

The Education Focus

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association • November 2010



Elizabeth Smith
State Teacher of the Year

Outstanding teachers

Oklahoma's Teacher of the Year Elizabeth Smith and the OEA members who were among the finalists are highlighted in this issue.

Page 2 Elizabeth Smith was surprised to win Teacher of the Year in her own district, let alone be chosen as Oklahoma's Education Ambassador.



Pages 3-5 Six OEA members were among the finalists for State Teacher of the Year, and each took part in a Q&A session with *The Education Focus*.

Page 6 Two state senators and the executive director of the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration have all spoken out in favor of SQ 744. As we near election day, read how they outline why and how we can afford this important constitutional amendment.



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Page 8 OEA's annual awards program celebrates outstanding contributions to education. Read about the many award categories as you think about who you could nominate.

On the cover – Byng's Elizabeth Smith takes the podium just after being named Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. Photo by Doug Folks.

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- Oklahoma Education Association
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Need help? Call us.

Do you need assistance with a personnel matter? Would you like to invite an OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist to provide professional development in your building? Does your Association need organizing help? Call your regional office and ask for help.

Oklahoma City Metro and Southwest Teams

800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

Northeast and Tulsa Metro Teams

800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

Northwest Team

800/439-0393 or 580/256-0071

Southeast Team

800/563-4230 or 405/275-4060

The Education Focus

Volume 28, No. 2

The Education Focus is a production of the Oklahoma Education Association's Communications Center.

Becky Felts, President

Linda S. Hampton, Vice President

Lela Odom, Executive Director

Dr. Dottie Hager, Assoc. Exec. Dir.

Doug Folks, Editor

Contributing Writers

Katie Hawk

Kandis West

Maureen Peters, Center Assistant

The Education Focus (ISSN 1542-1678) is published eight times annually with issues in September/October, November, December/January, February, March, April/May, June/July and August for \$5 by the Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

Periodicals postage paid at Okla. City, OK, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Education Focus, PO Box 18485, Oklahoma City, OK 73154.

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It's up to us to pass SQ 744

By Becky Felts
OEA President

For too long, we have let those that want to cut funding to schools control the debate about properly funding education.

Fortunately, for Oklahoma's kids, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to increase the investment in our schools, but I fear we are about to let that opportunity slip by. We have let those that are opposed to increasing investment in our schools control the debate, and it is time for us to speak loudly about our support for education.

Oklahomans will vote on State Question 744 in the next few days. (If you are one of the many that vote early and have already filled out your ballot, I hope you marked a "yes" for SQ 744, the first question on the ballot.) SQ 744 will increase the investment in our schools to the regional average, and raise us from 49th in the nation for what we invest in our schools. Much has been said about 744 over the past year, and much of it is meant to scare voters.

We can pay for SQ 744 by ending billions of dollars in special interest tax breaks, eliminating millions in wasteful spending and cutting politicians' perks.

The special interests want you to believe we cannot afford 744, but that is simply not true.

It is up to us to make sure everyone knows these facts. The success of this state question depends on our work to educate people we know.

You can do three things to make sure Oklahoma's kids and schools win on Election Day:

1) Do your homework. Become knowledgeable about the facts. Visit

YesOn744.com to see the actual ballot language and new wording for our constitution. Visit 744facts.com to see the truth about some of the accusations the opposition has publicized.

2) Talk to your friends, family, neighbors and coworkers about how important this issue is to you and ask them to vote YES. Send the postcards found in last month's issue of *The Education Focus* magazine to four people you want to vote YES.

3) Vote Yes on 744. Take your friends and family to vote Yes, too. Your county election board is open all day Friday, October 29; Saturday morning, October 30; and all day Monday, November 1, for early vot-



President Becky Felts

ing. And your regular polling place will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, November 2.

I am putting every ounce of energy into making sure SQ 744 passes on Election Day, and I am asking that you do the same. Do not let this opportunity slip by, because it will not come again.

BALLOT TITLE FOR STATE QUESTION NO. 744

State Question No. 744

Initiative Petition No. 391

The measure repeals a Section of the State Constitution. The repealed section required the Legislature annually to spend \$42.00 for each common school student. Common schools offer pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The measure also adds a new Article to the Constitution. It sets a minimum average amount the State must annually spend on common schools. It requires the State to spend annually, no less than the average amount spent on each student by the surrounding states. Those surrounding states are Missouri, Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, Colorado and New Mexico. When the average amount spent by surrounding states declines, Oklahoma must spend the amount it spent the year before.

The measure deals with money spend on day-to-day operations of the schools and school districts. This includes spending on instructions, support services and non-instruction services. The measure does not deal with money spent to pay debt, on buildings or on other capital needs.

The measure requires that increased spending begin in the first fiscal year after its passage. It requires that the surrounding state average be met in the third fiscal year after passage.

The measure does not raise taxes, nor does it provide new funding for the new spending requirements.

SHALL THE PROPOSAL BE APPROVED?

FOR THE PROPOSAL YES _____

AGAINST THE PROPOSAL NO _____



Oklahoma Teacher of the Year Elizabeth Smith with two of her Byng Junior High students, Amanda Daniel (left) and Hunter Easley.

“Did I really just win this?”

By Doug Folks

Elizabeth Smith may be surprised to find herself as Oklahoma’s Teacher of the Year, but she’s always known where she’s supposed to be and that’s in the classroom.

Smith, a seventh grade reading teacher and assistant high school girls basketball coach in Byng, was named State Teacher of the Year and Oklahoma’s education ambassador at a ceremony at the State Fair of Oklahoma in late September. Judging by the shock on her face at the time, no one was more surprised to hear her name called than was Smith.

“I was actually surprised to win at the district level. Once I was a (state) finalist, I was just glad to be there,” said Smith, who is in her 15th year at Byng after three years at Vanoss. “Honestly, I never considered winning. It never entered my mind.”

In fact, it took some time for Smith to realize the honor was real.

“For two weeks, I’d wake up in

the middle of the night and think, ‘Did I really win this?’” she said.

She played basketball at Oklahoma Baptist University for three years before transferring to East Central State University in Ada where she completed her bachelor’s degree in elementary education and a master’s in education administration. But no matter where the path took her at the beginning of her life’s journey, she always knew where she would wind up.

Both of parents – Richard and Mary Willis – were teachers in Byng, a school of about 1,750 students just north of Ada in Pontotoc County. Richard was an art teacher, coach and administrator while Mary taught language arts. They are both retired now, but Mary works half-day as a librarian in Sulphur. Together, they inspired Smith to follow in their footsteps.

“We lived at the school. My parents were involved, and I just grew up in the school setting,” she said. “I

felt very comfortable with it, and I just loved it. I knew I wanted to teach very early on.”

In addition, Smith said she had great teachers along the way in Byng to further cement the idea that she should be a teacher.

Smith blushes at the thought of being considered Oklahoma’s top teacher.

“First of all, I think I’ve been a very successful teacher. But I don’t think I’m better than other teachers,” she said. “There are so many outstanding teachers that will never get (their due recognition).

“I love teaching, so my passion helps me in the classroom. I love what I’m teaching and who I’m teaching. That plays a huge role in my success.”

Smith says the secret to that success is more than just a passion for the material. A great teacher must also reach students as individuals.

“You have to make a connection with students. They have to see you as a person who not only cares about them as students, but as individuals ... find a way to connect and talk to each kid. Find what they are interested in. Go to a football game, go to a music concert,” she said.

Smith’s schedule as Oklahoma Teacher of the Year is already getting busy. By January, she’ll be traveling the state on a regular basis, speaking to future teachers at state colleges and civic groups. During those sessions, she plans to talk a lot about the importance of making those connections in the classroom.

“Every student who walks into my room needs to learn,” she said. “It doesn’t matter if they are below average, on an Individual Education Program (IEP), or a top student. Every student has to grow. When I can see that growth in students, I see success.”

To schedule a visit from State Teacher of the Year Liz Smith, contact Erin Nation at the State Department of Education at 405/521-3346 or Erin_Nation@sde.state.ok.us.



Kari Steele is a National Board Certified Teacher with a bachelor's in elementary education from Oklahoma Baptist University and a master's in early childhood education from the University of Central Oklahoma. Now in her 21st year as

Kari Steele

**6th Grade Pre AP Literature and Pre-AP Composition
Deer Creek Middle School**

a teacher, she has taught in Mid-Del, Putnam City and now Deer Creek Public School Systems.

Education Focus: Who inspired you to become a teacher?

Kari Steele: "God gave me the gift of teaching and I enjoyed working with children even when I was a young child myself. I encountered many amazing teachers throughout my educational career that showed me how much a great teacher impacts not only a student's learning but their life."

EF: What is your best source of information for lesson plans?

KS: "PASS Skills, Deer Creek curriculum, past experience and the students themselves. Often the students will become very interested in a specific topic and will want to delve into it further than I had planned. I will adjust to allow them to continue

discovering and learning."

EF: When classroom discipline becomes a challenge, what is your go-to technique?

KS: "I constantly encourage and praise the students who are making good choices and, most of the time, the students who aren't (making good choices) change their behavior. I like to have two-way communication with the parents so that if or when there is a problem I can work with the parents to help their child be successful."

EF: More than anything, what motivates students?

KS: "Praise, encouragement and recognition for a job well done."

EF: If you could trade places with anyone for a day, who would it be?

KS: "I would like to trade places with one of my students to see how I come across to them each day."

Teacher of the Year Finalists

Leesa Dickson

Reading Specialist

Westside Elementary, Claremore

Leesa Dickson holds a master's in education and a reading certificate. During her 27 years in the classroom, she has taught in both Claremore and Tiawah.

EF: When classroom discipline becomes a challenge, what is your go-to technique?

LD: "Having four to five students in a group, I really don't have discipline problems. If they can't behave they go back to their classrooms."

EF: What was the best excuse you ever received from a student who didn't have an assignment ready to hand in?

LD: "My mom took it with her on her business trip to Florida."

EF: Favorite school cafeteria

dish?

LD: "Turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie."

EF: What is the one thing every new teacher needs to know?

LD: "Always, always have a compassionate heart. You don't know what they're going home to."

EF: What was the biggest surprise about teaching that you didn't learn in college?

LD: "I couldn't adopt all the students that had an abusive home life."

EF: What is your number one, must-have tool in your classroom?

LD: "Leveled Reading books."

EF: More than anything, what motivates students?

LD: "A caring teacher that truly



ly believes in her students."

EF: If you could trade places with anyone for a day, who would it be?

LD: "My mom...she shops and plays bridge."



Terri Foughty

6th Grade Language Arts Newcastle Middle School

Terri Foughty: “I cannot remember a time when I did not want to be a teacher. I truly believe teaching is a calling from God. I believe teaching students is one of the reasons God put me on Earth.”

EF: What is your best source of information for lesson plans?

TF: “A few that I regularly access are: 1) my colleagues, 2) educational websites, 3) OEA, NEA, State Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Education website resources, 4) ideas from professional journals (*The Reading Teacher* and *The Journal for Adolescent and Adult Literacy*).”

EF: What was the best excuse you ever received from a student who didn’t have an assignment

ready to hand in?

TF: “My favorite one is from a second grader who said the tooth fairy must have accidentally taken the paper with the tooth. I’ve also had a student tell me – without feeling the least bit guilty – that their parent didn’t have time to do it for them because they were working late.”

EF: What is the one thing every new teacher needs to know?

TF: “Buy the book ‘The First Days of School,’ by Harry Wong. It will become your school bible. I have taught for 15 years and still reread this book every summer. You will learn how to set up procedures, classrooms, expectations, etc. that are essential for a successful school year.”

Terri Foughty is a National Board Certified teacher with a bachelor’s in elementary education. She has taught for 15 years, with stints at Oklahoma City Schools, Metro Technology Center and now Newcastle.

Education Focus: Who inspired you to become a teacher?

Teacher of the Year Finalists

Kendra Roulet

**AP U.S. History and Nonwestern Culture
Charles Page High School, Sand Springs**

Kendra Roulet is in her ninth year with Sand Springs Schools after teaching for six years at Putnam City West High School in Oklahoma City. She has a bachelor’s in Social Studies Education from the University of Central Oklahoma.

EF: When classroom discipline becomes a challenge, what is your go-to technique?

KR: “Most of the time just talking to a student and finding out what is the underlying cause of the disruption is what helps us work through any discipline issues. The better you know your students the more likely they are to respond to you when you correct an unacceptable behavior.”

EF: What was the best excuse you ever received from a student who didn’t have an assignment ready to hand in?

KR: “It was in my car that got impounded by the police.”

EF: What was the biggest surprise about teaching that you didn’t learn in college?

KR: “That we don’t have to write six-page lesson plans for every lesson and that confidence in what you are doing is half the battle to a successful classroom.”

EF: What is your number one, must-have tool in your classroom?

KR: “A smart board (if you can afford one). I love doing presentations with my students and helping them be active participants in our discussions.”

EF: More than anything, what motivates students?

KR: “Personal relationships with someone ... either a parent, teacher, or peer having a high expectation



of them. I have seen students do a 180-degree turn in their work and behavior because of a positive new influence. We have to capitalize on that as teachers and forge those bonds that will help students push themselves past their comfort zone.”

Karen Lewis

8th Grade English and Literature

Plainview Middle School

Karen Lewis has a bachelor's and a master's, both from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. She's taught 35 years, all in Plainview except for five years in Idabel.

EF: What is your best source of information for lesson plans?

KL: "During the years that I have been teaching, I have used hundreds of sources for information and ideas for my lesson plans, but it would be hard to say which one is my best source. I would have to say that now my best sources of information are the teaching units that I have developed. These units keep evolving and changing, but there are some things that, through experience, I have learned will work."

EF: What was the best excuse you ever received from a student who didn't have an assignment

ready to hand in?

KL: "I'm almost embarrassed to say what my best excuse was – or maybe I should say the worst excuse – for not having an assignment. It was, 'My dog pooped on my assignment.' I guess it's always easy to blame the dog!"

EF: What is your number one, must-have tool in your classroom?

KL: "My must-have high tech tool is my Interwrite board. My must-have low tech tool would have to be colored chalk."

EF: More than anything, what motivates students?

KL: "I do not think that any one thing motivates all children, although treats would come close. I find that most of my students are motivated



Photo by Doug Folks

with rewards, whether it is a promise of less homework or of a game. Just pitching a 'talking ball' around the room seems to motivate students to answer questions. Most students seem to be motivated most when they are enjoying what they are doing."

Teacher of the Year Finalists

Lynette Miller

Special Education (Language Arts and Math)

Jenks West Intermediate

Lynette Miller is in her 21st year of teaching. She holds degrees in elementary education and special education as well as a master's in reading.

Education Focus: Who inspired you to become a teacher?

Lynette Miller: "I grew up with a handicapped friend. She inspired me to work with children with disabilities."

EF: What is your best source of information for lesson plans?

LM: "Data. I am data driven. I monitor the progress of my students daily. How slow or fast they progress drives my instruction for the next day and/or week."

EF: Favorite school cafeteria dish?

LM: "Oriental Chicken with rice. It's low fat and low calorie!"

EF: What was the biggest sur-

prise about teaching that you didn't learn in college?

LM: "My student teaching experience was in the spring semester.



Photo by Doug Folks

The classroom was already a "well oiled" machine. I did not realize how much work the teacher had already completed in order to lay a strong foundation of structure and organization so the classroom would run smoothly. I had to learn by trial and error. I wasted instructional time during the course of the year because I did not lay that strong foundation at the beginning."

EF: What is your number one, must-have tool in your classroom?

LM: "Books. I can teach any child to read and inspire a love of reading as long as I have literature. A close second would be technology. Children love technology and it seems they are born with the instinct to use it. So, let's not hold them back."

EF: If you could trade places with anyone for a day, who would it be?"

LM: "A travel host from a travel show. I LOVE to travel."

Yes, we CAN afford it

Here's what others are saying about SQ 744

State Sen. Tom Adelson



Sen. Tom Adelson

"Every year, every session your Oklahoma Legislature ignores hundreds of millions of dollars of potential revenue — money that should be invested in health, education, transportation and public safety — for favored businesses and "clients." For example, investor and corporate tax breaks exploded from \$50 million in 2006 to over \$210 million in 2008. In addition to that staggering amount, the oil and gas industry has received another \$350 million-plus in tax giveaways since 2004. That's over a half-billion dollars that could be invested in our schools."

Excerpted from "Handouts to Special Interests Out of Control," an op-ed in the Okla-

homan by Sen. Adelson, Sept. 27, 2010. For the full column, visit www.newsok.com/sq-744-affordable-if-we-change-special-interest-treatment/article/3498117?custom_click=headlines_widget.

Steven Crawford, CCOSA

"It is fair to question where tax dollars are spent. Common education currently receives about 35 percent of state budgeted dollars, and according to the Oklahoma Policy Institute, funding has actually dropped from 38 percent of the budget in 2004 to this decreased level. The critical number left out of the conversation is that enrollment has increased to more than 640,000 students. The current appropriation provides about \$7,683 per student.

"... Oklahoma educates about 127,000 full-time (higher education) students, which equates to more than \$17,300 per student, making our state sixth in the nation in higher education funding....

"... Oklahoma's funding for transportation comes in 21st nationally

at an average of \$117,000 spent per controlled mile. According to Transportation Revenues Used Strictly for Transportation (T.R.U.S.T.) ... the Oklahoma Legislature has provided significant increases to transportation funding over the last three years, which will provide an anticipated \$625 million over the next decade in additional funding ...

"SQ 744 would not impact funding for those entities."

From "Crawford: A politically inconvenient truth," a guest column in the Journal Record on Oct. 14, 2010, by Steven Crawford, executive director of the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration. Find the full story at <http://journalrecord.com/2010/10/14/crawford-a-politically-inconvenient-truth-opinion/>.

State Sen. Jim Wilson



Sen. Jim Wilson

"Here's how we pay for (SQ 744). We defer \$120 million in tax cuts until revenues exceed 2008 levels. The OSU econometric model used by the Office of State Finance

shows projected revenue increases of 7.3 percent in 2012, 6.0 percent in 2013, and 5.3 percent in 2014, giving us about \$1.1 billion in additional revenue by 2014. If we use half, or \$550 million to satisfy SQ 744, we will have a total of \$670 million. Oklahoma allows \$5.6 billion in tax credits annually. Most of it comes from sales tax exemptions for manufacturing components and sales for resale which shouldn't be repealed. Realistically we could expect to repeal \$200 million in tax credits.

"And if revenues don't meet projections we can repeal another \$350 million in tax giveaways to special interests. Health care reform should save the state 20 percent in employee premiums or \$100 million. It will do this by reducing the uninsured by half by 2014 that will cut by half the justification for providers to charge as much as a 43 percent premium to the insured.

We could save \$100 million by adopting some of Minnesota's progressive corrections program. We always talk about running government like a business.

Let's capitalize common education. It's good business.

Excerpted from a letter Sen. Jim Wilson sent to a number of Oklahoma newspapers, but it not been published as of press time.

Seven deadly sins

We can help you if you avoid these gaffs

*By Heath Merchen
Associate General Counsel*

We, the attorneys who represent OEA members, love a good courtroom fight. In fact, we have an impressive win record in board hearings, trials and appeals. So when clients have been sexually harassed, wrongfully terminated or denied wages, we love to hear the story and fight the good fight on their behalf.

From your counsel

Sometimes, however, clients bring us stories that aren't going to end well – where there is no argument to be made and our client isn't on the side of truth and justice. In those cases, the most we can do is point out the error of their ways and hand them a Kleenex.

In hopes of avoiding those sad stories, I've listed out the "seven deadly sins" of school employees that leave us in a spot where we really can't help. All are completely avoidable, completely within the employee's control, and just should not ever happen – but, they all too often do.

1) Walking off the job. Grieve (after complying) – don't leave. The only exception is fleeing from an immediate physical threat. Otherwise, stay on the job and call us afterward about the concern. If you walk off the job, it is the same as quitting.

2) Quitting before you talk to us. Like walking off the job, using the "I'm going to hold my breath 'til my face turns blue" approach never works. Too many employees say "I quit" expecting their employer to recognize how indispensable the employee is, apologize and beg him or her to stay. Instead they hear, "Resig-

nation accepted." Except in extreme cases involving ongoing harassment or discrimination, you will have lost any right to sue, any right to a board hearing and any chance at unemployment compensation.

3) Going to work with liquor on your breath. Saying you just drank a bunch of cough syrup won't fly, (Cherry Nyquil smells a whole lot different than vodka; your boss isn't that stupid). Don't ever, ever, ever drink on the way to work, while at work or during a break – you will get caught, you will get a termination notice and we will not be able to help. (As a side note, coming to your attorney's office with liquor on your breath when facing termination for drinking on the job is also a bit of a no-no – I *will* take your keys). If you have a drug or alcohol problem, get into treatment. If you are proactive, we can get the district to work with you, get appropriate leave time and even help get you enrolled in a program. Denial will get you fired.

4) Looking at porn while at school. Please just get a Cinemax subscription at home, buddy, and stay off the school PC. Your district knows everything you've looked at, down to the nanosecond, and they have the computer records to prove it. You will get fired.

5) Leaving students unsupervised. Indefensible. When you walk away, something bad will happen, (little Billie will somehow blind Sally with a paperclip), and it will be entirely your fault. I understand the "need to use the bathroom" defense. Sadly, that won't help. Someone must be supervising students during even a quick bathroom break, (secretary, paraprofessional, even a custodian). Having someone "watch"



Heath Merchen

from the next room isn't enough. The number one job of a teacher is to supervise students, no exceptions.

6) Texting/emailing suggestive jokes to students. When the communication involves anything suggestive, your employer has to presume the worst (i.e. that you are sexually involved) and will terminate you. If an allegation of inappropriate contact is made, no matter how false, but the evidence shows sexually oriented jokes were exchanged via text or email, it can result in both termination and criminal charges.

7) Calling in sick then posting pictures of yourself at the lake/mall/Disneyland on Facebook. Ah, my favorite. The employee musters up their raspiest voice, throws in some hacking coughs for good measure, then leaves a pained message on the school's answering machine about how they are too sick to come in. All spoken via cell while in a swimming suit floating on the lake, beer in hand. How do we know? Because the employee had their buddy take a picture with his iPhone and post it to Facebook, commenting: "great sick day at the lake!!" Once again, here's your Kleenex and best of luck in your next career...

The bottom line? Think before you act ... or at the very least, call your regional advocacy specialist before you act so we can help.

OEA awards program celebrates education

OEA's annual awards program honors those who promote and support public education, members who exemplify greatness in the classroom, and local affiliates who excel for their members.

Nominations must be received at OEA Headquarters by January 31. Send nominations so that they arrive by the deadline to OEA Awards, PO Box 18485, Okla. City, OK, 73154; or overnight or hand-deliver them to the OEA at 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105.

For nomination forms, visit www.okea.org.

OEA Board of Directors Awards

Nominations for the following awards must come from a current member of the OEA Board of Directors.

Friend of Education – OEA's highest award, the Friend of Education honors a person who has made significant contributions to the betterment of public education. Past winners have included *Oklahoma Observer* editor Frosty Troy, Tulsa philanthropist Henry Zarrow and former Gov. Henry Bellmon, to name just three.

Claude A. Dyer Memorial Award – Given to an Oklahoma educator who has worked to bring about legislative action for equitable salaries and desirable working conditions, and has rendered leadership and direction in efforts to protect and advance the civil and human rights and responsibilities of educators.

Political Activist Award – Given to an individual or organization who exhibits a willingness and determi-

nation to promote the goals of the OEA through activities in the political arena.

Outstanding Legislator – Presented to legislators for outstanding support of public education and education employees.

Advocate For Academic Freedom – Honors a person or organization whose contribution to the safeguarding of academic freedom has had a significant impact on the public schools in Oklahoma and the nation.

Human and Civil Rights Awards

Kate Frank Award – Presented to the OEA member and/or local association rendering outstanding and significant service to advancing the cause of member welfare, rights and professionalism.

Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award – Presented to a business or group which has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

F. D. Moon Educational Award – Presented to the person who has contributed significantly to the advancement of education for students.

Glenn Snider Human Relations Award – Presented to the school district, individual or organization best exemplifying the practice of effective human relations and concerns for human rights.

Instructional Excellence in Education

Teachers Teaching Teachers and Teachers Teaching Students – To recognize individual OEA members for outstanding contributions in instructional excellence, both with

students and colleagues. The awards acknowledge the fact that the quality of education in this country can rise no higher than the quality of teaching.

OEA Education Support Professional Award – Honoring an individual ESP member whose activities reflect the contributions of an educational support professional to public education.

Media Awards

Marshall Gregory Awards – Recognizing Oklahoma reporters and broadcasters and their newspapers, radio and television stations for significant efforts to provide continuing and accurate coverage of public schools, current education issues and the OEA. Categories for professionals and for high school journalists are offered.

Local Affiliate Awards

OEA Collective Bargaining Award – Presented to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement of education through the collective bargaining process.

Golden Apple Awards – Recognizing OEA local associations for their consistent efforts to provide quality communications to all of their audiences, including members and other education personnel, local school administration, parents and the community in general.

5 Star Local Awards – The OEA 5 Star Local Program is intended to strengthen local association programs and to recognize locals who meet the criteria in each program area. Application deadline for recognition at Delegate Assembly is March 15. The application deadline is June 15 for recognition at the Summer Leadership Academy. Five Star Local nomination forms can be found at www.okea.org/5StarLocal.

NEAMB offers savings on language programs

Have you always wanted to learn another language but just couldn't find the time? Now there's no excuse with the great deal NEA members get through the NEA Academy.

For the first time ever, the world-famous Berlitz language course is being offered to NEA members in a group format with either an online or in-person option as follows:

Berlitz Virtual Classroom — 6-8 students per group.

Berlitz Face-to-Face — 6-10 students per group. (Ask your Berlitz consultant about options for class locations.)

The program schedule is two sessions per week, 1 1/2 hours per session, for a total of six weeks.

The NEA member price, which includes the course workbook, is only \$299 per person.

Here's what you can expect from the Berlitz Method:

- Focus on active listening and speaking skills.
 - No memorization.
 - Lessons built on words and structures from previous classes.
 - Access to sessions via recordings that can be reviewed on your computer or MP3 player.
 - Access to personalized one-to-one coaching.
 - Relevant reading and writing exercises.
- Each class option features native-fluent instructors who

are available when you need them. Choose from more than 20 of their most popular languages, including Arabic, Czech, Dutch, English, French, Greek, German, Hebrew, Italian, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Spanish, Thai, and Turkish.

Learn more about Berlitz language programs and view a demo of the Berlitz Virtual Classroom at www.berlitz.us/NEA-Academy/.

NEA Foundation Award includes \$25,000 cash prize

Each year, one National Education Association member is honored as part of an effort to recognize, reward and promote excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession.

The NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence are presented by the NEA and the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. Each NEA state affiliate may nominate one member for the award. Deadline for the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) nomination process is January 31.

Five awardees are named finalists and are selected for The Horace Mann Awards for Teaching Excellence, which include a \$10,000 cash prize. The NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence recipient, selected from the five finalists, receives \$25,000 in cash.

A detailed nomination packet is required. For more information on the NFIE Award or how to complete the packet, contact Dr. Dottie Hager, OEA associate executive director, at 800/522-8091, 405-528-7785, or dhager@okea.org. The complete award program can be reviewed at neafoundation.org.

WRLC returns to Salt Lake City

The Western Region Leadership Conference returns to Salt Lake City, January 14-16. Registration is now open at www.nea.org/wrlc.

The registration fee is only \$135 through December 14, but increases to \$175 beginning December 15. The Hilton Salt Lake City Center will serve as the host hotel.

In addition to the WRLC, the Women's Leadership Training and the Minority Leadership Training Conferences will be held January 12-14, at the same property. Registration and the opening sessions are slated for Wednesday, January 12. Pre-registration for both events will be incorporated in the WRLC registration template.

For more information, contact Rheta Kennedy, OEA administrative assistant in Governance, at 800/522-8091, or rkennedy@okea.org.



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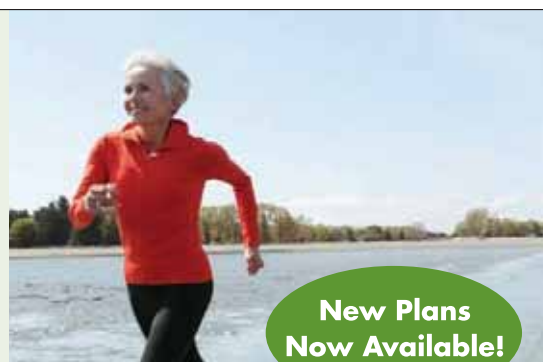
(Required by 39 USC 3685)

The publication's title is The Education Focus (Publication No. 1542-1678). The filing date of the statement is October 2010. It is published monthly, with the exception of four issues which are published bimonthly. Eight issues are published annually, in September-October, November, December-January, February, March, April-May, June-July and August. The annual subscription price is \$5.00. The complete mailing address of the known office of the publication and of the General Business Office of the Publisher is: Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3117. Maureen Peters (405/528-7785) is the contact person. The publisher is the Oklahoma Education Association, P.O. Box 18485, Oklahoma City, OK 73154-0485. Doug Folks is the Editor and Dr. Dottie Hager is the Managing Editor. Owner of the publication is the Oklahoma Education Association, P.O. Box 18485, Oklahoma City, OK 73154-0485. There are no bondholders, mortgagees, or other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax have not changed during the preceding 12 months. The name of the publication is The Education Focus. The issue date for the circulation data which follows is August 2010.

The data is classified as follows: a. the average number of copies of each issue during preceding 12 months, and b. the actual number copies of the single issue published nearest the filing date. Total number of copies: a. 23,925; b. 26,125. Paid or requested circulation through (1) outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541: a. 23,012; b. 23,005; (2) in-county subscriptions: a. none; and b. none; (3) through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: a. 733; b. 2,980; (4) other classes mailed through the USPS: a. none; b. none. Total paid distribution: a. 23,785; b. 25,985. Free or nominal rate copies for (1) outside-county: a. 115; b. 115; (2) in-county: a. none; b. none; (3) other classes mailed through the USPS: a. none; b. none. Free distribution outside the mail: a. none; b. none. Total free distribution: a. 115; b. 115. Total distribution: a. 23,900, b. 26,100. Copies not distributed (office use, leftovers, spoiled): a. 25; b. 25. Total printed: a. 23,925, b. 26,125. Percentage of paid and or requested circulation is: a. 99.5% and b 99.6%. The statement of ownership will be published in the November 2010, issue of the publication. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions. Doug Folks, Editor.

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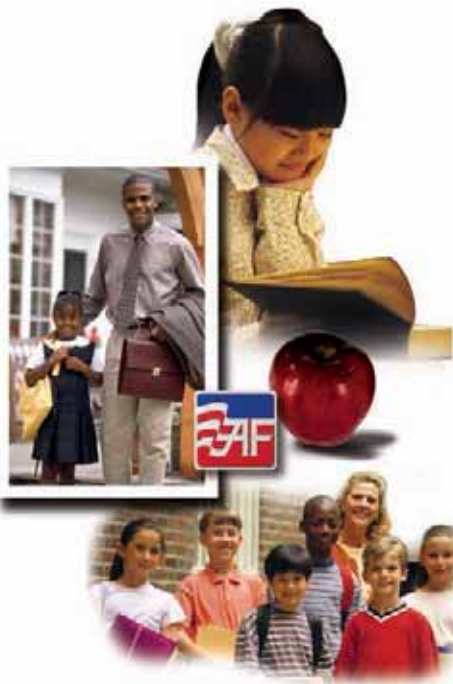
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Oklahoma City Branch Office
7510 N. Broadway Extension, Suite 202
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Eastern Oklahoma Manager
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