

The
Education

Focus

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association • February 2014

2014 Legislative Preview

Face-to-face lobbying

Sifting through 2,000 bills

Linking Educators and
Democracy game board

*Plus, a pull-out
Read Across America poster*

Putting education first

2 Up close & personal

Mid-Del ACT's Stephanie Bailey says all teachers should lobby their legislators – it reminds them who put them in office.

3 Sifting through 2,000 bills

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– RAA poster contest is back

On the cover – a replica of *The Guardian*, which sits atop the State Capitol Dome, on the second floor of the Capitol. Photo by Doug Folks.



The Education **Focus**

Volume 31, No. 3

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

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OEA
Oklahoma Education Association
putting education first.

Caution!

Legislative session ahead

By Linda Hampton, OEA President

I hope the New Year has started off well for you and yours. As with any new beginning, 2014 begins with hope for a better year. There is the very realistic hope that 2014 can be the year public education and its employees are valued and respected. The year public education friendly candidates are elected. And the year the Oklahoma legislature works with teachers, support professionals and administrators instead of placating testing companies and for-profit businesses. The 2014 Legislative Session and the upcoming statewide elections have the potential to make these a reality.

As the legislative session and the election cycle begin, there are some signs of caution we need to heed from an everyday traffic light – red for stop, yellow for caution and green for go.

The legislature needs to **STOP** trying to change our teacher retirement system from a defined benefit to a defined contribution. Just like the red light prevents car wrecks, there's legislation we need to stop so we don't end up wrecking our pension system. Changing the pension system is a gamble – a \$22 billion gamble which would leave the taxpayers to foot the bill if it doesn't work.



Pres. Linda Hampton

After dedicating their lives to public education and Oklahoma's children, education employees shouldn't retire into poverty. States like West Virginia and Alaska learned that a defined contribution plan ended up doing just that, retiring educators into poverty. We need to learn from them instead of repeating that mistake.

The legislature needs to **STOP** testing Oklahoma's students to the point of frustration. Instead of helping testing companies prosper, legislators need to listen to the experts in public education – specifically, educators who are in the classroom every day – about what over-testing is doing to our students. They need to listen to parents as they voice their concerns about what over-testing is doing to their child. It's time to put the children of Oklahoma first.

We all need to use **CAUTION** as we face the upcoming election cycle. We need to stay informed. Watch for what candidates "say" they stand for versus what their actions show. We need to put political parties aside and vote for the candidates that support public education.

We need the legislature to **GO** forward with public education funding. Oklahoma is 49th in the nation in what we spend per pupil to educate our children. 49th isn't good enough in sports, and it certainly shouldn't be good enough for our children's education. Can you imagine anyone in Oklahoma saying it's okay if we are beaten by Texas, Kansas or Iowa State in football? Yet, it seems OK for 48 other states to beat us in what we pay to educate our children. This legislature needs to take the steps necessary to improve funding.

The legislature needs to **GO** for a raise for teachers and support professionals. It has been seven years since there has been an across-the-board raise in salary. We are 47th in the nation in teacher pay. Once again, that isn't acceptable. Competitive salaries are needed to retain and recruit quality teachers.

If we follow this "legislative traffic light" we will avoid wrecks involving public education and ensure we arrive at the end of the 2014 Legislative Session having protected and improved public education.

Thanks for all you do!

SAVE THE DATE!

OKLAHOMA'S RALLY FOR EDUCATION.

678,000 REASONS



MONDAY, MARCH 31
OKLAHOMA CAPITOL, 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the south side of the Oklahoma State Capitol.

The Education Rally is a unified effort to encourage Oklahoma Legislators to secure funding for public education.

We have 678,000 Reasons to Rally!

Event coordinated by: Oklahoma Education Association, Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration, Oklahoma State School Boards Association, Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools, United Suburban Schools Association, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association, Oklahoma Association of Career and Technology Education, and Oklahoma Parents and Teachers Association.

Like **OKED Rally**

Up close and personal

Face-to-face lobbying makes all the difference

By Chancen Flick and Ivy Riggs

Face to face meetings with policy makers can seem like a daunting experience. But, it is also one of the most effective methods to impact decisions that affect your school districts and individual classrooms.

The Legislative and Political Organizing Center began small group lobby days during the previous legislative session. OEA's LEAD (Linking Educators and Democracy) Lobby Days allow for members to meet specifically with their legislators to discuss issues that relate directly to their school district. It also allows legislators to receive first-hand knowledge and contacts regarding education issues.

Stephanie Bailey, a national board certified science teacher at Midwest City High School, has lobbied her legislators for years. She does a little homework and gets a little help from OEA before



Mid-Del's Stephanie Bailey in the Oklahoma State Capitol's Hall of Governors.

Photo by Doug Folks

visiting the capitol.

"I try to be informed of current legislation by looking up some bills on my own and seeking information from websites about Oklahoma's total tax burden and current position on teacher

meetings usually occur in the legislators' offices and allow members to have a one-on-one discussion with their elected official. Meetings can be set with a member's own legislators or with the legislators that represent the school district. If desired, committee meetings and floor hearings can be attended as well.

"As a Republican, what has worked really well for me was having data from the Party's own 'think tanks' that supported one of my positions;

(such as) science education in the state," Bailey said.

"Another positive was when the Legislature's own data findings supported a position I was taking. I realize I keep mentioning 'data,' but to me, numbers supply support to an issue."

Bailey admitted that while data can be manipulated, it does allow for a discussion around the central question, "Is this really good for public education in Oklahoma?"

LEAD Lobby Days are also advantageous to legislators. It allows them to spend time with their constituents and gain valuable information on the opinions of their voters. As most legislators have to be a 'jack of all trades' on a

See "Everyone" on Page 12

pay and school funding to support my position," she said. "However, OEA always provides participants with an informative flier and a discussion group to help everyone understand the issues and a potential means of how to approach one's legislator."

A LEAD Lobby Day begins around 9 a.m. at OEA headquarters, located across the street from the State Capitol. LPO staff will meet with members over a light breakfast to discuss what issues are most important to their district and what items legislators are focused on for that day or week.

Members and LPO staff then go to the Capitol to meet with legislators. These

"If you are passionate about public education, your profession, and you're concerned about what our kids will experience while in our classrooms, get involved in the legislative process."

Schedule your local for a LEAD Lobby Day

OEA's LPO Specialists are scheduling small groups from across the state to participate in a LEAD Lobby Day during the upcoming session. To schedule your visit or for more information, contact Chancen Flick (western half of the state) or Ivy Riggs, (eastern half) at 800.522.8091, 405.528.7785 or via email at cflick@okea.org or iriggs@okea.org, respectively.

Sifting through 2,000 bills

By Amanda Ewing
Associate Executive Director

In the weeks leading up to the legislative session, your staff in the Legislative and Political Organizing Center has been hard at work reading the more than 2,000 new bills filed this year. It seems that nearly every legislator has a plan to "improve" your schools in one way or another.

Some are truly trying to provide solutions to problems, such as Sen. Gary Stanislawski's bills to amend the Reading Sufficiency Act. Senate Bills 1348 and 1349 would exempt English Language Learners and students on IEPs from 3rd grade retention as long as they are receiving any necessary remediation.

Other bills leave us questioning whose best interests are being served, as with the voucher bill from Reps. Jason Nelson and Tom Newell. This time around, it's called an "Education Savings Account," (HB 3398) but make no mistake, it's yet another effort to move public tax dollars out of our already

financially strapped public schools to private entities with no oversight or accountability.



Rep. Jason Nelson
405/557-7335



Rep. Tom Newell
405/557-7372

ALEC ALERT

The voucher bill introduced by these legislators is brought to you verbatim from the website of the "stink-tank" known as ALEC. For more information on ALEC's agenda for public education, visit alecexposed.org.

language to in the future. Your LPO staff will be watching each one closely.

The most recent statements from leadership and the governor's office were that all new public employees should be moved to defined contribution schemes. This session we are going to fight to preserve good pensions for ALL – current and future – education employees. Furthermore, even if the proposed changes were only made to future employees, we still haven't seen a plan that allays our concerns about the effect that would have on current employees' pensions.

TESTING: Any sports fan knows that playing defense isn't enough to win the game – you've also got to go on the offense and score some points. So while we're fending off pension "reform," let's work together to take back control of your profession! We will be working to improve our out-of-control testing situation by supporting several bills. In response to a vote at the 2013 Delegate Assembly, we'll advocate for Sen. Dan

Newberry's SB 1827, which would allow parents to opt their children out of taking standardized tests.

We are also working with Rep. Gus Blackwell on HB 3170 which would lower the number of EOI's high school students must take. Sen. Earl Garrison and Rep. Lisa Billy also have bills we'll support (SB 1169 and HB 2492, respectively) that prevent the State Department of Education from changing the cut score for a test in the same year the test is administered.



Rep. Randy McDaniel
405/557-7335



Sen. Rick Brinkley
405/557-7372

You Make the Difference!

Your OEA lobbyists have met with these legislators to voice our concerns with the pension changes. We are making progress, but State Treasurer Ken Miller and powerful out of state interests are lobbying hard on the other side. Last session, it was your overwhelming number of calls and emails that put an end to pension changes, and this year contacting your legislators is even more important.

FUNDING: Last, but certainly not least, is our statewide effort to increase education funding. If we're going to be successful, you and your colleagues must be at the Capitol on March 31!

This session the legislature will decide the fate of the horizontal drilling tax credit (\$300 million a year) that is set to expire next year and the franchise tax (another \$60 million). That's a lot of money, and it will be directed somewhere. Whether it is directed into your classroom, however, is up to you. Talk to your colleagues, your administrators and your school board now about how your school is going to help.

Improving testing, increasing funding and fending off a myriad of legislative attacks this session is not going to be an easy feat. But you didn't join this profession to accomplish easy feats; you joined it to make a difference in children's lives. If we work together, the changes we make this session will make a big difference in the quality of education we provide Oklahoma's students.

Stay in touch during the session

State Senate, 405/524-0126, www.oksenate.gov

State House of Representatives, 405/521-2711 or 800/522-8502, www.okhouse.gov

Governor Mary Fallin – 405/521-2342, www.ok.gov/governor

For individual legislator email addresses, visit okea.org/legislative and click on "Contact Your State Legislators."

2014 OEA Legislative Agenda

Funding

- Increase Common Education funding to fiscal year 2008 level (approximately \$300 million).
- Improve current tax structure to achieve proper education funding.

Recruitment and Retention – Quality Teachers and Support Professionals

- Protect current and future education employees' pensions by preventing harmful changes to the Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System.
- Increase teachers' salaries by \$3,000 across the board.
- Increase education support professionals' salaries by \$1,500 across the board.
- Increase the state minimum salary lanes for higher level degrees by 20 percent.

- Increase the state minimum salary lane for National Board Certified Teachers by \$4,000.
- Increase the NBCT scholarship program by \$1,265 to cover the entire cost of application and certification.
- Provide every teacher a \$500 allocation for supplies.

School Culture

- Provide sufficient alternative education settings to address chronic classroom discipline issues at all grade levels.
- Provide adequate personnel for the delivery of counseling services and other strategies to minimize disruptive and violent behavior.

Classroom Instruction – Standards and Accountability

- Allow parents to opt their child out of some or all high stakes testing with-

- out penalty to the student, teachers or school district.
- Repair or replace the A–F school grading system.
- Restore the class size requirements currently in state statute.

OEA Legislative Committee

Rene Allen, Putnam City, Committee Chair
 Linda Ogle, McLoud, Board Liaison
 Maschelle Brakefield, Yukon
 Lisa Cobb, Seminole
 Teri Gray, Choctaw-Nicom Park
 Patti Green, Ardmore
 Lawrence Lane, Checotah
 Lynn Stockley, Tulsa
 Cristi Thomson, Hilldale
 John Waldron, Tulsa
 Amanda Ewing, Associate Executive Director, Legislative and Political Organizing Center, Staff Liaison

Congrats to the NBPTS Class of 2013

The following teachers earned new national Board Certification in 2013:

Oklahoma City Metro Region

Cathy Murphy, Western Oaks Middle School, Putnam City

Northeast Region

Kymberly Tinsley, Greenwood Elementary, Tahlequah

Southwest Region

Tiffany Bray, Lone Grove Primary El.
 Laura Payne, Mountain View-Gotebo Elementary

The following teacher renewed their National Board Certification in 2013:

Oklahoma City Metro Region

Belinda Craig, Southmoore HS,
 Moore
 Stephany Gooden, Central Elementary, Moore

Gregory Richard Oppel, Edmond Memorial HS
 Carl Ray, Townsend Elementary,
 Midwest City-Del City
 Kortni Magdalene Torralba, Moore HS

Northeast Region

Jennifer Denslow, Oologah-Talala HS
 Elizabeth Mosier, Cleveland Primary

Northwest Region

Marsha Carman, Weatherford HS
 Laura Flesner, Westwood Elementary,
 Stillwater
 Shana Deann Glasgow, Piedmont HS
 Sharon Mahan, Burcham Elementary,
 Weatherford
 Shereen Rasor, Mustang Creek Elementary

Southeast Region

Starla Howard, Will Rogers Elementary, Shawnee


Southwest Region

Patti Green, Charles Evans Elementary,
 Ardmore
 Jennifer Garrett, Norman North HS
 Jamie Johnson, McKinley Elementary,
 Norman
 Misti Michelle Smith, Cleveland Elementary, Norman
 Audra Urquhart, Norman North HS

Tulsa Metro Region

Susan Collier, Jenks Middle School
 Patricia Duncan, Hale HS, Tulsa
 Kari Eddy, Cedar Ridge Elementary,
 Union
 Christina Leach, Jenks West Elementary
 Shelley Zevnik, Eighth Grade Center,
 Union

Become a LEAD Educator



Participate in L.E.A.D. Lobby Day

Invite a Legislator to your classroom

Go to Education Rally, March 31

Meet with a Legislator in your Legislative District

Contact the Governor

Contact your Representative

Contact your local School Board

Contact your Senator

Register to VOTE (or help someone register)

Donate to OEA's Fund for Children and Public Education FCPE

START

Linking Educators And Democracy LEAD

LEAD Educators are teachers and support professionals who communicate with decision makers, doing their part to ensure Oklahoma's education community has a voice.


In order to become a LEAD Educator, participants must complete each box in no particular order, except for the last step being attending the Education Rally on March 31. Once all blocks on the game board are completed, fill out the information below and mail to OEA.

LEAD Educators will be recognized at Delegate Assembly and will receive a lapel pin as an identifier of their accomplishment.

Send your completed game board to:
 Oklahoma Education Association
 Attn: LPO Center Assistant
 P.O. Box 18485
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73154

Name _____
 School _____
 District _____
 Email _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

HINT! To find your Legislator, go online to: www.oklegislature.gov/FindMyLegislator.aspx



Fund for Children & Public Education

Oklahoma Education Association

www.okea.org

Commit to standing up for public education!

Every contribution to OEA's Fund for Children & Public Education increases our collective strength. • Through these contributions, our members' voices will be heard. • Voluntary OEA FCPE contributions are designed to help elect friends of education to political office. • Dues dollars are never used to support political candidates.

Charles McCauley 1944 – 2013

The OEA family said good-bye to a dear friend on New Years Eve. Former Associate Executive Director Charles McCauley passed away after developing an infection while undergoing cancer treatment.

Charles was a light that shined upon everyone he knew. He was a beacon on the hill, above the fray of petty grievances.

When he joined the Oklahoma Education Association in 1972, he was the first black professional staffer and later became the first black manager in 1977.

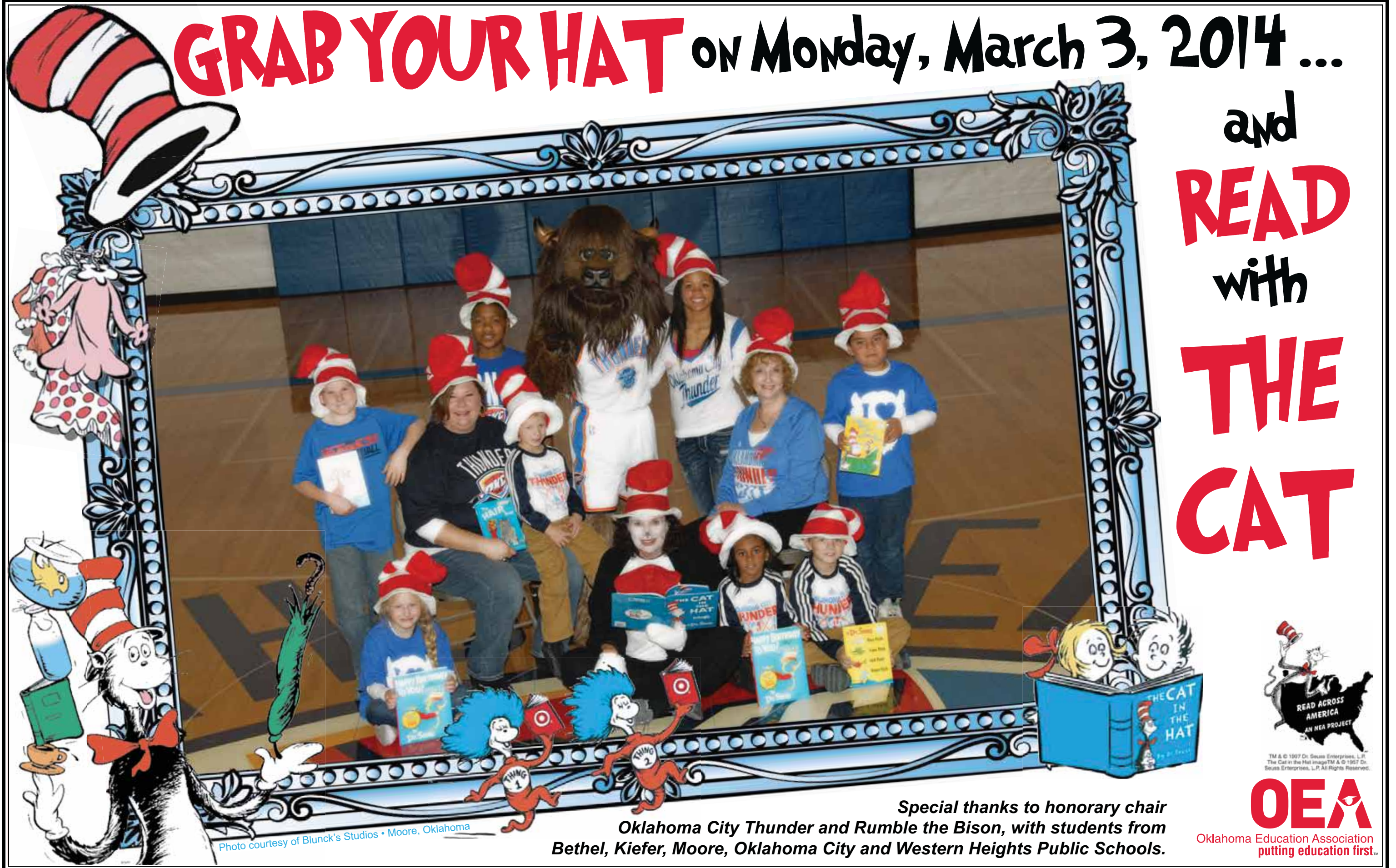
He honored each God-given breath by being a man of integrity and truth, not harboring a single grudge in his soul. The light in his eyes truly warmed the heart and we will rejoice and celebrate the man he was.

During his nearly 37 year career at OEA, he shined his light on dark places and we were all able to see his good works and benefit from his contributions to the success of public education.



Charles McCauley

Photo by Doug Folks



GRAB YOUR HAT on Monday, March 3, 2014 ...

and
READ
with
THE
CAT

Photo courtesy of Blunck's Studios • Moore, Oklahoma

Special thanks to honorary chair
Oklahoma City Thunder and Rumble the Bison, with students from
Bethel, Kiefer, Moore, Oklahoma City and Western Heights Public Schools.



Setting sites on a record

Guinness officials approve world record attempt

Oklahoma's 2014 Read Across America (RAA) celebration promises to be record setting. Guinness World Record setting, that is! On Monday, March 3, the Oklahoma Education Association and 10 local associations from around the state will attempt to establish the "Most Children Simultaneously Wearing Cat-in-the-Hat Hats" while reading a book. OEA's goal is to have more than 2,000 children take part in the attempt.

Participating locals are Broken Arrow EA, Professionals Educators' Association of Lawton, McAlester ACT, Mid-Del ACT, Moore ACT, Professional Educators of Norman, Putnam City ACT, Tahlequah EA, Tulsa CTA, and Woodward EA.

In addition, the NEA Cat-a-van will make stops in Shawnee and Mid-Del on February 28.

OEA recently won an NEA grant to provide books to the 10 participating locals in the Guinness attempt, hats for the students and funding to verify the record with Guinness, which has already given official approval of the attempt.

"We are excited to get our names in the Guinness record book, but we're especially excited to be bringing attention to the importance of reading," said OEA Pres. Linda Hampton. "Read Across America is a tremendous celebration of reading."

For more information and/or questions about Oklahoma's Read Across America event, please contact Dawn Jones at djones@okea.org and 405/523-4312.



Rowdy Story, a student at Bethel Elementary, meets Rumble the Bison at the OEA Read Across America poster photo session.

Picture this – RAA poster contest

If a picture is worth a 1,000 words, then a good book is worth countless pictures in our minds.

It is those visions inspired by reading that fuels OEA's Read Across America poster contest. Oklahoma students are invited to draw or paint a picture inspired by one of their favorite books. Entries for the contest are due by Friday, March 14.

Prizes will be awarded in four categories – kindergarten through 2nd grade, 3rd-5th grades, 6th-8th grades, and 9th-12th grades. First place in each division will receive a \$75 VISA gift card, second place winners win a \$50 VISA gift card, and honorable mention winners will receive a certificate.

The winners will be featured in the April-May issue of the *Education Focus* and on our website, okea.org.

Contest Rules:

- All students of OEA members are eligible to enter the contest.
- Pictures will be judged on creativity, use of color and content.
- Entries must be submitted on white, unlined 8 ½ x 11 paper. DO NOT FOLD.
- On the back of each entry, list the book that inspired the drawing, student's name, age, grade, name of school and teacher, and a school phone number.
- All entries will become the property of the OEA and must meet all contest rules to be eligible for prizes.
- All entries must be received by Monday, March 14. Mail them to OEA Focus on Reading, PO Box 18485, Okla. City, OK 73154; or hand-deliver over overnight entries to OEA Headquarters at 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105.
- Late entries or entries from non-OEA members will not be judged.

For more information, contact Editor Doug Folks at 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785, or dfolks@okea.org.



get connected



Have social media questions or news?
Email Dawn Jones at djones@okea.org



FACEBOOK Oklahoma Education Association Shares, Likes, Comments!

OEA, 1/08/14: Very cool receiving supporting messages/comments such as these from other states!

"Supporting you from Florida in your struggle with Barresi!"

"This Ohio BAT supports you! Solidarity!"

"Standing in solidarity with the educators of Oklahoma. You and your students deserve an educator as your Superintendent. From a proud New Jersey Education Association member."

"Supporting OEA from Oregon!"

"I am from California and I absolutely support you!"

OEA, 1/09/14: OEA STATEMENT, Regards to: Rep. Kern's "Common Sense Zero Tolerance Act"

Oklahoma Education Association President Linda Hampton: "I fully trust Oklahoma educators to handle student discipline in an appropriate case-by-case manner. The proposed legislation removes local control from teachers, counselors, administrators and local school boards. Educators are degreed professionals, trained and experienced in dealing with children. With our state facing so many critical issues in public education, Oklahoma Legislators should be focusing on school funding, excessive testing and overcrowded classrooms. The focus should not be on removing a teacher's ability to use common sense, local policies and their professional training when dealing with student discipline."

Todd Anthony, 1/09/14: I'm really "liking" our OEA lately! Keep up the hard work!



TWITTER @okea Tickling Tweets

OKEA, 1/09/14: Editorial: Barresi's snub of OEA a mistake - Editorials - Tulsa World

OKEA, 1/13/14: The Number Of Public School Students Is Exploding, And The Number Of Teachers Is Falling Off A Cliff #oklaed Business Insider - <http://www.businessinsider.com/public-schools-jobs-versus-enrollment-2014-1>

OKEA, 1/14/14: Less than 50 days till we celebrate Dr. Seuss, literacy and @NEARReadAcross! OK's festivities revealed soon! #oklaed

Andrea Eger, 1/16/14: State education board threatens funding, accreditation if schools don't participate in computer exercise - Tulsa World

CONTRIBUTORS - Fav Legislative Session Moment?



Lela Odom
Executive Director
Answer: Term Limits



Amanda Ewing
Legislation
Answer: Drafting Bills



Chancen Flick
Legislation
Answer: Reading Thousands of Bills



Ivy Riggs
Legislation
Answer: Sine Die

What is a blog?

Definition: a personal website or web page on which an individual records opinions, links to other sites, etc. on a regular basis.

Here are some suggested blogs to follow...



Simply Said. ... With Linda
Writer: OEA President Linda Hampton
okea.org/okea-blog



OKEDUCATIONTRUTHS
Writer: Remains a mystery
okeducationtruths.wordpress.com



A View From The Edge
Writer: Principal Rob Miller
viewfromtheedge.net



OK Policy Institute
Writer: OKPI Staff
okpolicy.org/category/blog



Fourth Generation Teacher
Writer: Claudia Swisher
fourthgenerationteacher.blogspot.com



The Jason.James Daily
Writer: Asst Supt Jason James
<http://paper.li/James-409Jason/1347568125>

OKLAHOMA'S RALLY FOR EDUCATION.

678,000 REASONS

MONDAY, MARCH 31
OKLAHOMA CAPITOL, 10:30 a.m.

Facebook page: OKED Rally

AG Opinion supports OEA’s position on TRS payment responsibility

Transferring sick leave and national certification stipends also covered

By Richard Wilkinson
OEA General Counsel

The Oklahoma Attorney General (AG) has issued three opinions over the last several months that impact education employees and school districts. The AG has issued opinions dealing with creditable service from the Oklahoma Teachers’ Retirement System (OTRS) for school employees who receive employment assistance from the School Consolidation Assistance Fund (Fund); the transfer of accumulated sick leave from one district to another and the carryover of unused personal leave; and the applicability of the moratorium on bonuses for National Board Certified Teachers to speech-language pathologists, audiologists and school psychologists who become nationally certified under a different statutory scheme.

Who’s Responsible for TRS Payment?

Attorney General Opinion 2013-9 dealt with two separate, but related issues: 1) Who is responsible for payment of the creditable year of OTRS retirement service for employees who receive employment assistance from the Fund; and 2) Whether an employee who receives employment assistance from the Fund but who was employed by a different school district for the successive school year is eligible to receive the creditable year of retirement service from OTRS.

School employees who are employed by a school district consolidated or annexed by another school district and who are not employed by the consolidating or annexing school district the following

year are eligible for employment assistance from the Fund. School employees who receive assistance from the Fund are also entitled to accumulate one year of creditable service for retirement purposes from OTRS, regardless of whether they were re-employed by a different school district the year following the annexation or consolidation.

OEA represented two employees before the OTRS with these issues. One sought the additional year of creditable retirement service from OTRS even though she had been re-employed by a different school district the following year. The other sought the additional year of creditable retirement service from OTRS although she had not been reemployed by any school district the year following the annexation or consolidation. OTRS denied the request for a year of creditable service in the first instance

and granted the request for a year of creditable service in the second instance, but billed the employee for the full contribution amount for the service credit.

The AG interpreted the relevant statutes and ruled that any employee who had been employed by a school district that had been annexed or consolidated and who received employment assistance from the Fund was entitled to an additional year of creditable retirement service from OTRS, regardless of whether or not the employee was employed by a different school district for the following school year.

The AG also ruled that – contrary to the OTRS position – employees who are eligible for the additional year of creditable retirement service are not responsible



Richard Wilkinson

ble for paying any statutory contributions to OTRS on the amount of the employment assistance received.

Transferring Unused Sick Leave and Unused Personal Business Leave

Attorney General Opinion 2013-26 also dealt with two separate, but related issues: 1) whether a school district must accept the transfer of unused sick leave from another school district when the teacher left the prior school district without finishing the full school year; and 2) whether unused personal business leave may carry-over from one school year to subsequent school years.

In this opinion, the AG also interpreted the relevant statutes and ruled that a school district must accept the transfer of accumulated sick leave if the leave was accumulated during any portion of a prior year and the transfer request occurred during the subsequent school year. The opinion also held that it is permissible for a locally negotiated leave policy to allow the carry-over of unused personal business leave from one school year to subsequent school years.

OEA represented an individual teacher who had been denied the transfer of accumulated sick leave because she had left her prior employment in November of the prior school year and

See “AG rules” on next page

Eight open board seats highlight elections

Filing is open February 1-21 for the open spots as well as delegate at-large spots to the OEA Delegate Assembly and the NEA Representative Assembly.

The elections, to be held in March, will be conducted with online voting. The polling site will be accessible from our home page at okea.org.

The OEA Board of Directors is designed to represent members at the grassroots level. Each zone is made up of at least 1,000 Association members who elect their representative on the board. The newly elected Zone Directors will take office on July 7.

At-large delegates to the Delegate Assembly and NEA RA will serve at this year’s meetings. The OEA annual meeting is April 25-26 at the Sheraton Oklahoma City Hotel and the RA is set for July 1-6 in Denver.

Filing forms are available at okea.org, OEA Headquarters in Oklahoma City and at the OEA regional office in Tulsa. For more information on the elections or filing forms, contact Rheta Kennedy at 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785 or rkenedy@okea.org.

AG rules on stipend moratorium

Continued from previous page

represented a local association where the school district had suggested it could not honor its collective bargaining agreement allowing for the carry-over of unused personal business leave for support employees. Attorney General Opinion 2013-26 resolved these issues and is applicable to all school districts as it pertains to these subjects.

National Certification Stipends

Attorney General Opinion 2013-23 dealt with the legislative moratorium on bonus payments to National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT’s) and whether that moratorium applied to speech pathologists, audiologists and school psychologists who have national certification under a different statutory scheme.

The AG ruled that the statutes estab-

lishing the different bonus programs and the funding mechanisms for providing the respective salary bonuses are separate and distinct. As a result, the legislative moratorium on salary bonus payments for NBCT’s does not apply to the statutes applicable to speech pathologists, audiologists and school psychologists who have other national certification under a different statute.

The AG also ruled that the amendments to the minimum salary schedule during the 2013 legislative session, which created a minimum salary schedule for NBCT’s, is not applicable to speech pathologist, audiologists and school psychologist who have national certification under a different statute.

Should you have any questions regarding any of these opinions, you can contact the Center for Legal and Corporate Services or your Regional UniServ Advocacy Specialist.

Zone Director Positions

All eight open OEA Board positions are for three-year terms, which expire in 2017. These board members will serve as NEA Delegates in 2015 and 2016.

Southwest B, representing Cleveland and McClain Counties.

Southeast B, representing Haskell, Hughes, McIntosh, Okfuskee, Okmulgee and Sequoyah Counties.

Southeast C, representing Atoka, Choctaw, Coal, Johnston, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg and Pushmataha Counties.

Tulsa Metro B, representing Tulsa CTA and Tulsa PSET.

Tulsa Metro D, representing Oral Roberts University, OSU Tulsa Langston, Sand Springs, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Tech, Union and the University of Tulsa.

Oklahoma City Metro B, representing Bethany, OCU, Putnam City, Southern Nazarene and Western Heights.

OKC Metro D, representing Choc-taw-Nicomma Park, Crutchko, Deer Creek, Jones, Luther, Mid-Del, Millwood and Rose State College.

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

Statewide Openings

OEA Delegate Assembly Positions: OEA/NEA Retired Delegate(s)-at-Large to OEA/DA

OEA Administrator Delegate(s)-at-Large to OEA/DA.

OEA Ethnic Minority Delegate(s)-at-Large to OEA/DA. *(Should the Bylaws requirement in this election category be met by local Associations, no OEA Ethnic Minority Delegates at Large will be seated.)*

NEA Representative Assembly Positions:

NEA Retired Delegate(s)-at-Large to the NEA/RA (successor delegates only)

Regional Positions Open

Category I Delegates-at-Large, 2014 NEA Representative Assembly

(The zones and exact number of delegates involved in this election were not determined by press time. This information will be posted in the Election Filing Forms section of the Local Association Forms page on okea.org by February 1.)

Most of your dues are tax deductible

Members who itemize deductions and meet the two percent requirement for additional miscellaneous deductions are able to deduct most of their membership dues.

Following is a chart of how much can be deducted (all but the 8.3 percent attributed to lobbying). Members should also check with their local associations for the amount of non-deductible local dues spent on lobbying.

For additional help, contact your tax professional.

Full-time active certified	\$436.05
Halftime active certified	\$229.52
Full-time active support	\$237.98
Halftime active support	\$130.74
Substitute	\$142.02
Reserve certified	\$206.52
Reserve support	\$107.51
Student member	\$24.17
Retired-Lifetime member	\$250.00

Advocacy Conference breakouts offer variety

School finance, smart practices for Other Academic Measures (OAM) and a special session for education support professionals highlight the breakouts scheduled for the 2014 Advocacy Conference, February 21-22 in Oklahoma City.

“Back to the Future” is the theme for this year’s conference, which returns to the Waterford Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City. Online registration is now available from a link on the OEA homepage (okea.org) and at <http://14advconf.eventbrite.com>.

Joe Bontke, ombudsman and outreach manager for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, will provide a keynote presentation on the morning of the 22nd. His presentation, “So-

“Everyone needs to lobby”

Continued from Page 2

variety of issues, meeting with education professionals allows them access to a unique form of expert, one that practices the policies that are decided upon at the Capitol.

“I truly believe everyone needs to lobby – it is the way our system works,” Bailey said. “Bodies of government need to be reminded as to who put them there and that they are supposed to ‘serve the people.’ When you show up in their office or call them or email them, that is recorded as a position on legislation. When it comes time to vote on bills, those numbers should have influence.”

Bailey feels it’s important for new faces to lobby each year so that legislators know they aren’t hearing just from a vocal minority.

“If you are passionate about public education, your profession, and you’re concerned about what our kids will experience while in our classrooms, get involved in the legislative process. I’m sorry, but you cannot just go into your classroom and teach – the powers that be are not going to let that happen.”

Special ed programs eligible for Nigh Foundation grants

Grants up to \$8,000 are available annually to public school special education programs from the Donna Nigh Foundation.

In 1985, friends of the then First Lady formed the foundation as a birthday present and in recognition of her commitment and work on behalf of the state’s developmentally disabled residents. While touring state facilities with her husband, George, during his tenure as lieutenant governor, she discovered a calling to help disabled Oklahomans become thriving, contributing citizens.

The Foundation was established to serve as a bridge between the public and private sectors to help with programs that government agencies are unable to provide. Funding through the grants are available for environmental and recreational adaptations, classroom cognition and developed equipment, and sheltered workshop equipment and activities.

For more information, visit occf.org/NighFoundation.html or contact Cher Golding at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, 405/606-2920 or c.golding@occf.org.

cial Media: Technology and Ramifications in the Workplace,” covers the hazards of social media for education employees and how to avoid them.

Breakout session topics during the afternoon of the 22nd will include:

The Power of WE, a special support professional workshop with Liz Picone, organizing specialist for the NEA;

School Finance, with Lori Smith, chief financial officer for Edmond Public Schools;

Smart OAM Practices for the Future, with Jana Burk, executive Director of Tulsa Public Schools’ Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, and Linda Hendrix, OEA Advocacy Specialist;

Can I Grieve This? with Sheri Childress and Cal Ware, OEA Advocacy Specialists;

Ask a Lawyer, a question and answer session with OEA General Counsel Richard Wilkinson and Associate General Counsel Heath Merchen; and

Local Bargaining, a two-part session with federal mediators John Doern and Bobby J. Thompson. They will cover The Mediator’s Role in Negotiations and Your Roles and Responsibilities at the Bargaining Table.

The conference will kick off Friday the 21st at 7 p.m. with a forum on the A-F Grading System, with Pres. Linda Hampton, Vice Pres. Alicia Priest and Executive Director Lela Odom and discussion and feedback from the audience.

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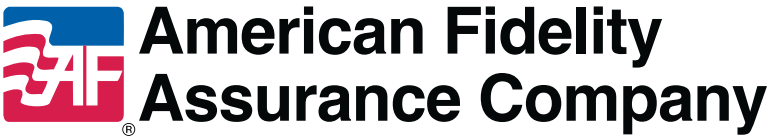
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