven children and Barbara's mother, America was embroiled in one of its most turbulent periods of racial unrest. They were a black family moving into a predominately white community that still had sundown laws on the books, prohibiting black public presence after dark. He accepted OU's offer of a job as an educational sociologist on the condition that housing for his family would be available. When



*Dr. George Henderson has dedicated his life to improving ethnic diversity and interracial understanding. (Photo by Doug Folks.)*

local realtor Sam Matthews courageously sold them the Norman home in which they still reside, the Hendersons became the first black family to own a home in the city. The Xenia Institute subsequently honored Matthews with its humanitarian award.

Dr. Henderson has been honored throughout the country for his research and writings, which include authorship of more than 30 books and 50 articles, and presentations at more than 100 professional conferences. His most recent book, "Race and the University: A Memoir," features recollections of his time in Norman teaching and advising struggling young OU students during the university's own civil rights movement.

OU president David Boren said, in his letter of recommendation, "Dr. Henderson has provided mentorship to generations of student leaders on campus, from the civil rights movement in the 1960s to the OU Unheard alliance today."

The University of Oklahoma continues to honor Dr. Henderson's vision through the Henderson Scholars Program, which engages a cohort

of students in a stimulating intellectual community of service, mentorship and critical thinking.

*By Bill Guy*

# Freshman wins RAA Best in Show

**A**ndrea Alvizo's pen and ink interpretation of "Alice in Wonderland" has been named Best in Show in OEA's 2017 Read Across America poster contest.

Andrea, a freshman at Putnam City High School, will receive a \$100 VISA gift card along with a certificate proclaiming her drawing as Best in Show.

Nearly 400 students from across the state entered this year's contest. In addition to the top prize, first, second and third place prizes were awarded in four categories – kindergarten through second grade, third through fifth grade, sixth through eighth grade and ninth through 12th grade. First place winners will receive \$75 VISA gift cards, second place \$50 cards and third place, \$25.

Winning entries can be found in the Photo Gallery section of the OEA website, [okea.org](http://okea.org).



*Best in Show – "Alice in Wonderland," by Andrea Alvizo, 9th grade, Putnam City High School*

## Division winners

### 9th-12th Grade

First place – Lauren Cathey, Durant High School; Second place - Francisco Lobato, Durant High School; and Third place – Precious Watts, Midwest City High School.

### 6th- 8th Grade

First place – Megan Marie Reyes, Durant Middle School; Second place – Reagan Stierwalt, Bristow Middle School; and Third place – Katie Arthur, Alcott Middle School, Norman.

### 3rd-5th Grade

First place – Hailey Godsey, Soldier Creek Elementary, Midwest City; Second place – Bryson Whitby, Mission Elementary, Anadarko; and Third place – Azrael Casper, Western Oaks Elementary, Putnam City.

### Kindergarten-2nd Grade

First place –Emma Cleveland, Liberty Elementary, Sallisaw; Second place – Liam Miller, Tulakes Elementary, Putnam City; and Third place – Victor Martinez, Epperly Heights Elementary, Del City.



*9th-12th Grade Division – 1st Place, "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children," by Lauren Cathey, 11th grade, Durant High School*



*6th-8th Grade Division – 1st Place, "Coraline," by Megan Marie Reyes, 8th grade, Durant High School*



*3rd-5th Grade Division – 1st Place, untitled, by Hailey Godsey, Soldier Creek Elementary, Mid-Del*



*Kindergarten-2nd Grade Division – 1st Place, "Charlotte's Web," by Emma Cleveland, 2nd grade, Liberty Elementary, Sallisaw*

# Ponca City ACT's membership recruitment plan pays large dividends

By Doug Folks

**P**onca City ACT has developed a back-to-school program that routinely recruits 90-95 percent of the district's new hires. A couple of simple ideas came from a regional summer leadership meeting, and it was all put in place with a little planning in May and June.

History shows that 88 percent of new Oklahoma Education Association members join at the beginning of the school year. When a local realizes that fun fact – and looks at Ponca City ACT's success – it makes planning for back to school all the more urgent.

"Local associations need a plan to open the school year. Membership is obviously our life blood, and recruiting new members doesn't happen by chance," said OEA President Alicia Priest.

The beginning of school is very busy for everyone, so knowing how a local will recruit new members and how it will follow up will make life easier – and more successful – for everyone.

PCACT's plan is built around building reps and other members taking an active role at the new teacher luncheon. Their job is to sit with the new hires from their respective buildings and begin creating relationships. Then, when it's time to sign membership forms, the current members also complete a registration form.

"We use that (exercise) as a form of positive peer pressure to encourage the new hires to fill out the form," Zach said, "even though our members are on a continuous membership and don't have to fill out a new form."

PCACT's luncheon includes a presentation by Joe White, whose firm provides legal assistance to OEA members through the association's Personal Legal Services Program. White talks with the new hires about the legal benefits of OEA membership and the need for protection in the classroom.



The local hands out lots of door prizes at the event. New teachers who join are eligible for a gift basket of items every new teacher needs to start a classroom. Every table has a plastic crate full of classroom supplies as a center piece which also serves as a door prize. Everyone who turns in a form (including current members) get to draw for a door prize.

"We start planning our back-to-school event in May and June, hammering out what we're going to do at the new hire event," Zach said. "At this point, the event is pretty self-sustaining because we've got the framework in place. It's just a matter of finalizing when we're going to do it, who we're going to invite."

Taking a little time in late May or early June to plan a membership recruitment effort will pay big dividends in August and September. Contact a member of your regional OEA team for guidance in creating your plan.



*Ponca City ACT brings in a guest speaker and plans for plenty of door prizes for the new hire luncheon it sponsors every year. Clockwise from above, PCACT President Zach Murray in front a display espousing the many benefits of OEA membership; Every new hire who joins receives a door prize based on the color they reveal on the sticker chart; One of the crates full of classroom supplies that serves as a table decoration and a door prize.*



# It's your responsibility – period

## Report suspected child abuse immediately

By Heath Merchen  
Associate General Counsel

The OEA legal department annually receives a large number of calls regarding child abuse issues. Sadly, countless members are misinformed about their reporting obligations and many districts run afoul of the statutory requirements. The following article is designed to help dispel the most common myths relating to child abuse reporting.

**Myth: If I don't believe the child's story, I don't have to report it.**

**Fact:** Your job isn't to assess credibility; it is to report. However, if you do not believe the child's story, you should tell that to the DHS worker or police officer you contact – reporting abuse doesn't mean acting as an advocate for prosecution. Rather, you simply convey all information you possess to the DHS worker or police officer.

**Myth: Telling my counselor or principal about the concern meets my reporting obligation, and if my principal tells me not to report, I don't need to.**

**Fact:** We deal with numerous calls annually from school staff members who have been instructed by their principals just to tell the counselor or not to report the incident at all. The principal may not believe the child, wants to avoid dealing with angry parents, doesn't want a police investigation on their campus, hopes to duck negative press, etc.

Regardless of the motivation, you have the obligation to report the alleged abuse yourself and no administrator can lawfully direct you to do otherwise or relieve you of your individual reporting obligation.

In addition, if your district procedure states or implies that you should let someone else make the DHS call, you need to make the DHS call anyway (violate the procedure, not the law), but in all other respects follow the procedures set forth in



your district. In short, you have to report child abuse cases to DHS yourself regardless of your internal district procedures or your principal's directives.

**Myth: If I didn't hear it first hand, I don't have to report it.**

**Fact:** First hand, third hand, written on a bathroom stall, or an anonymous phone call – you have to report the alleged abuse. Every person “having reason to believe” a child is being abused must report it, and it is not your right to assess the credibility of the source.

**Myth: If I call DHS and the person answering the telephone tells me not to report this type of incident again, I should do as they advise.**

**Fact:** Many DHS workers are well informed, qualified individuals who will work to assist you and provide accurate answers. Some won't and many don't fully understand the laws they are supposed to enforce. Don't rely on their legal advice – make the call, and if it annoys the DHS worker, so be it.

**Myth: If a child is in imminent danger, calling DHS is enough.**

**Fact:** DHS is as understaffed and overburdened as any other state agency, and it is unlikely that they will be able to immediately respond to every situation

where a child is facing imminent harm. In situations where you believe a child will be facing an imminent threat, call 911 in addition to DHS.

**Myth: As long as I made the call, DHS will keep the record that I contacted them so I won't get in trouble for failing to report.**

**Fact:** Sometimes they will, sometimes they won't. Especially in cases where the DHS worker tells you that the information you reported isn't reliable enough to act on or doesn't constitute abuse, keep a record of the time and date you called, the name of the individual you spoke with, the number you called, and what information you conveyed.

**Myth: Being strict or chastising a student constitutes child abuse.**

**Fact:** While “threatened physical harm” to a child constitutes abuse, simply yelling at a child (while it may be inappropriate) does not meet the statutory definition of child abuse. The same is true of making a child feel guilty or embarrassing a child – even though it, here again, may be inappropriate and unprofessional conduct.

Unfortunately, many districts in attempting to discipline staff members will apply the term “child abuse” to actions that, while not professional, in no way constitute abuse. Similarly, simply seeing a parent yelling at a child or exercising reasonable parental discipline (including spanking) does not constitute child abuse under Oklahoma law.

The above article by no means answers every child abuse reporting question, but hopefully gives you some useful guidance. The safest bet is to always keep student safety as your first priority and call your Regional Advocacy UniServ Specialist with questions when specific concerns arise.



- 88 papers passed out
- 17 minutes for assembly
- 5 parent drop ins
- 3 tutoring sessions
- 1 standardized test given

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