



2021 OEA LEGISLATIVE GOALS

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that quality schools are places where learning is a priority, quality teachers and other school employees are educational leaders, quality kids come ready to learn and behave appropriately, and quality education is the shared responsibility of all the members of a community.

Based on these beliefs, OEA adopts the following goals for the 2020-2021 legislative session:

I. HIGH STANDARDS

- A. Increase funding from local, state and federal sources for all public education programs, including common schools (PreK-12), vocational-technical education, higher education, alternative education, and adult and other community education services.
- B. Increase state funding for general school operations, enrollment growth, technology acquisition and training, alternative education programs, and professional development for teachers and education support professionals.
- C. Increase local support for schools by permitting the patrons of a school district to gain new revenue through approval of additional millage on real property for the purpose of acquiring educational technology, with the new revenue not to be charged against state aid.
- D. Permit the registered voters of a school district to approve capital bond issues by a simple majority of those voting, rather than by a sixty-percent super majority.
- E. All school board members at a minimum shall be high school graduates or equivalent. Permit the registered voters of a school district to elect a member to their school board with full rights who is an employee within the school district.
- F. Provide state assistance to local school districts for the purpose of funding new construction or retrofitting sites to provide safe environments against the impacts of tornadoes, earthquakes or other natural forces.
- G. Support efforts to prevent existing school district boundaries from serving as a hindrance to any student seeking his/her choice of educational programs in Oklahoma public schools.
- H. Provide funding and other support for the establishment and operation of alternative education facilities.
- I. Provide incentives for all students to aspire to good citizenship by emphasizing service to school and community.

- J. Require all students to meet academic standards regardless of educational setting, through participation in ongoing, comprehensive, developmentally appropriate student assessment, which includes the essential elements required by state and federal rules and regulations.
- K. Permit parents to opt their students out of high stakes testing and allow students to demonstrate competency in subject areas outside of state mandated tests.

II. RESPECT FOR THE PROFESSION

- A. Increase funding for professional development training programs for teachers and education support professionals, designed in whole or in part by employees themselves, with additional pay for satisfactory completion of the training. Such trainings should enhance the knowledge and skills of the educator and be voluntary and accessible to all. Any remuneration earned shall be in addition to the regular experience increment.
- B. Empower teachers and education support professionals with expanded decision-making authority in relevant matters such as staffing, site-based financial decisions, curriculum development, classroom management, student discipline, and parental relations.
- C. Provide duty-free planning periods and duty-free meal periods for the purpose of preparation, collaboration, and reflection.
- D. Adopt a living wage as a minimum wage for all Oklahomans in an effort to ease the effects of poverty and build a more sustainable environment for learning. A living wage is the amount that an employee must earn in order to enjoy an equitable standard of living within a specified area or region.
- E. Improve the salaries and fringe benefits of teachers and education support professionals, making their compensation comparable to education employees in other states and to other professions and occupations in the private economic sector.
- F. Review different educational positions within today's school districts to determine if additional salary increments are warranted. All restrictions on state/local salary schedule placement for teachers who have taught in an accredited school in-state, out-of-state, or out-of-country should be eliminated.
- G. Protect and improve the Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System through a commitment to adequate funding, preserving the defined benefit feature of the retirement plan design, preventing increased required contributions by active TRS members, providing additional funding to the system from new sources, and granting periodic benefits increases to current and future retirees when actuarially prudent.
- H. Eliminate the potential for lost or reduced individual retirement benefits by providing in-state law appropriate safeguards ensuring the timely collection of mandatory contributions for each active Teacher's Retirement System member.
- I. Preserve or expand on the partial state payment of teacher retirement contributions for all school employees participating in the Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System.

- J. Ensure access for all school employees and their families to quality, affordable health insurance, provided as a fully paid benefit by the State of Oklahoma. This benefit will not be considered part of the total compensation for the purposes of achieving the State Minimum Salary Schedule.
- K. Support funding for state payment of the single insurance premium for retired educators.
- L. Oppose any efforts to link a teacher's performance evaluation, continuing employment and compensation to student performance on standardized tests. Support the implementation of a student growth model testing system.
- M. Establish reasonable restraints on local school district employers so as to minimize privatization of school support services.
- N. Establish procedures setting minimum school district standards assuring employees the right of redress of workplace concerns, such procedures not to be in conflict with any existing collective bargaining agreement.
- O. Ensure due process for teachers through legislation prohibiting the use of temporary contracts.
- P. Support tax policies that produce sufficient revenue to fund common education and all other essential services.
- Q. Provide opportunities to local school districts to seek – using current deregulation procedures if necessary – educational improvement by means of innovative approaches to instruction and curriculum, enhanced student-teacher-parent partnerships, school site-based decision-making, and increased community involvement, provided that teachers teaching in deregulated schools shall remain employees of the local board of education, entitled to all rights and privileges normally accorded to other teachers in the school district.
- R. Achieve equity between school districts and employee organizations in the collective bargaining process.
- S. Improve public awareness of school district financial operations through enhanced financial reporting procedures.

III. EDUCATOR QUALITY

- A. Ensure safe and healthy school environments for students and school employees through financial assistance to school districts without resources to help themselves. Promote healthy lifestyles for students.
- B. Maintain professional teaching standards by opposing the liberalization of statutes, rules and regulations governing the extent of employment of non-certified substitute teachers.
- C. Allow teachers to rely upon a wide range of student products in the accomplishment of a school district's accreditation plan.

- D. Provide that school districts shall grant release time and position reinstatement without discrimination to teachers and other school employees elected or appointed to local, state or national educational organization offices or positions.
- E. Maintain professional teaching standards by opposing the liberalization of statutes, rules and regulations governing alternative or emergency certification.
- F. Support funding the full costs of attaining or renewing National Board Certification and a full \$5,000 stipend for NBCTs.