

THE EDUCATION

FOCUS

FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION - Summer 2018

RISING UP

APRIL'S WALKOUT
WINS THE DAY
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

A large crowd of people is gathered for a protest. In the foreground, a woman holds a sign that reads "THE LAST STRAW". Above the sign is a large graphic of a hand holding a straw. The background shows a crowd of people, some holding up their phones to take pictures. The scene is outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

**THE
LAST
STRAW**

CONTENTS

2
OEA Connected
Nearly 800 Oklahomans filed for office this spring, including 48 OEA members.

3
Rising Up
Oklahoma's nine-day walkout creates historic education funding package.

6
Education legislation of the 2018 session
A review of the major education bills from this year's legislative session, including some historic funding measures.

7
OEA's SQ 799 challenge awaits Supreme Court decision
The Oklahoma Education Association joined a group of taxpayers and education organizations to file a protest to SQ 799, the veto referendum to repeal HB1010xx.

8
Delegates build on momentum of the April walkout
Delegates to the 2018 OEA Delegate Assembly set the association's course for the next year by feeding off of the renewed activism sparked by the April walkout.

9
Summer is document checkup time
Now is a good time to remember what school-related and employment documents you should keep in your personal files.



Photo by Doug Folks.

Your involvement will help change our world

By Alicia Priest
OEA President

Here's the reality for our students and why it is imperative to continue to use our voices to advocate for them, for ourselves and for the future of our state ... and I realize you already know this, but here goes:

Nearly 20 percent of Oklahoma schools are educating their students only four days a week this year – that's 91 school districts with a four-day school week. Teachers continue to leave the profession and the state. The teacher shortage has resulted in almost 2,000 emergency certified teachers. World languages and fine arts classes have been eliminated. Advanced Placement classes have been eliminated.

We see the impact the shortage has on students in the form of skyrocketing class sizes in schools of every size and in every region of Oklahoma. Chemistry labs that previously had 25 students are now crammed with 40 and can't safely conduct experiments – even if they had the supplies to do them.

Teachers are moving their own desks into storage because they can't fit enough student desks into their classroom. Our children deserve to have the classroom opportunities to explore, experiment and figure out what excites and motivates them.

We must do better. We deserve better. Our students certainly deserve better!

There is a pathway forward to help our students and that is being engaged. Gandhi is credited as saying, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." Forty-eight of

“ Educators are lifelong learners who want the best for their students and their communities. That is the kind of candidate we want to elect. ”

our members took that philosophy to heart and have filed to run for office.

Educators are lifelong learners who want the best for their students and their communities. That is the kind of candidate we want to elect. OEA locals, caucuses, members and education advocacy groups are holding candidate forums and town halls all across the state so that everyone understands where the candidates fall on



President Alicia Priest

our issues. I urge you to help with those – AND attend them.

Once we find those candidates who are willing to be our education champions, we must put in some sweat equity for them – walking and knocking on doors for them (or driving the candidate or a team if walking is not possible). Volunteer to do data entry or whatever clerical help they need.

Then, we must VOTE on June 26. Then, continue our work through the general election in November. We can't just want change, we must BE the change.

OEA members make a difference every day they walk into the school, the bus barn, the maintenance facility or the administration building. Now, we need to muster the same energy in electing candidates who are willing to be the change we need for ourselves, our students and our state.

I am up for it and will be working to make that vision a reality. Will you join me?

The Education Focus

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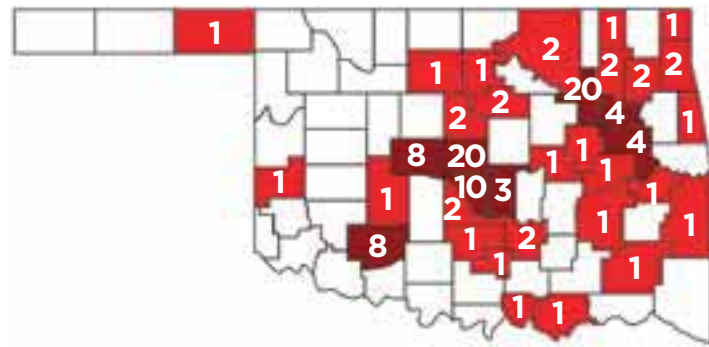


The 2018 Education Caucus

Nearly 800 Oklahomans filed to run for office this year – the highest number of candidates in state history. Of those, OEA has identified 112 candidates who are educators, education support professionals, administrators, retirees or Oklahomans with an immediate family member who works in education.

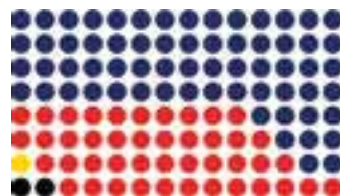
Education candidates stretch across the state and across party lines, and 48 are current members of OEA. Here's a quick look at the profile of education candidates, along with a list of those identified by OEA.

Anyone missing? Email info@okea.org.



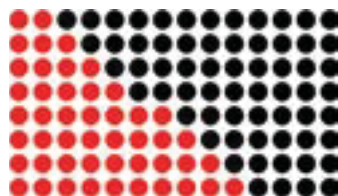
Political Party

Democrats: 65
Republicans: 44
Libertarians: 1
Independents: 2



OEA Membership

Members: 48
Non-Members: 64



2018 Education Caucus Candidates

OEA members are in bold red.

Oklahoma House Candidates

- Elizabeth Boney, R-Salina, Dist. 5
- Tonya Rudick, R-Eucha, Dist. 5**
- Ed Trumbull, D-Grove, Dist. 5**
- Ben Loring, D-Miami, Dist. 7
- Kevin Stacy, D-Delaware, Dist. 10
- Cyndi Ralston, D-Broken Arrow, Dist. 12
- Jolene Armstrong, D-Muskogee, Dist. 13
- Chris Sneed, R-Fort Gibson, Dist. 14
- Jack Reavis, D-Muskogee, Dist. 14**
- Judy Moore, D-Porum, Dist. 15
- Randy Randleman, R-Eufaula, Dist. 15**
- James Delso, I-Henryetta, Dist. 16
- Peggy DeFrango, D-Krebs, Dist. 17**
- Staci Lohrman, D-Rattan, Dist. 19**
- Sherrie Conley, R-Newcastle, Dist. 20
- Anthony Mackey, R-Noble, Dist. 20
- Tina Swayze, R-Purcell, Dist. 20
- Steve Jarman, D-Pauls Valley, Dist. 20**
- Rena Ward, I-Sulphur, Dist. 22
- Stephen Frazier, D-Tulsa, Dist. 23
- Craig Hoxie, D-Tulsa, Dist. 23**
- Ronny Johns, R-Ada, Dist. 25
- Daniel Manuel, D-Ada, Dist. 25**
- Lauren Richter, D-Shawnee, Dist. 26**
- Bruce Bushong, D-Shawnee, Dist. 26**
- Danny Sterling, R-Tecumseh, Dist. 27
- Kara Sawyer, D-Guthrie, Dist. 31**
- Angela Moffitt-Jones, D-Guthrie, Dist. 31**

- John Talley, R-Stillwater, Dist. 33
- Trish Ranson, D-Stillwater, Dist. 34**
- Ty Burns, R-Morrison, Dist. 35
- J Ganzel, R-Hominy, Dist. 36
- Jordan Lauffer, R-Skiatook, Dist. 36
- Tyler Smith, D-Oklahoma City, Dist. 41
- Laura Griesel, R-Piedmont, Dist. 41
- Charo Guillory, R-Piedmont, Dist. 41
- Jennie Scott, D-Enid, Dist. 41**
- Crystal Duncan, R-Yukon, Dist. 43**
- Nancy Sangirardi, R-Norman, Dist. 46
- Jacob Rosecrants, D-Norman, Dist. 46
- Beverly Adams, R-Mustang, Dist. 47
- Sarah Carnes, D-Mustang, Dist. 47**
- Lindsey Strader, R-Yukon, Dist. 47**
- Miranda Shelton, D-Kingston, Dist. 49
- Cyndy Southerland, D-Moore, Dist. 53
- Angel Worth, D-Moore, Dist. 53**
- Toryn Hambricht, R-Moore, Dist. 53**
- Dennis Dugger, D-Hammon, Dist. 55
- Fernando Zamarripa, D-Sayre, Dist. 55
- Jacqueline Smith, R-El Reno, Dist. 60
- Rhonda Baker, R-Yukon, Dist. 60
- Ashley Lehnert, D-Turpin, Dist. 61
- Nanette Hagen, D-Lawton, Dist. 62**
- Tammie Reynolds, R-Lawton, Dist. 63
- Trey Caldwell, R-Lawton, Dist. 63
- Joan Gabelmann, D-Lawton, Dist. 63**
- Ashley McCarter, D-Lawton, Dist. 64
- Brandon Thompson, D-Cyril, Dist. 65
- Toni Hasenbeck, R-Elgin, Dist. 65
- Brian Jackson, R-Sand Springs, Dist. 66
- Angela Graham, D-Sand Springs, Dist. 66**

- Carly Hotvedt, D-Tulsa, Dist. 67
- Karen Wright, R-Tulsa, Dist. 68
- Christopher Brobst, R-Glenpool, Dist. 68**
- Michael Ross, D-Tulsa, Dist. 68**
- Angela Statum, D-Tulsa, Dist. 68**
- Andy Richardson, D-Tulsa, Dist. 69
- Michael Mitrik, D-Jenks, Dist. 69**
- Mark Vancuren, R-Owasso, Dist. 74
- Karen Gaddis, D-Tulsa, Dist. 75**
- John Waldron, D-Tulsa, Dist. 77**
- Melissa Provenzano, D-Tulsa, Dist. 79**
- Karen Gilbert, R-Tulsa, Dist. 79**
- Cody Coonce, R-Bixby, Dist. 80
- Jennifer Youngberg, D-Broken Arrow, Dist. 80
- Helen Davis, D-Broken Arrow, Dist. 80**
- Janice Graham, D-Broken Arrow, Dist. 80**
- Melanie Spoon, R-Edmond, Dist. 81**
- Gregory Mills, R-Edmond, Dist. 82
- Brad Martin, R-Edmond, Dist. 82
- Robert Jernigan, R-Edmond, Dist. 82
- Cobi Ceron, R-Edmond, Dist. 82
- Casey Satterlee, R-Edmond, Dist. 82**
- Denara Manning, R-Edmond, Dist. 82**
- William Cagle, L-Bethany, Dist. 84
- Rhonda Cox, D-Locust Grove, Dist. 86
- Steve Weaver, D-Westville, Dist. 86**
- Sonya Ferguson, D-Oklahoma City, Dist. 91
- Amanda Jeffers, D-Oklahoma City, Dist. 91**

- Andy Fugate, D-Oklahoma City, Dist. 94
- Kelly Albright, D-Midwest City, Dist. 96
- Annette Williams, R-Choctaw, Dist. 96
- Maegan Heath, D-Harrah, Dist. 96
- Laura Steele, R-Broken Arrow, Dist. 98
- Kilmyn Easley-Graf, D-Broken Arrow, Dist. 98**
- Matt Hobbs, D-Broken Arrow, Dist. 98**
- Julie Roach, R-Oklahoma City, Dist. 100
- Donald Wentroth, D-Oklahoma City, Dist. 100**
- Madeline Scott, D-Choctaw, Dist. 101

Oklahoma Senate Candidates

- Jennifer Esau, D-Claremore, Dist. 2**
- Christopher Ford, D-Poteau, Dist. 4
- David Bullard, R-Durant, Dist. 6
- Shannan Tucker, D-Okemah, Dist. 8**
- Mary Boren, D-Norman, Dist. 16
- Renée Jerden, D-Moore, Dist. 24**
- Tim Haws, R-Bethany, Dist. 30
- Larry Buss, D-The Village, Dist. 30**
- Jacobi Crowley, D-Lawton, Dist. 32**
- Bryan O'Brien, D-Broken Arrow, Dist. 36
- Carri Hicks, D-Oklahoma City, Dist. 40**
- Brenda Stanley, R-Oklahoma City, Dist. 42

U.S. Senate Candidate

- Ruby Peters, I-Lawton, Dist. 4**

Rising Up

9-day walkout creates historic education funding package

By Doug Folks

Taking a step back and sorting through everything that happened leading up to and during the April 2018 walkout, it's impossible to argue with the results.

Thanks to the advocacy efforts of teachers, support professionals, administrators, students, parents and even the general public, Oklahoma public education will see the largest funding influx in state history for Fiscal Year 2019.

- Teachers are going to get an average raise of \$6,100 – largest salary increase in history.

- For only the second time in history, support professionals will receive a state-mandated pay raise.

- Schools will receive an increase of \$50 million through the formula for general operations.

- In all, nearly a half billion dollars is going to public education in just one year.

The hurdles that had to be cleared to gain that funding were higher than any other state. One of the country's most conservative legislatures needed 75 percent of its members to pass new taxes. That has never happened in state history, not until tens of thousands threatened to close schools, and then made good on that threat.

"What we accomplished this spring is unprecedented and is being recognized across the country as a sign that teachers can make a huge difference with a collective voice," said President Alicia Priest.

A Long Time in the Making

Educators have been talking about walking out of their classrooms for a couple of years, but that talk grew louder as the legislature made promises to fund a

significant teacher pay raise only to fail in 2016 and 2017.

OEA was listening to the frustration of its members. At the 2017 Delegate Assembly, Executive Director David DuVall's state of the association speech called for the membership to begin a steady drum beat to pressure the legislature. We would increase the speed and noise level of that drum beat, he said, building to a significant action at the legislature in 2018.

In June 2017, the OEA Board of Directors and staff began discussing the potential of a walkout. That fall, the governor called the legislature into special session after it failed to fund education during the regular session. A plan to provide teacher raises, as well as fund other state agencies in bad need of funding, failed in December by just six votes in the House.

A coalition of Oklahoma's top businessmen invited OEA to join the Step Up Coalition in January. With DuVall at the table representing education, the group hammered out a deal with legislative leaders to give teachers a \$5,000 raise. Sadly, the Step Up plan failed miserably in the second special session.

"When the Step Up plan failed, you could just feel our members'

frustration had reach a boiling point. Over the years we had sued the state for adequacy and equity, pushed two separate state questions to increase education funding and joined different coalitions to find solutions. After two special sessions and a push from the state's most influential business leaders, the legislature could still not find the political will to get something done," Priest said.

"Everything we had tried went ignored, but now our members were more determined than ever to be heard."

Continued on next page



Photo by Doug Folks.



After talks with the OEA Board and the Education Coalition, which includes state associations for administrators and school boards, OEA called for a statewide school closure on April 23. But the frustration of educators across the state was too much, and the decision was made to walkout on April 2. State law requires the legislature to fund education by April 1, so the 2nd was a logical date for action at the Capitol.

The Plan is Set in Motion

Over the next few weeks, about 200 local school boards passed resolutions of support for teachers who committed to walk out. Those districts represented an estimated three-fourths of Oklahoma's public school students and teachers.

With April 2 looming and an education system serious about shutting down schools, the legislature took notice and passed a string of bills that had failed in special session. During the last week of March, HB1023xx (the teacher pay raise bill), HB 1010xx (increasing gross production on oil and gas, hotel/motel tax, gas tax and a cigarette tax), HB 1011xx (itemized deductions cap on state income tax) all passed. In a historic vote, HB 1010xx met the 75 percent threshold with votes to spare.

"The legislature thought these bills would prevent thousands of teachers, ESPs and parents from across the state from surrounding the Capitol in April," Priest said. "It was the real threat of thousands of students not going to school and parents having to make adjustments that finally gave them the strength to meet our demands."

The day after passing HB1010xx, the hotel/motel tax was repealed, further damaging trust in the legislature. While acknowledging the admirable

job in passing the slate of bills, OEA renewed its call for schools to close beginning April 2. Priest announced that the walkout would focus on funding for OEA's second and third years of the Together We're Stronger plan.

9 Days in April

Even with the commitment of 200 schools and a loud, constant chant on social media, it was impossible to predict how many people would show up on that first day. April 2 was cool and windy, and at times wet. Still, the weather did not stop nearly 30,000 people from filling the Capitol and marching around the building. Outlets from across the state set up a media city east of the Capitol grounds and MSNBC/NBC and CNN camped out on the fourth floor rotunda, covering all aspects of the walkout.

Over the next nine days, thousands showed up every day. A stage in front of the Capitol provided speeches from dignitaries, announcements and entertainment. Each day, districts established a tent city on the south side of the Capitol where its employees could rest and eat between laps around the building. On a couple of different days, Edmond Public Schools set up an outdoor classroom and taught students throughout the day.

Between announcements from the stage, a constant stream of performers showed up to keep spirits and enthusiasm high. The talent included contestants from American Idol and America's Got Talent, local artists and the impromptu Walkout Band of high school instructors. Between acts, a DJ filled the air with music.

While outside the Capitol had a block-party feel, inside was more intense. Many times, the chanting from the rotunda could be heard on the House and Senate floors. Participants watching monitors outside of the House gallery on the fourth floor would quiet the crowd to pass on the latest development, which was then shared with the crowded floors below by shouting over the railing.

The highway patrol began closing floors of the Capitol as they filled up, several days as early as 8:30 a.m., while hundreds lined up outside to get in to visit with legislators. Communication in and around the Capitol was spotty at best with thousands trying to tap into the free WiFi system. Most of the time they were unable to connect.

Legislatively, things moved quickly over the first three days of the walkout. The governor signed the teacher pay raise bill and other bills passed the week before. The House and the Senate passed a gaming compact expansion, referred to as "ball and dice," to allow for Vegas-style roulette and craps in Oklahoma casinos. They also passed a tax on third-party retailers on Amazon.com. Together, the two bills added nearly \$45 million to the state's general revenue.

While educators didn't yet know it, by the end of the first week, legislators had done all they would do that session to increase revenue for education and the budget. The education budget had been passed, teachers had their raises and schools were set to receive new money in general revenue, including a line item of \$30 million for text books.

OEA's initial demand to the legislature was \$506 million in year one of the three-year Together We're Stronger plan. The legislature had delivered \$495 million – 94 percent of the initial ask.

No other revenue bill was being seriously considered as 50,000 people showed up on the second Monday of the walkout. The education crowd lobbied and chanted for a capital gains bill to be heard in the House. The Senate had already passed it, but House leadership refused to hear

the bill. Some called for a reform to state income tax, but it fell on deaf ears in the both houses.

The walkout received a big burst of enthusiasm on Tuesday the 10th when a group comprised mostly of Tulsa teachers arrived at the Capitol after walking 110 miles over seven days from Tulsa to join the effort. Forty-eight walked the entire route, and teachers from other districts joined for different legs.

Ending the Walkout

By Wednesday the 11th, crowds were beginning to thin and most schools were making plans to bring their teachers home. The Republican majority leaders in the Senate by now had told Priest, Vice President Katherine Bishop and DuVall that, under no circumstances, would they hear any more revenue-raising bills. Media coverage and the support in communities was not quite as positive as it was early in the walkout.

Both Houses had announced they would work an abbreviated schedule on Thursday the 12th and adjourn for a three-day weekend. It was a typical, mid-April schedule, and another sign that legislators were moving away from education to other business.

The OEA Board met Thursday morning, as they had several times during the walkout. After a good deal of discussion and debate, a consensus decided that edu-

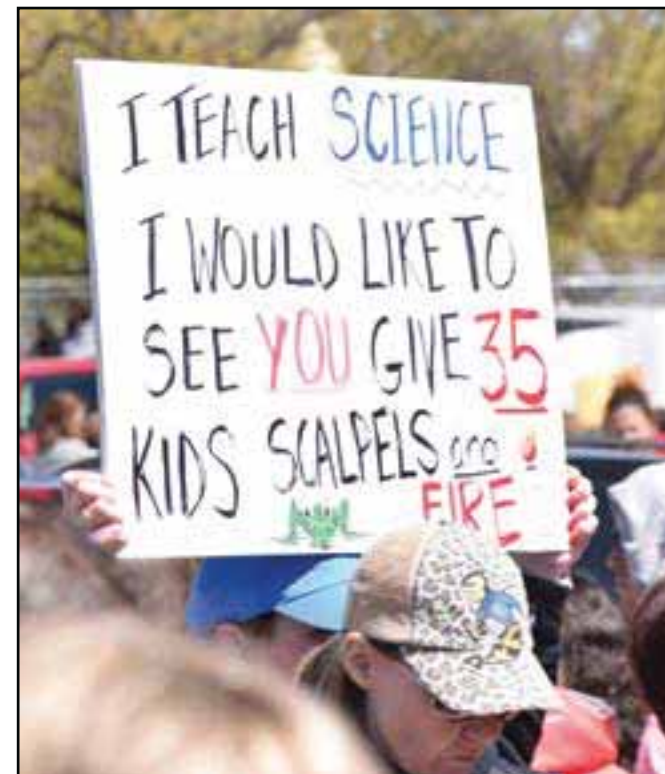


Photo by Doug Folks.

cators had accomplished all that they could with this legislature and it was time to go back to work. Late that afternoon, Priest announced the decision to a packed media conference.

During her remarks, she mentioned a survey of OEA members found a majority felt no more could be accomplished by a walkout. A great deal has been said about that survey. Many people said they didn't receive it and doubted its validity. It was sent only to home emails of members who had provided those addresses. OEA ultimately chose not to release the survey because it was not scientific, but also because it was not a determining factor in ending the walkout.

"We talked with our members at the end of every day of the walkout through a texting service called 'Hustle,'" Priest said. "We talked with our board members constantly throughout the nine days. We pulled information from Trendency surveys, followed social media and talked with people at the Capitol.

"It was very clear by Thursday that the walkout had accomplished all that it could. When we called for the walkout, we announced a three-year plan. In just nine days, we had achieved almost all that we asked for in year one."

Priest made it clear in her statement to the media that OEA and its members were not done. They would continue to lobby until the end of the session, and would shift significant attention and effort to electing better legislators in 2018.

"As the face of the OEA and our main spokesperson, Alicia has received a lot of criticism for ending the walkout before some thought we should," said Executive Director DuVall. "She didn't make that decision on her own, she was just the messenger. We decided as an organization we needed to shift our efforts away from a walkout and in another direction. We had constant input from



Photo by Doug Folks.

our Board of Directors and the members they represent as well as from NEA officials who had helped us before and throughout the walkout."

DuVall pointed to the bottom line – historic raises and nearly \$500 million in new education funding – and encouraged members to savor what they accomplished. At the same time, he understands why some remain frustrated with how the walkout ended.

"In 1990, when we walked out in support of HB1017, and as we've seen in other states this year where teachers have closed schools and marched at their state capitols, we had a defining moment in which to say, 'We won!' This time, our victories came in quieter moments and even before we actually arrived at the Capitol," he said. "I think that's why some people feel unfulfilled by the effort."

Now What?

Now, OEA is looking to the primaries on June 26 and gearing up to fight a veto referendum that will ask voters to repeal HB1010xx, the main revenue raising bill of the session. With more than 110 candidates with education ties running for office, the November general election will be important.

Regardless of who wins in November, OEA members will be back at the Capitol on the first Monday in February 2019, working to accomplish Year Two of the Together We're Stronger plan. And at the directive of Delegate Assembly New Business Item #5/14, OEA will "support a statewide concerted advocacy effort" at the Capitol if education is not funded by April 1.

Education legislation of the 2018 session

Bills that created new funding streams for education and raises for teachers and support professionals for the first time in 10 years highlighted a historic legislative session. But other education-related measures passed, as well. Here is an overview of the most important bills from the session. You can see the complete list of education bills at okea.org/2018session.

Second Special Session Legislation

Passed concurrently with the 2018 regular legislative session.

HB1010xx – Increases the tax on cigarettes, motor vehicle fuel, gross production tax on oil and gas and hotel stays.

HB1011xx – Caps the itemized deduction allowable on an Oklahoma income tax return at \$17,000, excluding charitable contributions and medical expenses.

HB 1019xx – Repeals the sections of HB1010xx relating to the hotel tax.

HB1023xx – Increases the state teacher minimum salary schedule from \$5,001 to \$8,395, depending on years of service and level of education.

HB1024xx – Increases state employee salaries by \$750 to \$2,000, depending on current salary.

HB1026xx – Increases salaries of full-time education support professionals by \$1,250.

2018 Regular Session

Career Readiness

SB 1171 – Creates the Work-Based Learning Program through the Governor's Council on Workforce and Economic Development, with the goal of increasing the number of apprenticeships and jobs.

Certification

HB 3309 – Renames resident teachers to inductees and allows inductees to be traditional, alternative or emergency certified teachers. State Board of Education may promulgate rules for adminis-

tration of the induction program.

SB 980 – Creates new optional teacher certifications through the State Department of Education for those who want to go over and above regular certification. It will be implemented in certain districts through a pilot program. The categories are lead teacher and master teacher. Both entail additional duties and additional compensation. At this time, there is no state funding, so districts that participate will have to fund it themselves.

SB 1074 – Sets qualifications and requirements to be licensed as a speech pathologist or audiologist. Permits issuance of a temporary license to qualified persons.

Concurrent Enrollment

SB 1196 – Authorizes high school students meeting eligibility requirements to take concurrent enrollment classes at any institution within the state's system of higher education. Increases the number of hours a junior in high school can take concurrently to nine hours, as long as the program is fully funded.

Consolidation

HB 1334 – Allows the school board of a consolidated or annexed district to transfer real property to a housing authority. Previously they could only transfer to a political subdivision or to higher education.

Curriculum

HB 3221 – Requires State Department of Education to adopt a timeline for transition to electronic rather than printed assessments. Requires information about Juneteenth be included in social studies curriculum.

SB 1370 – Allows high school students to meet one of their math credits required for graduation by completing a one-year,

full-time, three-credit hour career and technology program that leads to an industry credential/certificate or college credit.

SB 1566 – The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department may coordinate with the Oklahoma Historical Society and the State Department of Education to develop educational programs and materials for Oklahoma schools that promote learning both by reading about and visiting historical sites throughout the State of Oklahoma.

Funding

SB 1198 – Requires the Oklahoma Tax Commission to include on each individual income or corporate tax return form an opportunity for the taxpayer to donate for the benefit of the Public School Classroom Support Revolving Fund.

SJR 70 – Constitutional amendment referred to a vote of the people to expand the permitted use for certain ad valorem taxes levied by a school district for buildings to include use for operations.

SB 1398 – Expands the definition of the school building fund to include operations should the language in SJR 70 be approved by voters.

Graduation

HB 2911 – Specifies that in exploring postsecondary career options as part of

the Individual Career and Academic Plan, schools must include military careers, apprenticeship programs and career and technology programs leading to certification or licensure.

Insurance

SB 1015 – Allows employees of an educational service provider contracted with a school district who perform functions that would otherwise be performed by school district employees to qualify for the flexible benefit allowance.

OHLAP

HB 3592 – Requires OHLAP funds to be returned if a student withdraws from a course prior to the add/drop date.

Pay

HB 2009 – Requires the State Department of Education to annually publish on its website within one click of the homepage information listing increases in salaries, wages, rates of pay, fringe benefits or changes in job class if that change resulted in an increase in pay or benefits.

Payroll Deduction

SB 960 – Requires that payroll deduction notices for initiation or termination of association membership be accepted via email or fax.

Retirement

HB 1340 – Provides public retirees a one-time stipend that is the lesser amount of 2 percent of their gross annual retire-

ment benefit or \$1,000. (Average teacher stipend will be approximately \$300.)

Safe Schools

SB 950 – Requires schools to allow a student to possess and self-apply sunscreen that is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration without the written authorization of a parent, legal guardian or physician. Permits a school nurse or designated school employee to assist a student in applying sunscreen, with written parental permission.

SB 1287 – Prohibits consolidation of a school's Safe School Committee with its Healthy and Fit School Advisory Committee. Redefines bullying.

SB 1150 – Mandates school employees and board members report any threats or threatening behavior towards students, personnel or property. Mandates employees suspecting abuse or neglect to report to the Department of Human Services and local law enforcement.

School Boards

HB 2082 – Sets the date for school board general elections on the first Tuesday of April each year. Primary elections set for the second Tuesday of February each year, unless there is a presidential primary and then it will be set on that date. If there are only two candidates, they will be on the general election ballot. If there are more than two candidates, they will be on the primary election ballot. If a candidate receives more than 50 percent, they will be elected to the office from the

primary. If not, the top two performers will be on the general election ballot.

HB 3117 – Requires school boards to declare a seat vacant within 60 days of a member failing to complete instructional and continuing education requirements.

Special Needs

SB 929 – Updates some labels of impairments that affect students with disabilities. Defines hearing impairment (separate from deafness), orthopedic impairment, autism and traumatic brain injury. Specifies calculations for each new condition within the weighted pupil category.

Standards

HB 3311 – Requires inclusion of the U.S. naturalization test into subject matter standards for history, social studies and U.S. government courses. Requires government classes to include civics lessons defined as the study of rights and duties of Oklahoma and U.S. citizens and how each respective government works.

Task Forces

HB 3313 – Adds a speech-language pathologist, appointed by the Speaker, to the Dyslexia and Education Task Force.

Testing

SB 1197 – Changes the performance bands when reporting standardized test results, brings them in alignment with NAEP for comparability purposes, including advanced, proficient, basic and below basic.



Photo by Bill Guy.

OEA's SQ 799 challenge awaits Supreme Court decision

Oklahoma's attorney general says an effort to repeal HB1010xx should be allowed to move forward, and that the teacher pay raise should be awarded regardless of what happens with the veto referendum.

The Oklahoma Education Association joined a group of taxpayers and education organizations to file a protest on May 17 to Oklahoma Taxpayers Unite's petition to put the veto referendum on the November ballot. SQ 799 seeks a voter veto of HB1010xx, which is projected to generate about \$450 million in state revenue.

HB1010xx was the main funding measure for teacher pay raises gained through April's walkout.

In general, the challenge outlines several deficiencies in the petition filing:

- A description of the bill at the top of each signature sheet omits mention and discussion of the little cigar tax and the hotel/motel tax increases authorized in HB1010xx.

- The description is misleading and written backward, stating approval of the state question would "repeal" HB1010xx.

- The referendum petition doesn't include an exact copy of the bill that would be referred to the people, as legally required.

Oklahoma AG Mike Hunter's position came at the request of the State Supreme Court. The brief stated, "While the gist certainly could have been more precise, the referendum petition's technical deficiencies do not merit its invalidation."

Maybe more importantly to Oklahoma teachers, the AG's brief went on to say that the teacher pay increase created in HB1023xx should not be affected regardless of whether SQ 799 is successful. The opinion encouraged the Supreme Court to clarify that position.

Oral arguments on OEA's challenge were scheduled for 3 p.m. on June 11. A decision from the Supreme Court had not been issued before this publication went to press.

Delegates build on momentum of April walkout

Building off the momentum of a historic school closure and walkout, delegates to the 2018 OEA Delegate Assembly spent two days at the end of April setting the course for the association for next year.

Photos adorned the walls of the Embassy Suites in Norman, providing a visual timeline of activity that led up to the nine-day walkout during the first two weeks of April. Starting from 2014 when OEA members helped oust then-State Superintendent Janet Barresi all the way through the walkout, the pictures reminded delegates of just how far the association has come in a short time. At the end of the pictorial timeline sat a paper “parking lot” where delegates added sticky notes of actions they planned to take over the next year to continue building on the Together We’re Stronger campaign.

With 238 registered delegates (and 32 guests), the annual meeting highlighted the democratic process the association is known for. More than a dozen new business items were debated and voted on. OEA’s 2018-19 budget was passed, including an amendment that considers whether the teacher pay raises in HB1023xx is upheld as enacted.

Below is a list of action items passed by the delegates.

Standing Rules Amendment #1 – I move the results of any physical count of votes for any matter be announced to the body at the conclusion of the vote.



Former executive director of Stand for Children Amber England accepted the OEA Friend of Education award during Delegate Assembly. She was recognized for her leadership and organizing efforts to improve education funding, including State Question 779 and other coalition building efforts designed to push the legislature to action, which helped place education as the No. 1 concern for Oklahomans even though the initiative failed. England is now working as an organizing consultant on OEA’s Together We’re Stronger campaign, a three-year plan to improve education funding and teacher pay. (Photo by Doug Folks)



Chickasha’s Wilma Dudley (right) accepts the OEA Education Support Professional Award from President Alicia Priest. Dudley will now be nominated for the NEA ESP of the Year and Oklahoma ESP of the Year awards. Photo by Doug Folks

NBI #4 – I move that the OEA develop and maintain a legislative voting record that we make available for our members during and after Oklahoma legislative session indicating how each legislator has voted on key OEA identified issues.

NBI #8 – I move that the OEA update and modernize the Association website.

NBI #9 – I move that the OEA develop a video series explaining the duties and structure of the Delegate Assembly, the Board of Directors, and the Governance arm of the association, including a portion dealing with Robert’s Rules of Order. This video series shall be approved by the Board of Directors before being highlighted on the association website. A transcript of these videos shall be made available on the website.

NBI #10 – I move that the OEA take the lead in urging a calendar revision in school districts for the upcoming school year and each year thereafter where school will not be in session on general election day in November.

NBI #11 – I move that because OEA is a member-driven organization and understands the frustration of members who feel left out of major decisions, that the OEA Board commit to spending the next year to design and/or implement a process, system or mechanism to contact each local president and receive a response in a timely manner.

See “NBIs” on Page 10

Summer is document checkup time

Keep copies all of your professional records

By Richard Wilkinson
OEA General Counsel

Now that we’ve reached summer, it is a good time to remember what school-related and employment documents you should keep in a separately maintained permanent file.

School employees often have the mind-set that since the school district or applicable state agency has copies of these documents, it is not necessary for the school employee to keep separate copies of documents related to their careers. However, it is not uncommon for school-related and employment documents to get misplaced or even lost and it is also not uncommon for a school district to resist employee requests for the production of such documents, particularly when there is an employment dispute.

Unfortunately, it is also common for school employees to misplace or discard the necessary documentation to verify any claim of disparate pay on a salary schedule, discrepancy in salary or benefit amounts, some other employment dispute with a local school district, or a dispute with the Oklahoma Teachers Retirement System (OTRS) regarding years of experience or contribution amounts.

Annual Contracts & Payroll Documents

You should retain your annual employment contract and any related employee information worksheet provided by the school district. These documents will provide an explanation of your years of experience, placement on a salary schedule, fringe benefits, dollar amounts of salary and fringe benefits that are paid in cash, and other important information about your total compensation. You should also annually review your placement on a salary schedule as well as the corresponding



compensation that is reflected in your annual contract and any related employee information worksheet.

You should also keep a copy of each payroll document provided you by the school district for each pay period. You should review your payroll documents to make sure that you are in fact being compensated at the level and in the manner reflected in your annual contract and any related employee information worksheet. Catching mistakes early and in the same fiscal year that an underpayment occurs is critical to resolving those issues without the necessity of formal litigation.

If a mistake is discovered in a subsequent fiscal year, a school district is

prohibited from using current fiscal year funds to pay for an obligation created in a prior fiscal year and litigation is required to obtain a judgment against the school district for any amounts that were not paid in a prior fiscal year. The same is true for payroll mistakes that result in an overpayment to the school employee. It is much easier for a school district to manage those issues as soon as they occur, but particularly during the fiscal year that the overpayment occurs.

Teacher Retirement Status

Periodically reviewing your teacher retirement status is also a good practice. Sometimes mistakes occur and required contributions are not made or calculated correctly by a local school district. Mistakes in years of experience and in employment status (full-time or part-time) are also relatively common when reporting information to OTRS.

Discovering these problems on the eve of retirement can result in a diminished benefit, or at the very least, significant frustration in resolving the discrepancy between the school district(s) and OTRS. There are limitations on how far back you can litigate a mistake in contribution amounts paid to OTRS on your behalf and catching those mistakes as early as possible will help in reaching a favorable resolution of those discrepancies.

OTRS welcomes status inquiries from members of the retirement system and also recommends periodic review of your status with the system to ensure that any errors can be promptly and efficiently corrected. You should check your status with OTRS at least every five years (particularly if you have worked in multiple school districts) to verify that proper contributions have been/are being made and that you are credited with the proper years of service.

See “Document checkup” on Page 10

Document checkup

Continued from Page 9

Maintaining your employment and financial records from the school district(s) can also help verify employment status and contribution amounts to OTRS in the event those records no longer exist at the local district level. You would be surprised how often that occurs, particularly with many school districts now adopting retention policies that may only retain documents for a 10-year period.

Evaluations, PDPs

You should keep all copies of your evaluations, any plans for improvement or personal development plans, as well as your responses and any follow-up documentation to those plans. You should also keep copies of any individual teaching portfolio or other documentation so that you can effectively question and correct an erroneous evaluation and/or protect yourself from any adverse employment action that is based on a defective evaluative process.

These documents are becoming more and more difficult to timely obtain from school districts when adverse employment action does occur and it is important that you separately retain complete copies of all of these documents so that you can properly respond or assess any recommendation for adverse employment action.

Certifications

Finally, you should keep records of your certification and other credentials from the State Department of Education. You should obviously check the expiration date of your current certificate so that you can make application for your certificate renewal in ample time to avoid a lapsed certificate at the beginning of a school year. And, remember that if you have any unresolved tax issues with the Oklahoma Tax Commission, those must be resolved (or a resolution agreement in place) prior to a new certificate being approved. Those issues can take time to resolve, so don't wait until the last minute to

start the process or you may be faced with beginning a school year without a valid teaching certificate and be placed in a substitute position (and paid accordingly) until you obtain a valid certificate.

You have a right to all of the documents mentioned above and school districts are required to provide these documents to you. Even though these documents will be kept by a school district in a personnel and/or payroll file, it is important that you also keep complete copies of these documents. You also have the right to check the accuracy of your information with the SDE and OTRS to ensure that there are no mistakes. You can avoid the frustration of trying to verify any disputed salary placement, fringe benefit or retirement contribution if you have kept complete copies of these documents.

Your OEA Regional Advocacy UniServ Specialist can assist you with deciphering any of these documents and can also arrange for a "How to Read Your Paycheck" training for your local to assist employees in understanding their paychecks and in verifying accuracy of salary placement, fringe benefit calculations and retirement contributions.

NBI promoting MLK Day, budget amendments win approval

Continued from Page 9

NBI #13 – I move that the Oklahoma Education Association, through their locals, encourage local school districts to close school on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. (*passed unanimously.*)

NBI #5/14 – I move that the Oklahoma Education Association will support a state-wide concerted advocacy effort for public education funding during the 2019 legislative session if year 2 of our demands as outlined in the "Together We're Stronger" plan have not been met by April 1st.

Resolution Amendment #1 – I move that Resolution III-33 Science Education be amended by addition of "using the science and engineering practices" after the phrase "scientific inquiry."

Budget Amendment #1 – I move that the OEA Delegate Assembly amend the Proposed 2018-19 OEA Budget as follows:

1) The certified dues amount will be calculated upon the minimum salary schedule contained in HB1023xx multiplied by the .00877 factor unless there is a judicial determination that the salary



Moore's Wilma Bunting gives the ESP Committee report. (Photo by Doug Folks.)

schedule is stayed pending the outcome of any referendum, and in such case the certified dues amount shall revert back to \$277 for the period that the provisions of HB1023xx are not in effect;

2) The dues earmarked for the Media Campaign and Ballot Initiative and Crisis Funds shall be \$5 for certified and \$3 for support as long as the certified dues

calculation using the minimum salary schedule contained in HB1023xx multiplied by the .00877 factor remains in effect; and

3) Sixty thousand dollars shall be allocated to the local incentive rebate line items and the remaining dues dollars derived from the dues calculation using the minimum salary schedule contained in HB1023xx multiplied by the .00877 factor shall be reflected under the Together

We're Stronger and related line items in the 2018-19 OEA Budget.

Budget Amendment #2 – I move that Center for Governance Personnel: Salaries and Fringes - "Salaries and fringe benefits (employer taxes, employee life, medical and disability insurance) for President, Vice President, Executive Director and 2 Administrative Assistants. Includes retirement for President and Vice President. "Striking out" housing allowance.

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- 3 tutoring sessions ✓
- 1 standardized test given ✓

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Wednesday, July 25

Registration: 8 a.m., Conference 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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Cost \$10.00

Register via email Tina Townsend at ttownsend@okea.org

Northwest Leadership Day

Tuesday, July 17, 2018, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Canadian Valley Tech Center

6505 East US HWY 66, El Reno, OK

Register via email to Lilia Ocampo at locampo@okea.org

or online at [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/okea-nw-summer-leadership-tickets-46127045234)

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Southeast New Leaders and Leadership Day

New Leaders

Thursday, July 19; 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

SE Leadership Day

Friday, July 20, 2018 – 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Both events at

Lucy Smith Center, McAlester High School

1 Buffalo Drive, McAlester

Register via email to Kim Holley at kholley@okea.org

Southwest Leadership Training

Friday, July 20, 2018

Registration: 8 a.m., Conference 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Red River Technology Center

3300 W. Bois D'Arc, Duncan

Register via email to Mary Robison at mrobison@okea.org,
call 800-522-8091 x358.