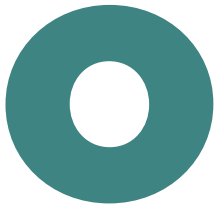


Education Focus

Out-of-state billionaires are working to privatize Oklahoma public schools



Oklahoma is experiencing a renewed wave to privatize public education. Whether they are called opportunity scholarships or tax breaks for the wealthy, state legislators

have filed nearly a dozen voucher bills all aimed at reducing the amount of money set aside for public education.

The movement is national in scope and it's funded by some of America's wealthiest, including the DeVos Foundation (as in Betsy DeVos), the Walton Foundation, and the Koch Brothers. Along with several other similar foundations, they have pumped nearly \$700 billion into vouchers and charter schools. Their efforts have closed 4,000 public schools across the nation since 2008.

In fact, some of those foundations are funding multiple pro-voucher lobbyists at our state capitol this year.

With the foundation money, several far-right organizations and think tanks claim public schools are failing, lobby legislators and provide cookie-cutter legislation to be introduced in state houses and senates. The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), Stand for Children, the Center for Education Reform and the American Federation of Children are all active, anti-public education, pro-voucher players.

To help combat the latest onslaught of vouchers in the Oklahoma Legislature, the OEA has joined a diverse group of local organizations representing parents, educators, clergy and community leaders.

"Public education is a right guaranteed by our state constitution. Every single child in Oklahoma should have a quality public school in their own community," said Pastor Clark Frailey, Executive Director of Pastors for Oklahoma Kids, one of the 14 members of the new coalition. "Since vouchers and neo-voucher tuition tax credits lessen available investments in local public schools, these policies as written will only further erode our schools that serve children in every ZIP code across Oklahoma. Anyone concerned with the



future of Oklahoma should be concerned with the consequences of these policies on our public school kids."

Lori Wathen, Oklahoma PTA President-Elect, added, "Oklahoma PTA opposes any private school choice proposal and/or voucher system that diverts public funds to private or sectarian schools, virtual schools, and/or homeschool programs. Public dollars must remain invested in public schools for the benefit of all students."

On pages 4 and 5 you can read more about the Public Funds for Public Schools OK Coalition, including guest columns from two of our partners. There is also a list of voucher bills filed this session.

Spring: The perfect time to save money

By David Glenn
NEA Member Benefits

As we approach spring, some thoughts that come to mind are sunshine, blooming flowers, cleaning, getting rid of old items and having



access to a new level of energy. As you think about refreshing the house or taking a trip I want to remind you that NEA Member Benefits is here to assist with your plans while saving you money at the same time.

Take a look at some of the ways in which we can assist you as you spring forward!

Save on Everyday Purchases & Travel

NEA Discount Marketplace, powered by Rakuten – Get deals and cash back on products from over 2,500 retailers and online stores, plus exclusive monthly offers for NEA members. Visit www.neamb.com/marketplace.

GE Appliances Store – Update your kitchen or laundry with the latest GE appliances, including GE Profile and Café. Get free shipping on purchases over a certain threshold. Visit www.neamb.com/ge.

NEA Car Buying Program – Research the new or used vehicle of your dreams using TrueCar's online platform; plus, get your purchase price before ever visiting a dealership! Find out more at www.neamb.com/products/nea-auto-buying-program.

NEA Travel Program – Plan future travel with savings on hotels, resorts, airfare, car rentals, and guided tours. Receive

NEA Travel Dollars when you sign up! Learn more at www.neamb.com/travel.

Earn Cash Back When You Shop

NEA Discount Marketplace – Your qualified purchases not only save money, but earn it, too. Get a quarterly check with your earned Cash Back. Visit www.neamb.com/marketplace

NEA Cash Rewards Credit Card — Choose which category you want to earn 3% cash back. Visit www.neamb.com/products/credit-cards.

ENTER TO WIN!

California Casualty \$2,500 Educators Jackpot Giveaway – California Casualty, the provider of the NEA Auto & Home Insurance Program, is offering NEA members eight chances to win cash this year in the \$2,500 Educator Jackpot. Two winners will be randomly selected every three months, and each will receive \$2,500. Visit <https://bit.ly/3en4X3H>.

NEA MB opens disaster relief program for Oklahoma

NEA Member Benefits has activated its Disaster Relief Program (DRP) in response to a FEMA-declared major disaster for the incident period of February 8-20, 2021, and affecting the Oklahoma counties of Canadian, Carter, Cherokee, Comanche, Cotton, Hughes, Jefferson, Le Flore, McIntosh, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Pittsburg, Stephens, Tulsa and Wagoner.

NEA MB and its business partners stand ready to assist by providing resources to affected members and affiliates, and

special accommodations to NEA member-participants in NEA MB programs.

A specially designed DRP Web page at www.neamb.com/disaster-assistance.htm provides details about the resources and accommodations available to affected members who are currently using NEA MB products and services in the impacted counties.

Contact David Glenn, NEA Member Benefits Affiliate Relations Specialist, for more information at dglenn@neamb.com.



The Education Focus

Volume 38, Vol. 3

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Katherine Bishop, Vice President
Carolyn Crowder, Interim Executive Director
Doug Folks, Editor
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800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

OEA Oklahoma Education Association
putting education first.

New Member Benefits app gives members mental health resources

In response to members' requests for a stress management solution, NEA Member Benefits will soon begin piloting an important new benefit. The NEA Mental Health Program is designed to help members address the considerable mental health impacts of the pandemic and other stressors present in their lives.

Offered in partnership with Sanvello Healthcare, the NEA Mental Health Program is an evidence-based mobile app care solution created by clinical experts that enables members to access on-demand help for stress, anxiety and depression. The Sanvello app is the No. 1 solution in this arena and currently has over 3 million users.

The NEA Mental Health Program is available to members, spouses/domestic partners and eligible dependents* in all 50 states. The program consists of three main options:

- Sanvello Free Self-Care Solution – Access to a number of tools including a Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based “Feeling Better” guided journey to learn techniques that help with stress, anxiety and depression. Other tools include meditation, assessments, hope boards, goal tracking and communities to connect anonymously with other like-minded individuals. *Must be age 13+ to use this solution.

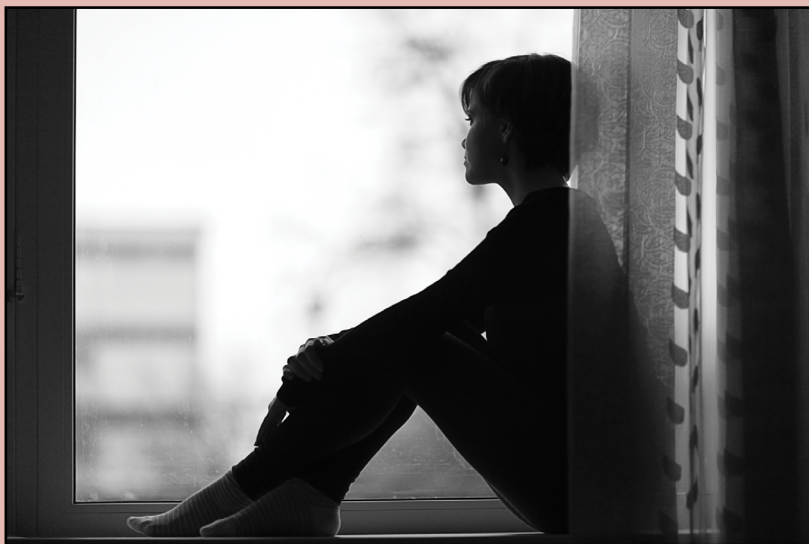
- Sanvello Premium App – Access all of the free components mentioned above, as well as enhanced tools including additional CBT-based guided journeys. Available at no cost for one month, and thereafter at a 25% discounted rate for direct-to-consumer subscribers (discounted cost is \$6.75/month or \$40.49/year.)

*Available to individuals age 18+.

- Sanvello Coaching – Access to all Premium App services, plus coaches available virtually support users on their journey to feeling better through one-on-one messaging and personal support, as well as live group video sessions. Sanvello's coaching staff is available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ET) Monday through Friday. Direct-to-consumer subscribers to Sanvello Coaching receive a 10% discount at a cost of approximately \$45 a month or \$315 a year. *Available to individuals age 18+.

The NEA Mental Health Program by Sanvello provides bilingual (English, Spanish & French) customer support through email at info@sanvello.com, which is monitored 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (ET) Monday through Friday, with responses within one business day.

For more information, visit neamb.com/mentalhealth.



Riversport offers discounted day pass

Members now have an opportunity to experience some of the state's most exciting water sports through a new partnership with Oklahoma City's Riversport. Day passes are just \$35.99 (a \$14 savings), giving you access to:

Whitewater Rafting – experience class II-IV whitewater rafting at the nation's only urban whitewater rafting facility.

Surf OKC – endless waves on a trampoline surface.

Love's Tubing – Experience RIVERSPORT Rapids by tubing down the rapids.

Kayaking and Stand-Up Paddle Boarding (SUP) – Paddle the waters of the Oklahoma River, Lake Hefner and Lake Overholser.

RIVERSPORT Adventures – The SandRidge Sky Trail adventure course includes Sky slides (72-foot spiral slides and 30-foot speed slides), Cloud Bounce, Sky Tykes and Kid Zip.

Pump Track Scooters and Bike Park – World-class bike

courses are designed for the extreme.

Basecamp Nature Center – Get up-close and personal with amphibians and reptiles native to Oklahoma.

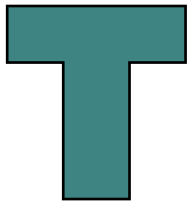
To purchase passes, visit www.riversportokc.org/epass, and use the promo code “OKEARIVER.”

In addition to the discounted ticket price, there is a \$1.50 convenience fee for each item purchased. The offer is available online only, and parking is not included.

For more information on the Riversport day passes, visit the Great Member Benefits page in the Members Only section of okea.org.



Diverse coalition fights voucher expansion



The Oklahoma Education Association has joined a very diverse coalition with one purpose in mind – prevent voucher expansion in state law.

The broad group of Oklahoma pro-public education organizations have formed the Public Funds for Public Schools OK Coalition.

“We believe that public education is the cornerstone of our democracy. We believe that every student deserves the opportunity for a quality public education as guaranteed by the Oklahoma Constitution. As parents, education employees, clergy and community leaders, we will work together to oppose any vouchers, direct or indirect, that divert funds from public schools. Together we will work to ensure that public funds remain in public schools,” said a statement released by the coalition.

The introduction of legislative measures to enhance current voucher schemes or to create new ones is nothing new. But this year, legislators have filed nearly a dozen voucher bills, the largest onslaught of bills attacking public education funding in a single year.

“There is no accountability built into voucher bills, not for

the parents who take the voucher or from whatever private school that receives the funding,” said OEA President Alicia Priest. “Vouchers weaken public education by draining money and resources away from the 90% of Oklahoma children who attend public schools.”

Members of the Public Funds, Public Schools Coalition:

- American Federation of Teachers Oklahoma City
- Oklahoma American Federation of Teachers
- Oklahoma Aspiring Educators Association
- Oklahoma Conference of Churches
- Oklahoma Education Association
- Oklahoma Edvocates
- Oklahoma Parent Legislative Action Committee
- Oklahoma Parent Teacher Association
- Oklahoma Policy Institute
- Oklahoma Rural Schools Association
- Organization of Rural Elementary Schools
- Oklahoma Retired Educators Association
- Pastors for Oklahoma Kids
- School Nurse Organization of Oklahoma

Vouchers bills of 2021

Voucher bills are nothing new in the Oklahoma legislature, but 2021 has seen the most ever filed in a single session. Here is a look at every voucher bill filed for this session and their status at press time in mid-March:

HB2673 (Echols, R-Oklahoma City) – Provides a private school voucher to any student attending a school that has had an F on the A-F report card in each of the last three years. The bill also provides for an open transfer to an A or B school from that F school. **Status: Dormant**

HB2701 (Hasenbeck, R-Elgin) – Tax credit vouchers. Grants tax credits to people who donate money to private school scholarship granting organizations, school districts or school foundations. Raises private donation cap from \$3.5 million to \$10 million and raises public donation cap from \$1.5 million to \$20 million. Meant for “low-income families,” the bill defines “low income” as families earning up to \$113,900. With the automatic 25% increases each year, as much as \$223.43 million could be diverted in 10 years. **Status: Technically dormant, but we expect to see this language moved into another bill later this session.**

HB2651 (Echols, R-Oklahoma City) – Tax credit vouchers. Increases the cap on tax credit voucher credits. **Status: Language moved to HB2701 – Dormant.**

HB1982 (Lepak, R-Claremore) – Tax credit vouchers. Increasing the cap on credits issued each year. **Status: Dormant**

SB203 (Daniels, R-Bartlesville) – Expands the Lindsey Nicole Henry voucher program to include students with at least one parent who is incarcerated. **Status: Dormant**

SB221 (Standridge, R-Norman) – Authorizes a “wellness” voucher if parents are concerned about the risk of being exposed to or exposing others to COVID-19 or other illnesses. **Status: Dormant**

SB222 (Standridge, R-Norman) – Creates a voucher for students experiencing bullying. **Status: The language of this bill was changed and is no longer a voucher.**

SB386 (Quinn, R-Claremore) – Provides cash “grants” to families for use on personal education expenses. The money would be distributed by the Governor’s office. **Status: Dormant**

SB402 (Simpson, R-Springer) – Expands the Lindsey Nicole Henry voucher program to students whose parents are active or former members of the armed forces and to students in foster care. **Status: Dormant**

SB532 (Standridge, R-Norman) – Provides a private school voucher to any student attending a school that has had an F on the A-F report card in each of the last three years. The bill also provides for an open transfer to an A or B school from that F school. **Status: Dormant**

Vouchers are particularly harmful to rural Oklahoma schools

Public schools represent the heartbeat of rural Oklahoma. As the largest employers in our towns, public schools are the center of community activities and provide the backbone that supports healthy commerce. When rural schools do well, rural communities follow suit. When the health of our schools is threatened, so is our entire rural way of life.

Representing some of the most economically disadvantaged regions in Oklahoma, 90% of state school districts are rural. Rural students account for 56% of the K-12 student population and 93% of Oklahoma zip codes have no access to private school options.

Oklahoma currently gives more public funds to private schools than any state in the region, yet we continue to see a strong legislative push to fund private education with public tax dollars. Voucher and tax credit schemes are particularly harmful

to rural communities, leaving them with even further depleted resources for their local public schools and no private school access to show for it.

Just two years ago, unlimited tax credits for the wind industry were met with legislative outrage. Today, those same lawmakers are asking rural voters to subsidize the private education choices of affluent metro families. These “school choice” bills actively harm rural communities by further draining the resources available to their already struggling local schools, putting their municipal and commercial health at risk as well.



Erica Wright

Redirecting public taxpayer funds for the benefit of a select few is not the Oklahoma Standard. This is the wrong time to push through policy which will rob millions of tax-payer dollars to underwrite private schools. Rural voters must demand their legislators use those dollars to adequately fund their local public schools, refusing to entertain school choice conversations until Oklahoma exceeds the regional average for per pupil spending. The survival of rural Oklahoma depends on it.

Erika Wright
Founder, Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Parents agree: public schools are the best choice

Oklahoma Parent Legislative Action Committee (OKPLAC) strongly supports the concept that public funds are for public schools. As eloquently stated by President John Adams, “The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be willing to bear the expenses of it.”

Because public schools welcome all children, public schools serve “the greater good.” Just like police departments and public libraries, public schools are available or open to all, for the benefit of all, regardless of whether or not they are used by an individual citizen. In the case of schools, parents whose children attend public schools benefit directly, but for those citizens who do not have children attending public schools, they are still receiving the benefit of living in a society where all children are being educated to be self-sufficient, productive citizens.

OKPLAC believes that every parent has the right to choose which school option best suits their child, and we wish for all children to receive a robust and high-quality education regardless of the school system. Further, OKPLAC is proud of the public school options available to Oklahoma students today.

Whether a child learns best in a traditional environment, at a specialty charter school or in an online environment, there are a multitude of publicly funded options available to meet each child’s needs. These schools admit all children, are accountable to elected leaders and state law, and comply with financial and performance transparency requirements. Public schools are the bedrock of our democracy and the engine for our economy.

We urge Oklahoma leaders to resist the diversion of public funds through voucher schemes and to focus our scarce resources



Lisa Kramer

on improving public schools for the betterment of the 90% of all children that attend them.

Lisa Kramer
Chairwoman, Oklahoma Parent Legislative Action Committee

OEA Elections 2021

State Office Candidate Statements

President



Katherine Bishop

Katherine Bishop *Putnam City ACT*

“The honor to lead our Association as your President is one that comes with great responsibility. As challenges come before us, the education community and the state of Oklahoma look for the leadership of the OEA. We must continue to meet every challenge with commitment and desire to do what’s right for our students, educators, and our profession. Working together ensures our victories. Help me make a difference. Thank you for your support.”



Lori Burris

Lori Burris *Mid-Del ACT*

“Public education is the cornerstone of our democracy, and OEA is the organization that should lead the charge to insure that it remains strong. We must engage our rank and file members to stand together and organize to fight for public education. I want to be that person that listens, engages, and fights alongside our members in our journey. I am running for OEA President for our students, our educators, our communities, and our profession.”

Vice President



Cari Elledge

Cari Elledge

Professional Educators of Norman

“Local leadership, organizational structure and planning, membership growth and development, and community organizing are just some of the experiences that I bring to the OEA. My background in rural, suburban, and urban education environments makes me relatable to all members. I want to learn what YOU want from this Association and help to make it a reality. Let’s continue to work together for each of our amazing members! Elect Cari Elledge for OEA VP!”



Chelsea Foo

Chelsea Foo

Edmond ACT

“I would be honored to serve as your OEA Vice President. A 27 year veteran teacher, currently in the classroom, I understand the challenges of all educators.

I was awarded our first NEA part-time release local presidents grant, and represent OKC on the OEA Board.

I assist new local presidents as a member of the NEA New Presidents Training Cadre, and chair NEA Peace and Justice Caucus.

I ask for your vote, Thank you.”

NEA Director



Zach Grimm

Zach Grimm

TEA Moore

“I am running for NEA director to elevate the voices of education professionals to advance equity and excellence in our public schools. I am deeply committed to the success of each student within my district, throughout the state of Oklahoma, and across the nation.”



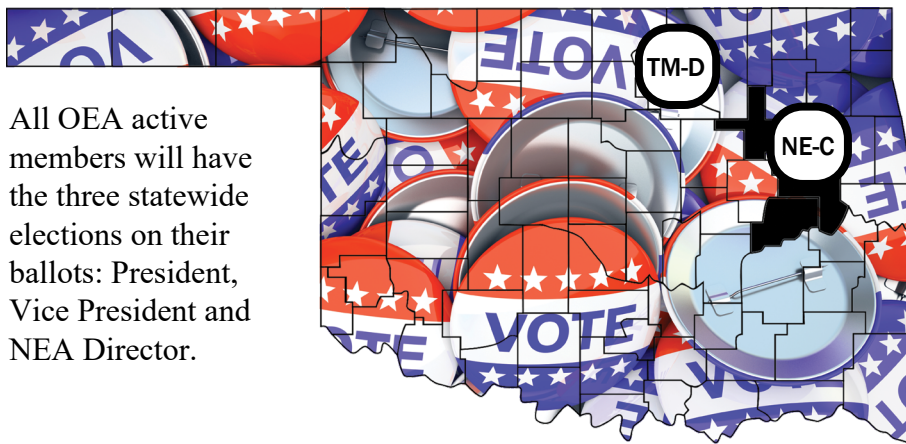
Shawna Mott-Wright

Shawna Mott-Wright

Tulsa ACT

“Serving my fellow OEA members is an honor & a privilege I don’t take lightly. Representing my heroes & friends is an awesome responsibility and I very much want to continue telling our Oklahoma story at the national level.”

OEA Zones with Contested Elections This Year



All OEA active members will have the three statewide elections on their ballots: President, Vice President and NEA Director.

Two zones have contested races. Northeast C represents Cherokee and Muskogee counties. Tulsa Metro D represents Oral Roberts University, OSU Tulsa Langston, Sand Springs ACT, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Tech, Union CTA, Union ESP and University of Tulsa.

Online voting is open March 22 - April 2 at okea.org.

2021 OEA Elections

Official Ballot Positions

Statewide Offices

OEA President/Alternate NEA Director/NEA Delegate

- Katherine Bishop, Putnam City ACT
- Lori Burris, Mid-Del ACT

OEA Vice President/ Alternate NEA Director/NEA Delegate

- Cari Elledge, Professional Educators of Norman
- Chelsea Foo, Edmond ACT

NEA Director / OEA Board of Directors / NEA Delegate

- Zach Grimm, The Education Association of Moore
- Shawna Mott-Wright, Tulsa CTA

OEA Board of Directors

Zone Directors/NEA Delegate

NEA Delegate the end of the 1st & 2nd year of the 3-year term, which expires 2024.

Northeast A, representing Adair, Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Nowata and Ottawa counties.

- Angelia Franke, Nowata CTA
(Unopposed)

Northeast C, representing Cherokee and Muskogee counties

- Mandi Jordan, Tahlequah EA
- Sharica Cole, Muskogee EA

Northwest A, representing Alfalfa, Beaver, Cimarron, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield, Grant, Harper, Major, Texas, Woods and Woodward counties

- Jennie Scott, Enid EA
(Unopposed)

Northwest B, representing Kay, Logan, Noble and Payne counties.

- Zach Murray, Ponca City EA,
(Unopposed)

Oklahoma City A, representing Crooked Oak, Harrah, Mid-America Bible College, The EA of Moore, ESP Moore, Oklahoma Christian College and Oklahoma City Community College

- Zach Grimm, The Education Association of Moore, (Unopposed)

Oklahoma City C, representing Edmond ACT, Edmond ESP, ESE-OKC, OEA-OKC and University of Central Oklahoma

- Chelsea Foo, Edmond ACT,
(Unopposed)

Tulsa Metro A, representing Tulsa CTA

- Kelli Roberts, Tulsa CTA,
(Unopposed)

Tulsa Metro E, representing Berryhill EA, Bixby EA, Broken Arrow EA, Jenks CTA and Jenks ESP

- Michael Horn, Jenks EA,
(Unopposed)

Zone Directors/NEA Delegate

*Two-year unexpired term expires 2023.
NEA Delegate at the end of the 1st year of the unexpired 2 year term in 2022.*

Tulsa Metro D, Oral Roberts University, OSU Tulsa Langston, Sand Springs ACT, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Tech, Union CTA, Union ESP and University of Tulsa.

- Betty Collins, Union ACT
- Frank Brazwell, Union Spa

OEA Board of Directors

Three-year term expires 2024. This position does not serve as an NEA Delegate.

Administrator-at-Large/OEA Board of Directors

- No candidates filed, position to be appointed.

Delegates-At-Large

Administrator Delegate(s)-At-Large OEA – Delegate Assembly

Elected based on number of positions available.

- No candidates filed.

NEA Retired Delegate(s)-at-Large OEA/Delegate Assembly

Elected based on number of positions available.

- Linda Long, Elk City
- Patti Ferguson-Palmer, Tulsa

OEA Ethnic Minority Delegate(s)-at-Large OEA/Delegate Assembly

Should the Bylaws requirement in this election category be met by local associations, no OEA Ethnic Minority Delegates-at-Large will be seated.

- No candidates filed.

NEA Retired Delegate(s)-at-Large, 2021 NEA Representative Assembly

Successor delegates only, elected based on number of positions available.

- No candidates filed.

Regional Delegates-at-Large

NEA Category I Delegate(s)-at-Large, 2021 NEA Representative Assembly

Northeast Region (1 opening)

- No candidates filed.

Northwest Region (1 opening)

- No candidates filed.

Tulsa Metro (1 opening)

- No candidates filed.

No Category I election in the Southeast, Southwest, OKC Metro and Tulsa Metro regions.

*You can see 75-word
statements and photos
from all candidates
at okea.org/2021elections.*

Valliant senior's drawing takes top honors

Bridgett Krup's depiction of Katniss Everdeen from "Catching Fire: The Hunger Games Book 2," earned Best in Show honors in OEA's 2021 Read Across America Poster Contest. Krup is a senior at Valliant High School.

Students in grades three through 12 entered drawings depicting their favorite books, featuring a wide range of literature. Children in grades kindergarten through second grade participated in a coloring contest featuring 2021's theme, "Zoom into a Good Book."

Krup will receive a \$100 gift certificate, honoring her winning drawing. The Award of Excellence winner in the K-2nd grade division will receive a \$25 gift card and the Award of Merit winner takes home a \$10 gift card. Gift cards of \$50 (Award of Excellence) and \$25 (Merit) go to the winning artist in the 3rd-5th grade, 6th-8th grade and high school categories.

Students who earned honorable mention will receive a certificate commemorating their artistry.

All winning entries can be found on our website at <https://bit.ly/3143Ozg>.



Best in Show

"Catching Fire: The Hunger Games,"
by Bridgett Krup, Valliant High School

2021 RAA Poster Contest Winners

High School Division

Award of Excellence – "Paper Towns," by Rayden Hyatt, Valliant High School

Award of Merit – "At Night, I Become a Monster," by Rayne Davis, Muldrow High School

Honorable Mention – "Percy Jackson," by Axtyn Merimon, Valliant High School

Grades 6-8

Award of Excellence – "Legend, Marie Lu," by Avery Weed, Piedmont Middle School

Award of Merit – "Demon Slayer," by Jillian Klein, Piedmont Middle School

Honorable Mention – "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe," by Elizabeth Holland, Keys Middle School

Honorable Mention – "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," by Timber Gouker, Prague Public Schools

Honorable Mention – "Be More Chill," by Jordan Gouker, Prague Middle School

Grades 3-5

Award of Excellence – "Junie B. Jones, Party Animal," by Taytumn Raines, Fanshawe Elementary

Award of Merit – "Alice and the White Rabbit," by Takwaki James, Keys Elementary

Honorable Mention – "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," by Josie McConnell, Elk City Intermediate

Honorable Mention – "Esme the Ice Cream Fairy," by Clai ren Casey, Prairie Vale Elementary, Deer Creek

Honorable Mention – "Dork Diaries," by Rylie Purkeypile, Prairie Vale Elementary, Deer Creek

Kindergarten- 2nd Grade

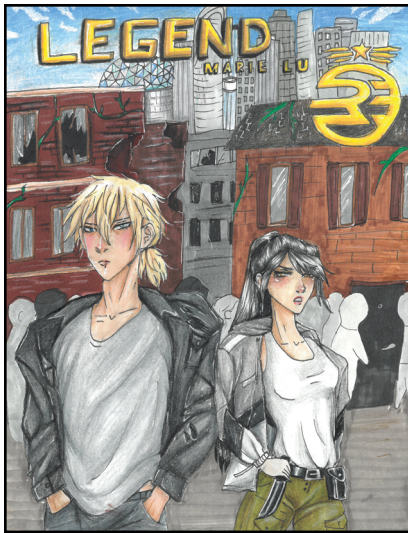
Award of Excellence – by Kinley Raines, Fanshawe Elementary

Award of Merit – by Maggie Branscum, Fanshawe Elementary

Honorable Mention – by Catherine Velazquez, Fanshawe Elementary

Honorable Mention – by Nicole Vazquez, Fanshawe Elementary

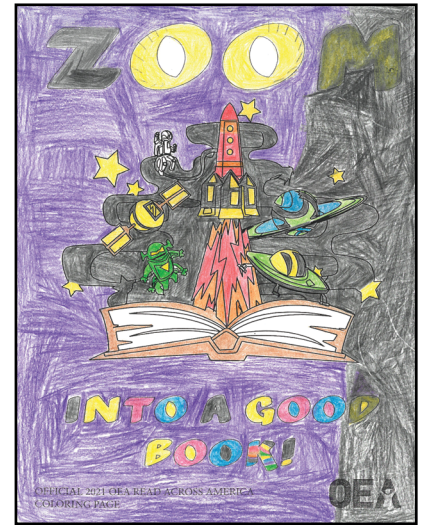
Honorable Mention – by Jasper Shipmnen, Fanshawe Elementary



Award of Excellence, 6-8 Grade
"Legend, Marie Lu," by Avery Weed, Piedmont Middle School



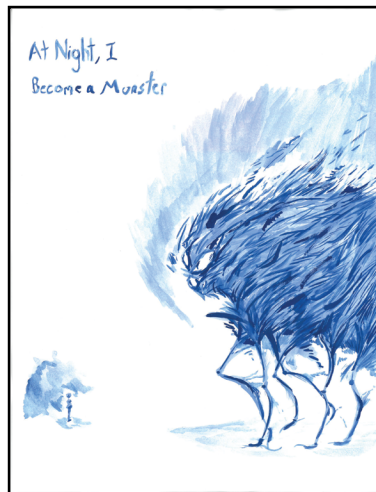
Award of Merit, 6-8 Grade
"Demon Slayer," by Jillian Klein, Piedmont Middle School



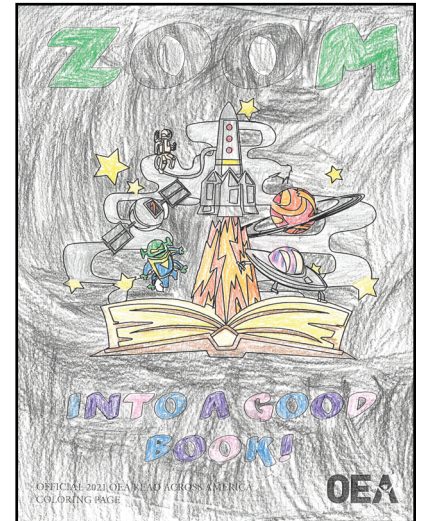
Award of Excellence, K-2 Grade
by Kinley Raines, Fanshawe Elementary



Award of Excellence, High School
"Paper Towns," by Rayden Hyatt, Valliant High School



Award of Merit, High School
"At Night, I Become a Monster," by Rayne Davis, Muldrow High School



Award of Merit, K-2 Grade
by Maggie Branscum, Fanshawe Elementary



Award of Excellence, 3-5 Grade
Junie B. Jones, Party Animal," by Taytumn Raines, Fanshawe Elementary



Award of Merit, 3-5 Grade
"Alice and the White Rabbit," by Takwaki James, Keys Elementary

Virtual Delegate Assembly to include NBI debate



Delegate Assembly will once again be virtual in 2021. The difference this year will be a process to introduce and debate new business items (NBIs).

OEA's annual meeting is scheduled for two, three-hour Zoom sessions: 5-8 p.m. Friday, April 30, and 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 1.

Official Delegate Assembly handbooks will be mailed to credentialed delegates by March 26. Green Delegates will receive a digital version.

The OEA Board of Directors has proposed a tentative agenda that will include debate on NBIs both days, adoption of OEA Resolutions and Legislative Goals and recognition of 2021 OEA award winners.

A procedure has been set for virtual debate on NBIs:

- NBIs must be submitted by 5 p.m. Friday, April 23, via e-mail to OEANBI@okea.org.
- NBIs are to be submitted in advance to allow for parliamentary review, distribution to delegates in advance of the assembly, preparation for display at the assembly and creation of poll questions.
 - Debate on each NBI will be limited to 30 minutes.
 - NBIs will be considered for 90 minutes in each of the two business sessions.

Early enrollment opens April 1

First-time active members can join OEA and NEA beginning April 1 and not have to pay dues until next school year.

Those who take advantage of the early enrollment opportunity receive access to a number of benefits for agreeing to become a dues-paying, active member in September.

Early enrollees receive the \$1 million benefit of the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program and access to a wide range of discounts from NEA Members Benefits, including deals on shopping, travel, dining and entertainment, tools to help with student loans and loan forgiveness and a wide range of insurance products for members only.

OEA-specific benefits include access to the OEA Personal Legal Services Program, which provides legal help for off-the-job issues for members, their spouses and dependents. Many of the services are covered free of charge, such as wills, stepchild adoptions, non-contested divorces and more.

Early enrollment is a great tool for local associations to use for a spring membership drive. Contact your regional organizing specialist for more information on early enrollment.

• NBIs properly submitted and not considered because of time constraints will be referred to an appropriate OEA Committee for consideration and any further action.

NBI Protocols

Because of the limitations of a virtual meeting, usual parliamentary procedures will not be available, such as motions to call the questions, amendments, etc.

- After the Maker of a Motion speaks to the Motion, the Chair will open the floor for debate.
- Debate on each Motion and NBI will be limited to 30 minutes.
- The White/Green/Red card system will be utilized using the "Chat Box." The speaking order will be two White Cards, one Green Card, one Red Card and then repeat the order as necessary or until 30 minutes of debate has elapsed at which time debate will be closed.
- Each speaker will be allowed two minutes to debate and all speakers in the queue will be allowed to speak until there are only all for/against in the speaking order or until 30 minutes of debate has elapsed at which time debate will be closed.
- After debate has closed, the Chair will submit the Motion or NBI to an electronic vote of the delegates.
- The Chair will announce the vote results, the number of delegates who voted and ask that the results be posted.

For more information on Delegate Assembly, contact Rheta Kennedy at rkennedy@okea.org.



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The Last Word

with Pres. Alicia Priest

No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, A-F test/label/punish, private charters, vouchers, unchecked virtual charters...

ALL of these are failed education reforms that have done immense harm to public education. In fact, for the last four years, failed and harmful education policy was the standard during the DeVos administration.

Oklahoma is on the precipice of privatization with unfettered checks and balances thanks to the pandemic. Not unlike the reformers who used Hurricane Katrina to decimate public schools in New Orleans, the governor and some lawmakers are angling to use the disaster of the COVID-19 pandemic to push for those same failed policies. New Orleans public schools have never recovered from these attacks. Where will OK public schools stand after the onslaught of anti-public education policies coming from our own legislators?

HB2673 (Echols) provides any student who is attending a school that has had an F on the A-F report card in each of the last three years a voucher to a private school. The voucher stays in effect until graduation or the student turns 22. Mind you, our A-F grading system is set up on a forced Bell Curve where 5% of our schools must receive an F.

REALITY: What problem are we trying to solve? Helping students in “failing” schools. What are some ways to help students in those “F” schools? How about we ask those who work there?!? I did and here are their ideas: lower class sizes; increase community involvement to mentor students; decrease focus on teaching to the tests and more focus on critical thinking, problem solving and play; increased funding for after-school programs and mental health helps – the list goes on. Imagine that!

Like SB407 from last session, HB 2701 (Hasenbeck) would grant tax credits to people that donate money to scholarship granting organizations, school districts or school foundations. Removes population limits. Raises private school donations from \$3.5 million to \$10 million and raises the public side from \$3.5 million to \$20 million. Meant for “low-income families,” defined as those making up to \$113,900.

REALITY: Real philanthropy doesn’t need a tax credit or incentive. There is nothing in this provision that doesn’t allow for a, “I’ll give your child a scholarship, if you’ll give mine one – then we both get basically free tuition because we get the tax credit” situation. Every tax credit shrinks the total tax pie that funds public education and other core services.

SB895 (Rosino), a bill seemingly tied to one of the founders of Epic, would allow state agencies to circumvent the oversight of the State Auditor by giving the agencies the power to pick and choose their auditing process including allowing agencies to fire their auditor if they didn’t like the findings.

REALITY: The senator that introduced this bill received the maximum donation from an Epic co-founder and his wife. Also, why would a state agency get to pick their auditor when we have a state auditor?!? (*Source: Tulsa World, March 10, 2021*)

As you can see by these bills and a multitude of others, public education in Oklahoma is under attack. Our detractors have harnessed a pandemic to spread their vitriol through bogus messages of inadequacy because we stood for safety and health as a priority. We must not let the playground of privatization occur in our school yards. There is no research that shows these policies help the students they are purported to help.

Public schools are the best choice – for our students, our communities, our state.



President Alicia Priest

“Public education in Oklahoma is under attack. Our detractors have harnessed a pandemic to spread their vitriol through bogus messages of inadequacy because we stood for safety and health as a priority. We must not let the playground of privatization occur in our school yards.”

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