

THE EDUCATION

FOCUS

FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION - Fall 2018

The Movement Continues

56 educators face general election opponents

The Perfect PD to meet your PL Focus



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On the cover – OEA member Carri Hicks is one of 56 educators facing opponents in the general election. She has been knocking doors for 18 months to support her campaign for SD 40. (Photo provided.)

OEA prides itself on being democratic and member-driven

By Alicia Priest
OEA President

As I traveled the state in August, attending back to school events, it was once again evident that Oklahoma education employees are incredibly talented, creative and dedicated to the students they serve. OEA members amaze me every day with the effort they put in to their jobs, their schools, districts and communities.

To top off all that work, you put in extra time for our association, whether it be attending meetings, trainings, knocking doors for public education candidates –and mercy we have a lot of opportunities for this before November!

The reality is that in order to have a successful OEA, we need YOU. The Oklahoma Education Association is a member-driven organization. We are governed as a representative democracy, from the local level where you elect building reps to leaders at the state and national levels, which have the same election structure.

Just like it is important to know who you vote for in state government elections, you should get to know candidates and vote in your association elections at the local and state level. You also elect

Zone Directors, who serve as your representative on the OEA Board of Directors. These volunteers give freely of their time to host zone meetings, get information out to local leaders and bring your needs to the Board meetings. (*You can find out who your zone director is by visiting okea.org/about-oea/oea-leadership/oea-board-of-directors.)*

The OEA has 16 standing committees that are filled with member volunteers. Committees meet at least twice a year on Committee Saturdays and then virtually as needed. The work these committees do helps drive the agenda and the work of the OEA through their research, discussions and reports. Committee appointments are made by the president and approved by the Board of Directors at the first meeting of the board after the president is elected.

We approved committees at our last Board meeting, but there are still some spots available. You can look up our committees and what they do on our website – okea.org/about-oea/oea-leadership/committees. If you are interested in serving on a committee, send me an email listing your interests. When we have an opening, I'll contact you to see if you are still interested and available.



President Alicia Priest

OEA members also drive the Fund for Children and Public Education, our Political Action Committee. No member dues dollars go to support candidate campaigns and elections. Only money given above dues to the FCPE goes for those purposes.

To be a “recommended candidate,” a team of members interviews the candidate and makes a recommendation to an elected body called the Fund Council who then discuss and vote. Only members who donate to the Fund can serve on the interview teams and run for Fund Council.

OEA is unique in its structure. Other organizations do not elect members to represent them, nor do they have such a representative democratic structure. I am proud of the way our members step up and run this organization. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you as the momentum and movement continue!

The Education Focus

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OEA
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putting education first™

Over and above

Some locals bargain increases on top of HB 1023's historic raises

By Doug Folks

With September's paychecks, teachers across the state are seeing the results of their advocacy efforts last year. Vastly improved salary increases are being implemented, especially in districts that bargain contracts.

The increases come from the passage of HB 1023xx, the teacher pay bill, and HB 1010xx, which provided a revenue stream to guarantee the salary increases would be properly funded. The historic teacher raises ranged from \$5,001 on Step 0 with a bachelor's degree to \$8,395 for Step 25 on the doctorate schedule – an average of \$6,100.

Some local association bargaining teams have negotiated significant increases above the state-paid raise. As an example, what once seemed possible only in larger states on the East and West Coasts, Edmond and Putnam City both approved salary schedules that start at \$40,000 for teachers on Step 0 with a bachelor's.

As bargaining began earlier this summer, OEA advocacy specialists and local bargaining teams began hearing rumblings that some larger districts were going to give the salary increase as part of the total compensation package. By doing so, districts were going to back out 7 percent retirement from the raises, which meant teachers would not see the full raises approved by the legislature.

Most troubling was that those districts had not backed out retirement for some time. For instance, Putnam City inadvertently released a salary schedule to the media and the public – before bargaining – that placed the raise on total compensation.

With guidance and support from OEA advocates, local bargaining teams demanded the raises be placed on the salary base per past practice. Districts that had not been in the practice of backing out retirement eventually approved agreements that met the spirit of the law.

Part of the confusion surrounding teacher pay is that the State Minimum Salary Schedule is a total compensation figure. Districts are allowed, by law, to count all or

part of the teacher's portion of retirement as part of the state minimum.

Most larger districts bargain with their teachers and pay the employee's 7 percent retirement in addition to salary. Conversely, most teachers on the state minimum will not see the full raise reflected in their salaries as their districts will count retirement as part of the compensation package.

Language was included in HB 1023xx requiring districts to notify new employees and returning employees if retirement was going to be backed out of the salary and counted as part of the total compensation package.

In addition to improved salaries, some locals also bargained other benefits and improved language. Here are highlights from OEA's bargaining locals:

Broken Arrow EA – In addition to the state raise, added \$300 to each step,

added Step 32 to the certified salary schedule, each teacher advanced one step, and agreed to a 3 percent stipend for returning teachers and a 1 percent stipend for newly hired teachers, both paid on Oct. 5. BAEA and the district team will work to level the salary schedule during next year's negotiations.

Claremore CTA – added \$1,200 increase to each step on top of the new salary increase.

Deer Creek ACT – added \$1,500 to each step on top of the state mandated raise, plus a \$1,000 stipend for all returning teachers.

Edmond ACT – starting salary for a bachelor's degree is \$40,000 and all steps were equalized.

Support Employees of Edmond – All support staff received a \$1.21 raise. This See "Bargaining wins" on Page 12

"With the raise we received through the walkout, I won't have to live paycheck to paycheck anymore. And now I'll be able to afford Internet access at home so I can grade papers and input scores or work at home and not have to stay in my classroom until 7:30 at night. Thank you OEA and Edmond ACT!"

Taysha Foshee
Fourth grade teacher
Will Rogers Elementary
Edmond Public Schools



Choosing the right tool for the job

Everybody's on the Instafacepagegrams. Does that mean you have to be, too? Nope. First, you have to decide what you want to do. Do you want to share ideas? Pick the best date for your next meeting? Show the world all your great work as a local? Never fear. There's a tool for that.



The movement continues

The passion and determination generated by the walkout is steaming toward the general election Nov. 6. Is this the year education takes over the State Capitol from the inside?

By Doug Folks

Like a locomotive picking up steam and hitting its stride, the educator movement continues gaining speed and power, and promising big changes at the State Capitol for the next legislative session.

At the end of April's statewide teacher walkout, OEA President Alicia Priest announced the association and its members were shifting their focus to election season. The walkout had achieved what it could, but work remained. The elections were the next task on the "things to do" list.

The first sign of continued momentum came when nearly 100 educators filed for office in mid-April, including teachers, support professionals, administrators and retired teachers.

Now, just a few short weeks before the November 6 general election, the makeup of the state legislature has already been altered. Of the House Republicans known as the Platform Caucus who voted against HB 1010xx, the funding mechanism for the historic teacher pay raise, only four remain in contention for re-election.

- Three were term-limited (Jason Murphy, HD 31; Kevin Calvey, HD 82; and John Enns, HD 41)

- Four chose not to run for re-election (John Bennett, HD 2; Tim Downing, HD 42; Roger Ford, HD 95; and Rick West, HD 3)

- Two lost in a primary (Scott McEachin, HD 67, and Chuck Strohm, HD 69)

- Six lost in a primary runoff (Travis Dunlap, HD 10; George Faight, HD 14; Bobby Cleveland; HD 20; Jeff Coody, HD 63; Mike Ritze, HD 80; and Tess Teague,



Craig Hoxie, second from left, is a TCTA member and a candidate for HD 23. He is one of 26 OEA members in November's general election. Joining him at a recent campaign activity is (from left) Robert Stinson, his wife and fellow TCTA member Bea Stinson-Hoxie, his daughter Willow Hoxie, David Lilburn and Dr. Ashwin Padsalgikar. (Photo provided)

HD 101).

- Tom Gann (HD 8) won his primary, while Tommy Hardin (HD 49) and Kevin West (HD 54) did not have primary opponents. Sean Roberts (HD 36) won his runoff and doesn't have an opponent in the general election.

"Our members have never been more politically active," said Priest. "They came to the Capitol in April with a determination we haven't seen in years. After 10 years of funding cuts and disrespect, our people had had enough.

"While the legislature eventually passed about 95 percent of our first-year plan, several elected officials treated them poorly or ignored them altogether. And

many felt the legislature could have done much more."

Local associations upped their political involvement this summer by holding town hall meetings, legislator forums and accountability sessions. They also worked closely with candidates in their campaigns, walking and knocking on doors and handing out literature or get-out-the-vote door hangers.

The Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association has set a high bar when it comes to political involvement. One of the walkout's most inspirational moments came in the second week when 48 people, mostly TCTA members, arrived at the Capitol after walking the 110 miles from Tulsa.

The march down Route 66 and the experiences they had at the Capitol have lit a fire under the TCTA and its members. They wasted little time after returning home in creating the “Mile 111” effort.

“Leading the march really activated a lot of people who weren’t active before or who weren’t even members before,” said Patti Ferguson-Palmer, TCTA president. “But I think having four of our members running for legislative office really activated a lot of people because it’s someone they know personally.”

Three current, active TCTA members are working toward general election races: John Waldron (HD 77), Craig Hoxie (HD 23) and Kilmyn Easley-Graf (HD 98) won their primaries. Angela Statum (HD 68) lost in a runoff for the Democratic nomination.

Two former TCTA members who are now OEA members in other districts also won their primaries: Melissa Provenzano (HD 79) was a teacher and popular principal in TPS before taking an administrative job in Bixby, and Janice Graham (HD 80) retired from TPS after being the supervisor of school psychologists for the district.

While most of TCTA’s efforts have been for those candidates, some members have worked for J.J. Burnam, Democratic candidate for HD 70, and Tim Gilpin, an attorney and former State Board of Education member who is the Democratic candidate for Congressional District 1.

Working in campaigns has been just one of the efforts of the Mile 111 club. The League of Women Voters trained TCTA delegates on how to register people to vote. Shawna Hight, a fifth-grade teacher at Wayman Tisdale Fine Arts Academy, led TCTA’s voter registration effort.

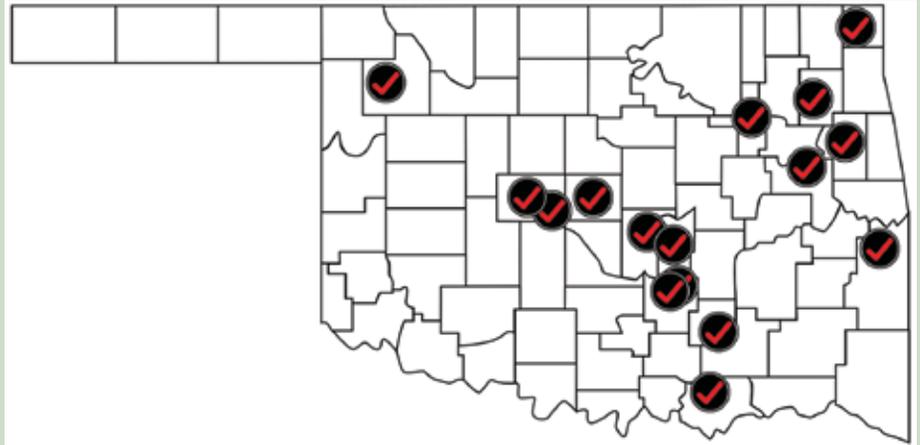
“TCTA members have put in at least 88 hours registering new voters,” Ferguson-Palmer said. “We included voter registration forms in our new member recruitment folders and encouraged teachers to ‘vote for your students.’”

LeeAnne Jimenez, science academic coordinator for Tulsa Public Schools, led TCTA’s 20 hours of power-mapping to determine who the candidates were and which campaigns most needed assistance and attention from the association.

TCTA planned and executed four town hall/candidate forums, totaling 45 hours of volunteer time, with Hannah Fernandez taking the lead.

Ferguson-Palmer said her members have driven more than 110 hours for

Closing schools for election day



During the Tulsa march to the walkout, bus captain Stephanie Jones got the idea that Election Day should always be a non-school day. What better way to call attention to the importance of Election Day for public schools than to give teachers every opportunity to go to the polls?

During a meeting of the march participants at OEA Headquarters, Stephanie, a Pre-K/kindergarten teacher at Emerson Montessori Elementary School, asked TPS Supt. Deborah Gist if she could make that happen. Dr. Gist liked the idea, the school board eventually accepted the proposal, and Tulsa became the first district to make Election Day a “holiday” on the school calendar.

Since then, more than a dozen districts have joined the movement. Ada, Byng, Coalgate, Durant, Miami, Muskogee, Oklahoma City, Panama, Pryor, Seminole, Woodward and Yukon are all closed on Nov. 6. Shawnee and Tahlequah will have professional days, and El Reno will close at 1:40 p.m. on Election Day. Putnam City ACT bargained that no extracurricular activity, excluding sports, would take place on state election days.

If your district has changed its calendar or altered plans for Election Day, let us know by emailing Carrie Coppennoll Jacobs at cjacobs@okea.org.

candidates doing door-knocking, spent more than 40 hours knocking on doors and dropping literature, put in 30 hours interviewing candidates and eight hours coordinating miscellaneous events like coffees (led by Stephanie Jones), home meetings (led by Lisa Grimm-Bridgewater) and sign-holding on election day. Also, TCTA members have worked on mailings for at least nine candidates.

The local hosted a primary night watch party at Dave & Buster’s for its member candidates. The event drew about 100 people and was visited by two Congressional candidates. The “price of admission” was a donation for TCTA’s New Teacher Give ‘n Grab and Food Pantry.

The march from Tulsa and the walkout itself are the not the only reasons Ferguson-Palmer says her members are highly motivated this election season.

“The best thing that came out of the

walkout was the realization that the public supports us,” she said. “That was something we were never really sure of before, but community support of our teachers has really been affirming.”

Legislators provided another form of motivation, one they perhaps didn’t expect.

“For a lot of our members it was their first time to come face-to-face with their legislators and it was like a bucket of cold water,” Ferguson-Palmer said. “They found out some legislators don’t care what we have to say and aren’t interested in listening to us. Our members reacted to that treatment by getting involved in the election in the biggest way possible.”

Through its proaction during and after the march, TCTA has also seen an increase in membership over last year and fewer Tulsa teachers retired, thanks to the raise produced through the walkout.

What's the election status of the House Bill 1010xx **NO Votes?**

A total of 29 lawmakers voted against House Bill 1010xx, the funding package that raised revenue to fund teacher and support staff raises, as well as increase classroom funding. Oklahomans were overwhelmingly supportive of the budget deal, and those who opposed it have had a tough time at the polls so far this year.

LOST IN THE PRIMARY						
	Scott McEachin HD 67	Chuck Strohm HD 69				
LOST IN THE RUNOFFS						
	Travis Dunlap HD 10	George Faught HD 14	Bobby Cleveland HD 20	Jeff Coody HD 63	Mike Ritze HD 80	Tess Teague HD 101
DID NOT RUN FOR RE-ELECTION						
	John Bennett HD 2	Rick West HD 3	Roger Ford HD 95	Tim Downing HD 42	Josh Brecheen SD 6	
TERM LIMITED						
	Jason Murphy HD 31	John Enns HD 41	Kevin Calvey HD 82	Anthony Sykes SD 24	Randy Bass SD 32	
ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT						
	Tom Gann HD 8 (won primary)	Tommy Hardin HD 49 (no primary)	Kevin West HD 54 (no primary)	Mark Allen SD 4 (won primary)		
RE-ELECTED						
	Sean Roberts HD 36 (won primary)	J.J. Dossett SD 34 (unopposed)				
NOT UP FOR ELECTION THIS YEAR						
	Joseph Silk SD 5	Rob Standridge SD 15	Julie Daniels SD 29	Nathan Dahm SD 33	Allison Ikley-Freeman SD 37	

America's largest education caucus

56 educators still in the running for public office

More educators are running for office in Oklahoma in 2018 than any other state. Here is a list of educators who have made it to the general election. *(This list is for informational purposes. It does not reflect recommendations from the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education. A digital version of The Education Focus in October will outline recommended candidates.)*

- 99 education candidates filed in April
- 56 are still alive in the general election (40 Democrats, 12 Republicans, 3 Independents, 1 Libertarian)
- 29 won their primaries
- 7 won their primary runoffs
- 20 did not have primaries and moved automatically to the general election
- 4 have already been elected:
 - Mark Vancuren (R, Owasso, HD 74), former biology teacher and basketball coach, won his primary and doesn't have a general election opponent.
 - Danny Sterling (R, Tecumseh, HD 27), high school principal, won his primary and doesn't have a general election opponent.
 - Sen. J.J. Dossett (D, Owasso, SD 34), high school history teacher and coach at Owasso High School, and Rep. Mickey Dolens (D, Oklahoma City, HD 93), freshman English teacher at U.S. Grant High School in Oklahoma City, were unopposed and automatically re-elected

The following lists are of candidates identified by OEA as having direct connections to education. They are teachers, retired teachers, support professionals or administrators.

OEA Members (26)

State Senate

- Jacobi Crowley (D, Lawton), SD 32, crisis interventionist/assistant football coach, Lawton Public Schools
- Jennifer Esau (D, Claremore), SD 2, special education teacher, Claremont Elementary
- Carri Hicks (D, Oklahoma City), SD 40, fourth grade teacher, Grove Valley Elementary, Deer Creek
- Shannan Tucker (D, Okemah), SD 8, English teacher, Okemah High School



Jennifer Esau, SD 2

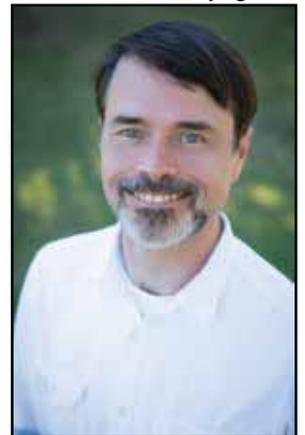
State House of Representatives

- Sarah Carnes (D, Yukon), HD 47, fine arts teacher, Mustang High School
- Peggy DeFrangé (D, Krebs), HD 17, retired elementary teacher
- Kilmyn Easley-Graf (D, Broken Arrow), HD 98, fine and performing arts chair, Tulsa Central and Junior High School



Jack Reavis, HD 14

- Joan Gabelmann (D Lawton), HD 63, assistant principal, Lawton High School
- Karen Gaddis (D, Tulsa), HD 75, incumbent, retired teacher
- Janice Graham (R, Broken Arrow), HD 80, retired teacher
- Craig Hoxie (D, Tulsa), HD 23, physics teacher, Booker T. Washington High School, Tulsa
- Steve Jarman (D, Pauls Valley), HD 20, retired teacher
- Amanda Jeffers (D, Oklahoma City), HD 91, English teacher, Crooked Oak High School, Midwest City
- Renee Jerden (D, Moore), SD 24, choir teacher at Irving Middle School, Norman
- Daniel Manuel (D, Ada), HD 25, half-time bus driver, Byng Public Schools
- Melissa Provenzano (D, Tulsa), HD 79, assistant principal, Bixby High School
- Cyndi Ralston (D, Broken Arrow), HD 12, second grade teacher, Haskell Elementary
- Randy Randleman (R, Eufaula), HD 15, retired school psychologist
- Trish Ranson (D, Stillwater), HD 34, music teacher, Westwood Elementary, Stillwater
- Jack Reavis (D, Muskogee), HD 14, history teacher, Muskogee High School
- Michael Ross (D, Tulsa), HD 68, fine arts/journalism teacher, Charles Page High School, Sand Springs
- Kara Sawyer (D, Guthrie), HD 31, special education teacher, Guthrie Upper Elementary School
- Jennie Scott (D, Enid), HD 41, fourth grade teacher, Garfield Elementary, Enid
- Ed Trumbull (D, Grove), HD 5, science teacher, Grove Middle School
- John Waldron (D, Tulsa), HD 77, history teacher, Booker T. Washington High School, Tulsa



John Waldron, HD 77

Congress

- Ruby Peters (I, Lawton), U.S. Congress District 4, Title I reading teacher, Lawton

Non-Members (30)

State Senate

- Mary Boren (D, Norman), SD 16, former school counselor
- Arnold Bourne (D, Durant), SD 6, retired agriculture teacher, Durant

See "56 educators" on Page 10

Self-Determined Professional Learning

By Jaycie Smith

Beginning this year, teachers now have real control over their individual professional development as it relates to their own evaluations.

This shift is occurring as the Professional Learning Focus will be fully implemented by all public school educators this school year.

In July 2016, Oklahoma's House Bill 2957 effectively redesigned professional development at the district level. Professional development would thereafter include, within the evaluation system, a focused, individualized program of professional learning for educators – commonly referred to as PL Focus.

HB 2957 provided that each educator determines his/her annual PL Focus in collaboration with the evaluator and the support of the district and the state. During 2017-18's pilot year, OEA Pres. Alicia Priest and I conducted a webinar outlining the new evaluation requirement. You can still access that webinar at <https://youtu.be/lp9ZKjowTE>.

Last year was an implementation year for the PL Focus. At every

Oklahoma public school site, at least 25 percent of the certified staff established a PL Focus as part of his or her evaluation. This incremental implementation permitted those participating to provide insight into the new component of the evaluation system and begin determining best practices for its full implementation the following school year.

As the PL Focus was piloted across the state, many district leaders saw value in the system and the number of participants in the initial phase quickly soared to more than 23,000 educators.

This year, educators are to establish their PL Focus by the end of the first grading period this fall. This deadline allows educators the time to know their students and determine what professional development may be needed during the year to best meet the needs of those students.

When selecting the PL Focus for the school year, the educator should keep in mind that the PL Focus selected must correlate with one of the components of the educator's evaluation rubric; the PL Focus must allow the educator to engage in learning practices which are evidence-based and effect student achievement; and the PL Focus must be approved by the evaluator of record.

Jaycie Smith is executive director of Teacher and Leadership Development at the Oklahoma State Department of Education.



Jaycie Smith

NEA Micro-Credentials: The perfect PD for your PL Focus

As Oklahoma teachers begin development of their Personal Learning Focus plans for their 2018-19 evaluations, the National Education Association offers a valuable – and free – resource.

NEA Micro-Credentials are short, competency-based recognition – grounded in research and best practice – that allow educators to demonstrate mastery in a particular area, such as addressing challenging classroom behaviors. Micro-credentials are perfect professional development to meet PL Focus requirements.

There are more than 90 NEA Micro-Credentials from which to choose, including "IDEA 101," which was written by OEA Vice President Katherine Bishop.

These micro-credentials are:

- Personalized, allowing you to create your own journey based on your interests, goals, students, school and district;
- Flexible, so you can study when it's convenient, either on your own or with peers; and
- Performance-based, awarded based on your demonstrated mastery of the subject matter.

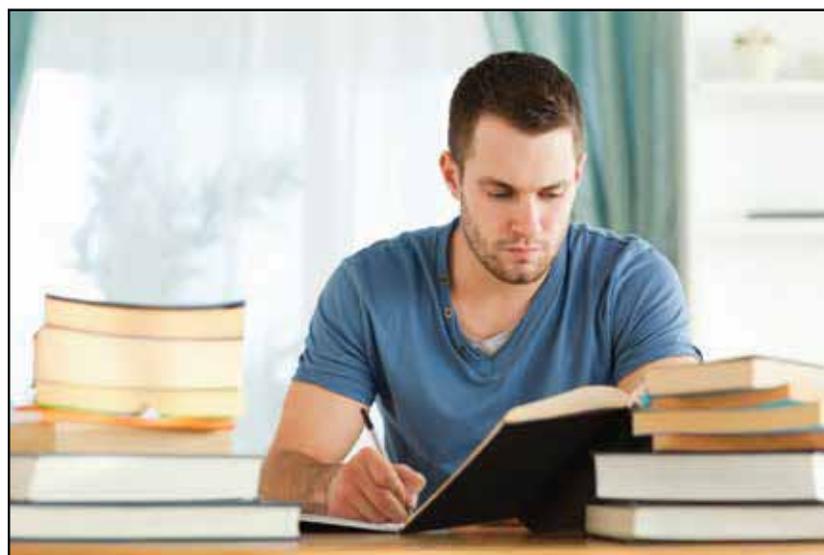
Going through the rigorous micro-credential process will help you develop skills and build understanding.

Once you've selected a micro-credential, you will have six months to complete the process, which will involve collecting the evidence that demonstrates your competence in the selected area. Be sure to double-check with your district

that it will accept micro-credentials for your PL Focus.

Visit <http://cgps.nea.org/micro-credentials/how-it-works/> to find details how to get started and to review the different micro-credentials available.

Your OEA Advocacy Specialist can also help you determine what steps to take to complete your PL Focus.



Parent-teacher communication is the key to student success

By Bill Guy

A meme making the rounds goes something like, “Teachers can only work with what parents send them.” No doubt supposed to be humorous, it could also be interpreted as a backhanded swipe, especially in light of the fact that in some cases historically, schools and individual teachers have regarded parents as intruders or critics. Educators who recognize that their best allies in helping students achieve can be parents must be purposeful in helping change cultures that sometimes erect more barriers than create pathways for collaboration.

Given that everyone is surrounded by hundreds of messages each day, all of them vying for attention, you can never communicate too much. And there’s such a variety of ways to do so: grade-level newsletters of upcoming events, publishing monthly school-wide calendars and maintaining websites with important information and resources. But it should be understood that no form of written or digital communication surpasses communicating in person. A worthy goal would be to have a face-to-face conversation with each child’s parents or guardians at least by half-way through the school year.

Communicating by phone can provide a more human touch, and at times may be the best way to ensure that you are communicating with the right family member. But many teachers find email better for more frequent communications. Written communication not only allows the opportunity for more careful and thoughtful composition, but it also provides for the important written record of messages.

Written communication soliciting parental responses can help teachers produce notes for parent-teacher conferences and

generate ideas for creating better lesson plans for meeting individual needs. It’s also a good idea to send brief, encouraging messages about student successes, too. This can be especially true for parents whose children have difficulties, either academically or behaviorally. Imagine how good it can be to learn that your child is doing something well if you’re more used to hearing about poor behavior or grades.

this isn’t so, double down on positive comments or requests for help from parents to increase buy-in. Increasingly, teachers and schools look for ways to involve parents in hands-on opportunities that may include volunteering opportunities or speaking to classes about their jobs, hobbies or other relevant experiences.

It is estimated that close to 100 percent of schools in the United States have web-



Another useful tactic could be sending an interest survey for each child, asking both students and parents to complete one. It can be interesting to see how parents’ perceptions differ from children’s perceptions. Some teachers ask parents to write a “tell me about your child” essay or report, often learning funny, poignant or vital information in the process.

As students mature in age, moving from elementary to secondary school, some parents may begin to feel like there is not as much need to be as involved in their child’s school life. But teachers who realize that

sites now, with communication being perhaps their most important purpose. With digitally secure databases, teachers can safely post assignments and lesson plans, report grades, attendance and behavior, and schools can post announcements, schedules and calendars any time of day or night. Good websites will encourage parental responses.

Some school websites offer parental chat rooms or bulletin boards and some offer homework assistance. Some are even exploring with the idea of video parent

See “Schools get creative” on Page 10

Delegate Assembly moved to May 2019

Delegate Assembly has been moved to May 10-11, 2019, due to a lack of available facilities in the Oklahoma City Metro for the previous scheduled dates in late April. A location will be announced in the coming weeks.

Delegate credentials will be due March 15, 2019, as already scheduled.

Other important association dates for local leaders to remember for 2018-19 include:

Nov. 3 – OEA Committee Saturday, OEA HQ

Dec. 1 – Zone Rebate applications deadline

Jan. 18 – OEA Awards entry deadline

Feb. 1-15 – OEA Elections filing period

Feb. 2 – OEA Committee Saturday, OEA HQ

Feb. 22-23 – OEA Organizing Conference, Edmond

March 1 – SOEA Outreach To Teach, Site TBA

March 1 – Read Across America

March 2 – SOEA Spring Convention, Site TBA

March 15 – OEA Delegate credentials deadline

March 15-17 – NEA National Leadership Summit, Denver CO

March 18-29 – Online voting in OEA Elections

April 10 – 2019 NEA RA credentials deadline

May 10-11 – OEA Delegate Assembly, Site TBA

June 7 – Statewide Summer Leadership Conference, Site TBA

July 2-7 – NEA RA, Houston, TX

56 educators face general election opponents

Continued from Page 7

- David Bullard (R, Durant), SD 6, AP U.S. History and AP Government teacher, Dennison (TX) High School
- Becki Maldonado (R, Noble), SD 16, English teacher, Emerson Alternative High School, Oklahoma City
- Bryan O'Brien (D, Broken Arrow), SD 36, retired science teacher
- Brenda Stanley (R, Oklahoma City), SD 42, retired principal, Choctaw-Nicom Park

State House of Representatives

- Kelly Albright (D, Midwest City), HD 95, third grade teacher, Dove Science Academy, Oklahoma City
- Jolene Armstrong (D, Muskogee), HD 13, library media specialist, Okmulgee
- Rhonda Baker (R, Yukon), HD 60, incumbent, former English teacher
- Ty Burns (R, Morrison), HD 35, social studies teacher, East Middle School, Ponca City
- William Cagle (L, Bethany), HD 84, bus driver, Yukon Public Schools
- Donnie Condit (D, McAlester), HD 18, incumbent, retired teacher
- Sherrie Conley (R, Newcastle), HD 20, homeless coordinator at Fillmore Elementary, Oklahoma City
- Rhonda Cox (D, Peggs), HD 86, retired teaching assistant, Peggs
- Dean Davis (R, Broken Arrow), HD 98, physical education teacher, Broken Arrow High School
- James Delso (I, Henryetta), HD 16, former teacher in Tulsa

- Troy Dyer (D, Heavener), HD 3, former teacher, Connors State College
- Angela Graham (D, Sand Springs), HD 66, Pre-K teacher, Deborah Brown Community School, Tulsa
- Toni Hasenbeck (R, Elgin), HD 65, 7th grade teacher, Elgin
- Ronny Johns (R, Ada), HD 25, principal, Ada Junior High School
- Ashley Lehnert (D, Turpin), HD 61, family and consumer science teacher, Turpin High School
- Ashley McCarter (D, Lawton), HD 64, elementary counselor, Lawton
- Judy Ross Moore (D, Porum), HD 15, counselor, Hilldale High School
- Jacob Rosecrants (D, Norman), HD 46, incumbent, former high school history teacher

- Miranda Shelton (D Kingston), HD 49, special education teacher, Kingston Elementary
- Kevin Stacy (D, Delaware), HD 10, retired superintendent, Oklahoma Union
- John Thomas Talley (R, Stillwater), HD 33, former agriculture teacher
- Renae Ward (I, Sulphur), HD 22, special education teacher, Sulphur Elementary

Congress

- Jason Nichols (D, Tahlequah), U.S. Congress District 2, political science instructor at Northeastern State University
- Mary Brannon (D, Washington), U.S. Congress District 4, retired teacher and counselor

Schools get creative with communications

Continued from Page 9

conferences and streaming videos to advance understanding and involvement of parents in student learning.

One idea some schools are trying is to invite parents and community members to “brown bag lunches” in schools to help them feel more welcome to the education community and to find out about important issues in an informal way.

Parent Teacher Home Visits, a program initiated in a low-income neighborhood in Sacramento, Calif., in 1998, used community organizing principles to develop a strategy intended to build trust and ac-

countability between parents and teachers for raising student achievement. A pilot project facilitated voluntary teachers visits to student homes for a meeting in a setting away from the institutional power of schools between two equal partners – teachers and parents – with common goals. The success of the program has fueled its expansion to some 17 other states. (*For more information, visit www.pthv.org.)*

One of the founding principles of the National Parent Teachers Association – “When it comes to children’s education, parent involvement is key” – becomes only more relevant with the passage of time.

Legal services are key for many members

By Heath Merchen
Associate General Counsel

Protection and security are prominent reasons many people join the Oklahoma Education Association. As we start a new school year, it's a great time to review the legal services available to our members.

First and foremost, OEA members receive completely free legal advice and defense when facing disciplinary action and employment-related contractual disputes – no deductibles, no cost to members, no referring of cases to inexperienced counsel or attorneys without education law experience.

Instead, we employ attorneys who have decades of experience successfully representing teachers and dealing with education issues. We win or successfully settle 75 percent of the cases we litigate, and our in-house attorneys handle the majority of claims. Additionally, our attorneys understand all sides of education issues as each have represented both employers and employees, and our staff even has experience in school administration.

Unlike the benefits provided by other organizations, disciplinary defense doesn't have a dollar limit. We have expended hundreds of thousands of dollars in defense costs on a single member, with the member paying only their annual dues and nothing more.

Second, OEA members receive an incredibly valuable set of benefits for legal services not related to their employment.

Through the Personal Legal Services Program members, receive free wills, durable powers of attorney, divorces, assistance with child support enforcement and uncontested stepchild adoption all at no charge. The value of any one of these services is a great deal more than annual dues.

Third, for matters not covered by PLSP, we have agreements with a network of local attorneys who will accept referrals at a discounted hourly rate and who will

provide consultations free of charge.

Finally, we also provide insurance coverage that protects teachers from liability and provides legal defense in the event a teacher faces criminal charges. These programs are over and above the general legal services described in the preceding paragraphs.

Our coverage documents are available for anyone to review – and before believing

the promises of any other organization or any quotes relating to how much insurance they have, ask for a copy of their coverage agreement. If a

document isn't forthcoming – don't believe what you don't receive. If a document is available, any staff member will be happy to review it with you and do a line-by-line comparison of what OEA offers.

In short, there is no other organization, plan or benefit that provides the quality and quantity of legal protection and services an OEA member receives.

“OEA members receive an incredibly valuable set of benefits for legal services not related to their employment.”

Advocates provide first line of defense

In addition to the legal services OEA members have access to when it becomes necessary, the association has eight Advocacy UniServ Specialists who work across the entire state with individual and local affiliates. The professionals coordinate with the OEA Center for Legal and Corporate Services to answer questions and assist members with disputes.

Many times, a conflict between a teacher and an administrator, or a support professional and a supervisor, can be resolved without legal action. That's where OEA advocates provide valuable assistance to our members in these areas:

- **Member Advocacy:** Advocates offer assistance with writing responses to evaluations, admonishments or plans of

improvement, assistance with individual rights and employment problems, and representation for disciplinary issues.

- **Collective Bargaining Assistance and Preparation:** More than 200 local OEA affiliates are recognized to bargain in Oklahoma and OEA Advocates are trained in a variety of bargaining methods and skilled in every facet of the bargaining process, from preparing to circulate a petition for recognition to impasse resolution.

- **Local Association Advocacy:** Advocates provide assistance to local associations in grievance processing, contract maintenance, privatization issues, health and safety issues and other local association issues.

Regional Advocacy Specialists

Oklahoma City Metro

Carnie Cullen, ccullen@okea.org

Annetta Hein, ahein@okea.org

Northeast

Melissa Kaltenbaugh,
mkaltenbaugh@okea.org

Northwest

Rhonda Harlow, rharlow@okea.org

Southeast

Cal Ware, cware@okea.org

Southwest

Sheri Childress, schildress@okea.org

Tulsa Metro

Susan Stowe, sstowe@okea.org

Linda Hendrix (Tulsa CTA),
lhendrix@okea.org

Bargaining wins around the state

Continued from Page 2

does include the state mandated raise.

Henryetta ESP – All support employees (full time and part-time) received a \$1.21 per hour raise.

Miami ACT – added \$44,000 to the extra duty stipend schedule.

The Education Association of

Moore – Teachers certified a step and the state-paid salary increase and the local bargained increases for extra duty schedules.

Professional Educators of Norman – Added “Right To Know” language: “Any teacher who is threatened with harm by a student, parent, or guardian, or otherwise harassed by a parent or guardian while performing his/her duties shall notify the principal in writing. The principal shall notify the proper authorities, if necessary, provide whatever assistance is necessary, and update the teacher with documentation as to the action taken. Furthermore, if the principal becomes aware that a teacher has been threatened with harm, he/she will notify that teacher.”

Putnam City ACT – Raised the starting salary for a bachelor’s degree to \$40,000 and all steps were equalized. Also, PCACT bargained language that no afterschool activities, excluding sports, will be held on state election days.

Shawnee ACT – Bargained \$250 for each teacher to spend on the classroom; every teacher received movement on the schedule of a step and a half (in addition to the state-paid raise).

Stillwater ESP and Stillwater EA – Both units added right to representation to their master contracts.

Tulsa CTA – Added an extra duty position for those in charge of tracking all instructional resources in the school; changed the dress code to allow for a more tolerant policy regarding piercing and tattoos; modified language to bring observations and evaluations for probationary teachers in line with current law. (TPS has always required more observations and evaluations than the law stated and had an earlier completion time. This

change will help principals with workload and probationary teachers will also benefit from the reduction of observations.)

Union CTA – Bargained an average increase of 5.25 percent, which provided the step and the leveling of the salary schedule, the state-paid increase and a 5 percent stipend for returning teachers. The agreement brings the beginning bachelor’s step to \$39,000.

Vinita CTA – Added vision insurance for all employees, paid by the district.

Western Heights EA – Certified staff all moved two steps, plus added \$750 to the base on top of the state mandated raises. The district also extended the schedule to 40 steps. Support employees received a \$1.37 per hour raise across the board plus step increase.

Woodward EA – The district agreed to reimburse up to \$500 in tuition and fees toward the cost of three hours of college classes per semester. Also, the district agreed to allot \$100 a year to each teacher for the purchase of classroom teaching supplies.

Retired teachers to receive stipends in October

Members of the Oklahoma Teacher Retirement System will see their first financial increase in at least 10 years in mid-October.

HB 1340, which becomes effective on October 1, was passed by the legislature last spring. It will provide a 2 percent stipend to those who have been retired at least five years.

“Although the stipend was a huge disappointment compared to a cost-of-living adjustment legislation we lobbied

for heavily, it the first financial relief our members have seen in a decade,” said Sabra Tucker, executive director of the Oklahoma Retired Educators Association.

According to information from the Oklahoma Teachers’ Retirement System, the stipend will come in a separate payment and will not be folded in to the regular monthly retirement check. The stipend will be sent to retirees or their surviving joint annuitants who can expect the payments between Oct. 10-15.

“Through our work with legislators, we were able to improve the benefit slightly for those beneficiaries who have been retired the longest,” Tucker said.

The stipend will be 2 percent of the retiree’s annual benefit. Those retired 20 years or longer will receive a minimum stipend of \$350.

Tucker added that there is no definitive information yet on tax withholding, except that no taxes will be withheld from any stipends smaller than \$200.

How you can help NEA members affected by Hurricane Florence



As NEA members and families in the Carolinas and other parts of the eastern United States begin the cleanup from Hurricane Florence, NEA and NEA Member Benefits have set up two opportunities for other NEA members, staff, affiliates and NEA MB business partners to help support recovery efforts.

Individuals may contribute to the NEA Hurricane Florence Relief Fund via a special GoFundMe page at <https://bit.ly/2Nn9Wff>.

State Affiliates and other organizations may make donations by check, to NEA Member Benefits Relief Fund, ATTN: Cecilia Evans, Hurricane Florence Relief, 900 Clopper Road, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-1356.

Members can be assured that 100 percent of funds donated will go to affected NEA members and their families through their state affiliates.

For more information, visit www.neamb.com/how-you-can-help.htm.



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

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