

**The
Education**

FOCUS

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association • April/May 2015

A woman with brown hair, wearing a red blazer, stands at a black podium outdoors, speaking into a microphone. She is gesturing with her right hand. Behind her, a man in a suit and a woman in a blue shirt and sunglasses are visible. In the foreground, the backs of several people's heads are visible, some holding up smartphones to take pictures. The background shows trees and a clear sky.

Rallying for a Brighter Future

Katherine Bishop Elected Vice President

Honoring OEA Awards Winners

Top 4 Drawings from the 2015 RAA Poster Contest

Putting education first

2 Katherine Bishop Elected OEA VP

Complete results from March’s elections.

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On the cover – State Supt. Joy Hofmeister addresses the crowd during the PTA’s Brighter Future Rally. Just to her left on the stage is Executive Director David DuVall, MC and former OEA staffer Floyd Cox, VP Alicia Priest and Pres. Linda Hampton. Photo by Bill Guy.



Photo by Lauren Burkholder.



Photo provided.

We won’t be silenced in spite of this insult

By Linda Hampton
OEA President

“*This country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as when the baby gets hold of a hammer.*” – Will Rogers

While Will Rogers’s quotes are usually humorous, they also have a grain of truth in them. This particular session I feel the “hammer” has been aimed directly at our OEA members. While this can be frustrating, it shows we are doing our job as advocates for public education, our profession, our students and our schools. They certainly aren’t targeting ineffective groups.

HB 1749 is definitely a bill that has OEA members in the center of the bull’s eye. I listened to the House author, Rep. Tom Newell, debate it when it was first brought up. He said it’s “immoral.” (Yes, he used the word immoral several times.) He said it was immoral to ask schools to payroll deduct dues and then have those very people bargain against the schools and then strike when they don’t get their way. First of all, it is illegal for education employees in Oklahoma to strike.

Secondly, our local associations don’t bargain AGAINST a school, we bargain WITH a school board. After all, a teacher’s working conditions are a student’s learning conditions.

Apparently Rep. Newell and I differ on what is immoral. I think it is immoral to be number one in the nation in cuts to public education funding. I think it is immoral to be 48th in the nation in what we spend per pupil to educate Oklahoma’s children. I think it’s immoral to be 48th in the nation in what Oklahoma pays its teachers. These are the issues the legislature should be working to correct instead of passing legislation that makes it inconvenient for education employees to make decisions about where their hard-earned money is spent.

Nevertheless, the bill was passed and signed into law by the governor. I believe some anti-public education legislators and groups expected us as an organization to be wailing and lamenting the end of our association. Boy, do they have that wrong! This bill will simply be inconvenient for our members, but certainly isn’t devastating. While it was designed to break us, it will only unite us and make us stronger.

What this bill does do is insult every



President Linda Hampton

teacher and support professional in the state. When I heard debate and read articles that said our members don’t know who they’ve joined or what OEA stands for, my first thought was how dare they say our members don’t know these things. Our members work very hard for every penny they make, and they don’t spend it carelessly. They spend it to support their families and even to buy supplies for their underfunded classrooms, pay for clothing or food for needy students and, yes, pay dues to the OEA because they fully understand we share their values and believe EVERY child in Oklahoma deserves a great PUBLIC education.

HB 1749 is merely a speed bump, not a road block. OEA has been around for 125 years doing the right thing for the right reasons – our students – and we have plans to be around another 125 years.

Thanks for all you do!

OEA has discount tickets for your summer vacation

When you start making plans for your summer getaways, OEA has several benefits partners who offer some great discounts on attractions here and around the country.

The Oklahoma City Dodgers, the AAA affiliate of Major League Baseball’s Los Angeles Dodgers, will host OEA members for two special nights. The first game is Saturday, May 16. For just \$10, you get a ticket on the Terrace Level, a limited edition Dodger baseball hat, a game program and a voucher for a meal at Braum’s. Also, the first 2,000 fans will receive a Dodgers baseball.

To order your tickets, visit the Great Member Benefits page in the Members Only section of our website, okea.org. You’ll find an order form with instructions on reserving your tickets.

The second OEA Night with the Dodgers is Saturday, June 20. More details will be available in late May.

Frontier City and White Water Bay in Oklahoma City are both offering discount tickets to OEA members. Tickets are \$16 each plus a one-time online fee of \$5. Tickets are val-



id May 29-June 14. You can find the promo code and ordering details in the Members Only section of the website.

If you’re taking your family to Orlando for the NEA Representative Assembly, or just for a vacation, we have the best discounts to **Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World and all other**

Orlando attractions. Visit our Members Only section for the promo code and a link to register for the OEA members only page of orlandovacations.com.

On our Great Member Benefits page, you will also find links and promo codes to **Six Flags Amusement Parks and Tickets At Work**, which offers discount tickets to attractions all over the country.

The Education Focus

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Priest, Bishop set to take office

Leadership at the Oklahoma Education Association is set for the next three years with the election of Putnam City’s Katherine Bishop as Vice President. Current VP Alicia Priest won the presidency earlier this fall when she ran unopposed.

In other results from OEA’s spring elections, the OEA Board of Directors will welcome five new members: Sherri Callahan, Vinita CTA, NE-A; Jennifer Thornton, Tulsa CTA, Tulsa Metro A; Michael Walcutt, Muskogee EA, NE-C; Dr. Deborah Schovanec, Edmond ACT, OKC-C; and Amy Braun, The Education Association of Moore (TEAM), Administrator-at-Large.

Rhonda Harlow, Enid EA, NW-A; Elise Robillard, TEAM, OKC-A; Pam Ramey, Professional Educators’ Association of Lawton (PEAL), SW-A; and Katy Cook, Broken Arrow EA, TM-E; all won re-election to their respective board seats.



Pres-Elect Alicia Priest



VP-Elect Katherine Bishop

Bishop is an instructional coach at Putnam City West High School and a former special education teacher. She has served as a presenter on the NEA IDEA Cadre as well as various OEA Targeted Skill Sessions, which help teachers adapt to new state standards. She has been a member of the Putnam City ACT’s bargaining team and chair

of OEA’s Instruction and Professional Development Committee.

“Katherine is a true instructional and professional leader. She has been recognized at the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) awards as one of five national Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence winners. She is applauded as an expert in the profession, and is a coveted presenter both

statewide and nationally,” said President-Elect Priest. “I look forward to working with someone who will continue to uplift education as a profession and fulfill the mission and vision of the OEA.”

Priest, Bishop and the board members will begin their three-year terms in July, after the conclusion of the NEA Representative Assembly in Orlando.

2015 Election Results

President

Alicia Priest, Yukon PEA

Vice President

Katherine Bishop, Putnam City ACT

NEA Director

Patti Ferguson-Palmer, Tulsa CTA

OEA Board of Directors

Zone NE-A

Sherri Callahan, Vinita CTA

Zone TM-A

Jennifer Thornton, Tulsa CTA

Zone NE-C

Michael Walcutt, Muskogee EA

Zone NW-A

Rhonda Harlow, Enid EA

Zone OKC-A

Elise Robillard, The Education Association of Moore

Zone OKC-C

Dr. Deborah Schovanec, Edmond ACT

Zone SW-A

Pamela L. Ramey, Professional Educators’ Association of Lawton

Zone TM-E

Katy Cook, Broken Arrow EA

Administrator-at-Large

Amy Braun, OKC-A, The Education Association of Moore

2015 OEA Delegate Assembly

Retired Delegates-At-Large

Debbie Hogue-Downing
Paula Squires

Administrator Delegates-at-Large

Todd Crabtree, SE-A, Byng
Amy Braun, OKC-A, Moore

OEA Ethnic Minority Delegate-at-Large

(No Ethnic Minority Delegates-At-Large were seated because local delegates filled the required Ethnic Minority goal.)

2015 NEA Representative Assembly

NEA Category I Delegate-at-Large OKC Metro Region

Maschelle Brakefield, OKC-B, Putnam City ACT

Northeast Region

Darla Page Ryan, NE-C, Muskogee EA

Northwest Region

Connie Ward, Piedmont EA

NEA Retired Delegate-at-Large

Cheryl Dowell, Retired



get connected



oklahoma education association

#OKEDRally Activity

OEA, 3/30/15: How were your visits with legislators today? Share your stories in the comments!

- Lauren Haskins: My school and I had a great time visiting with Rep. Justin Wood and Sen. Ron Sharp! Both of them gave us as much time as we wanted, and Sen. Sharp even stayed after a little once my group was done to talk more with me, which cut into time that he was supposed to be in caucus!

OEA, 3/30/15: DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE! Eliminating teachers' income tax this year is the precursor to eliminating all income tax next year. Then how do we fund public ed? People without public ed's best interest funded temp workers to hand these stickers out!



@okea

3/30/15: “While Oklahoma may have a teacher shortage, we in no way have a shortage of great teachers,” Jason Proctor, 2015 OKTOY #OKEDRally

3/30/15: “We’re here because our legislators don’t get it yet!” Dr. Keith Ballard, Tulsa PS Superintendent #OKEDRally

3/30/15: “Today you rally because your elected officials didn’t listen [last year]. They ignored 25,000 of you... The way they show their support is by passing HB 1749... Together thousands of us can fight for our children & fight the fiscal insanity that has plagued us for years,” Rep. Scott Inman #OKEDRally



simply said... with linda

3/17/15: I’m perplexed! It’s a day later and I am still sitting here pondering the results of yesterday’s actions at the State Capitol. HB 1749 was voted out of committee by a 4-3 vote with two senators “walking the vote.” While I am disappointed on many levels, I can’t say I am really surprised, and this is the perplexing part. I’m not surprised because it’s become evident over the last couple of sessions that many of our legislators don’t like teachers, and I don’t know why. They can say they don’t like the OEA, but really who is the OEA except teachers and support professionals? OEA’s goals are to promote public education and to be a voice for our students. I challenge those who oppose us to read our Mission, Vision and Core Values and then tell me why they hate us enough to want to silence us.

Read more at: okea.org/oea-blog



Oklahoma has many wonderful attractions throughout the state and this list doesn’t begin to cover them all. Visit their websites for more information and links to social media accounts for discounts, events and tips. Visit www.okea.org/member-resources for more great ideas and discounts with your OEA membership.



Tulsa Zoo
www.tulsazoo.org



Oklahoma City Zoo
www.okczoo.com



Big Splash Water Park
www.bigsplashwaterpark.net



Myriad Botanical Gardens
www.myriadgardens.org



Oklahoma City Dodgers
okcdodgers.com



Arbuckle Mountains Wilderness Park
arbucklewildernesspark.com



OKC Boathouse District
boathousedistrict.org



Photo by Bill Guy.



Photo by Doug Folks.



Photo by Lauren Burkholder.



Photo by Doug Folks.

15,000 Rally for a Brighter Future

Teachers, support professionals, administrators, parents and students created a rowdy atmosphere at the PTA's Brighter Future Rally on the south steps of the State Capitol on March 30. While the crowd of about 15,000 was not as big as the 2014 rally, many more lobbied their legislators in the morning before the rally program. They carried a message of injecting some common sense into our testing system and encouraged legislators to develop a plan to recruit and retain quality teachers with better pay.

We held a rally. Now what?

By Chancen Flick
Legislative & Political Organizing Specialist

The rally is over. All the signs have been packed up for another day. You and many of your colleagues met with your elected officials, heard the speeches and did your part to promote the future of public education. What's next? How do you continue to be an advocate for positive change after the rally?

To start, become the education expert for your legislators. They have many different issues that require attention during the session and most do not have an in-depth awareness of how their policy decisions will impact students. They need feedback from constituents to help form decisions that will better public education.

A key part of being an effective advocate is developing relationships. That was the primary goal of this year's rally. We focused on meeting legislators and having conversations about what

is happening in local school districts. But that was just the beginning of these relationships. For them to progress, the conversation must continue. A single face-to-face meeting may have a temporary impact, but an established connection will have a lasting effect. Continue the conversation. There are many different ways you can do that.

- Invite your legislators to participate in a local meeting.
- Set up a recurring breakfast or lunch meeting to discuss education issues during the interim.
- Attend local events that they regularly attend, such as Chamber of Commerce meetings.
- Continue to contact them on issues via email, phone and letters.

There are only a few of the different ways to build these relationships, and it is so important that we do. Elected officials make decisions every day that impact your profession. They need to

understand that those decisions have a name, a face and repercussions that are longer lasting than a mere floor vote or committee speech. The rally is over. The real work starts now.



Photo by Lauren Burkholder.

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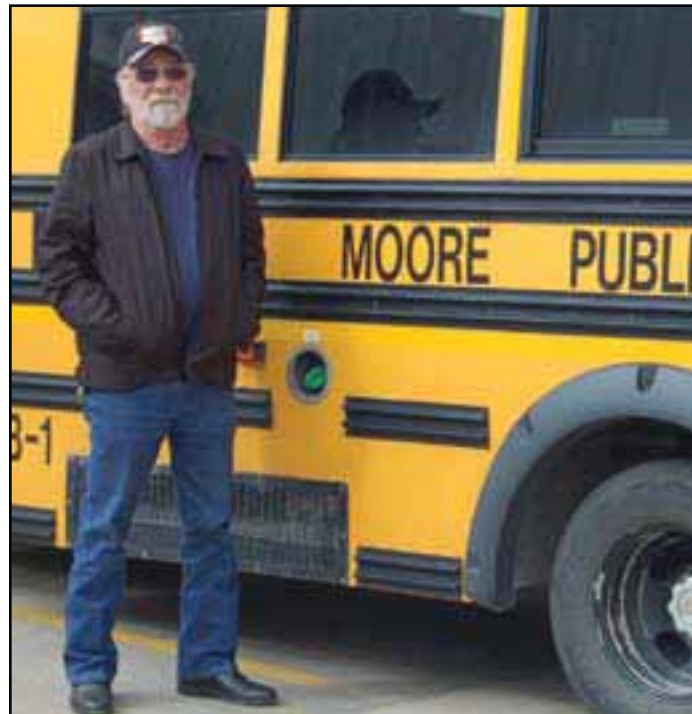
Calvin Hackler has worn many hats throughout his career, but he has a great dedication to his current position in the transportation department for Moore Public Schools. He began his career 10 years ago in Moore and is highly respected by his colleagues, parents and students.

Parents trust him with their precious cargo, and because of that, they have taken their children off the bus route if Hackler was no longer their driver. He makes safety his first priority by acknowledging his passengers' pick up and drop off surroundings, and he takes the time to learn their personalities so he can maintain control of the atmosphere on his bus.

Hackler became a member of the Education Support Professionals of Moore (ESPM) eight years ago and has since recruited 75 percent of his transportation colleagues. His department also makes up the majority of members in ESPM. He believes it is his responsibility to recruit and represent members and stand up for them when no one else will.

His dedication to his profession, as well as the members of Moore ESP, has earned Hackler OEA's 2015 Education Support Professional award. This honor is presented to an individual Education Support Professional member whose activities reflect the contributions of the educational support professional to public education.

— Story and photo by Lauren Burkholder



ESP Award winner Calvin Hackler.



Special education teacher and OEA's NFIE Award nominee Shawn Sheehan (left) works with a student in his classroom at Norman High School.

NFIE Award nominee hopes to redefine perception of teaching

Professional Educators of Norman member and Norman High School special education teacher Shawn Sheehan loves teaching so much he created the "Teach Like Me" social media campaign to enlist fellow educators to help spread the word about how great the profession is. And the campaign's primary goal of improving recruitment and retention by redefining public perceptions of the education profession has gone nationwide.

The campaign was promoted at last summer's Oklahoma State Department of Education's Vision 2020 Conference offering learning opportunities, professional development and training for Oklahoma educators, school administrators and parents. Sheehan also had the opportunity to share his vision and mission with educators in Colorado. Sheehan has recently been named Norman Public Schools' Teacher of the Year.

The "Teach Like Me" Facebook page has close to 2,000 likes and more than 350 educators are following the @Teach_Like_Me Twitter feed. A website – www.teachlikeme.org – offers additional information and sharing opportunities.

In an effort "to recognize, reward and promote excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession, the National Education Association and NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) annually present the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence to one of its members. Each NEA state affiliate is allowed one nominee for this prestigious award, and Sheehan is OEA's 2015 nominee.

— Story and photo by Bill Guy

Collaboration wins the day for PCACT

Significant new language and additional money for salary increases marked a very successful year for teachers in Putnam City, thanks to the Putnam City ACT Bargaining Team.

PCACT and the district's negotiations team employ a collaborative bargaining process. Both sides bring a list of concerns and possible solutions to the table with a goal to strengthen language in the contract dealing with working conditions and to improve the salary package to make Putnam City competitive with other districts in the Oklahoma City Metro and around the state.

The two sides agreed to language that cleaned up sections on teacher reassignments and transfers, teacher evaluations and compensation for unused sick leave when leaving the district voluntarily. Most significantly, PCACT was able to remove language from the agreement that said supervisors could deny personal leave.

On the financial side, PCACT was able to negotiate an additional \$1.3 million for teacher salaries, which paid for steps and added \$250 to the base. Putnam City now pays \$34,000 on Step 0 for brand new teachers, \$2,400 above state minimum. The team also added extra duty stipends for five new extra assignment positions.

The success and collaboration at the table earned the PCACT Bargaining Team the 2015 OEA Collective Bargaining Award,



Members of the Putnam City ACT Bargaining Team are (l-r) Vickie Vaughan, Katherine Bishop, Amber Shoun, Jill Scott and Jodi Williams.

which is awarded to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement of education through the collective bargaining process.

— Story and photo by Doug Folks

Gabelmann shares anti-bullying strategies with Lawton colleagues

When Professional Educators' Association of Lawton (PEAL) member Joan Gabelmann began witnessing negative behaviors related to bullying at Lawton's Eisenhower High School, she decided to initiate an anti-bullying campaign. Enlisting the help of students, who became known as Bully Busters, she began the project as classroom back-to-school lessons.



When word spread of the program's success, she was asked by the district to provide professional development on anti-bullying strategies for all adult stakeholders, including teachers, counselors, principals, aides, custodians and school secretaries. Gabelmann's presentation focused on strategies and de-escalation communication techniques to help create safe environments.

The information added substance to the district's long-standing but vague "no tolerance" stance. With parental and district permission, Gabelmann included students in the presentations, giving them the opportunity to switch roles and become "teachers of teachers." By acting out various role-playing scenarios, the students gave the issues a greater sense of reality.

"Everyone has the right to voice opinions and perspectives without being denigrated or bullied," said Gabelmann. "It's all about tolerance and acceptance." An English teacher at Eisen-

hower while initiating and facilitating the anti-bullying program over the last few years, Gabelmann is now an assistant principal at Lawton's MacArthur High School.

Gabelmann's professional development program earned her OEA's 2015 Excellence in the Classroom – Teachers Teaching Teachers Award. The honor recognizes OEA members for outstanding contributions in instructional excellence and acknowledges the fact that the quality of education in this country can rise no higher than the quality of teaching.

— Story and photo by Bill Guy

Lawton's Joan Gabelmann (center) is pictured with a group of "Bully Busters," Lawton Eisenhower High School students (l-r) Kaylee Little, Sommer Cunningham, Taylor Bone, James Rutledge and Justin Smith.

“Attire to Aspire” helps outfit students

Kimberly Jones grew up in a large Lawton family that included 10 children. She acquired from an early age an understanding of the feelings of students whose families might not be able to afford new school clothes for their children every year.

So in response to a school district decision to require uniform attire – khaki, black or navy pants/skirts and solid color polo shirts – for all students at Lawton’s elementary and middle school students, she decided to do something to assist families in need of buying the necessary clothing.

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, the MacArthur High School environmental science teacher started “Attire to Aspire,” soliciting donations from individuals, businesses, civic organizations and churches throughout Lawton to purchase the mandatory attire for students whose families could not afford them.

Military units from nearby Ft. Sill became a major source of donations. Students at MacArthur engaged in an intra-class fund-raising competition that netted much appreciated dollars. The program provided more than 600 uniforms during the 2013-14 school year and 400 more last fall.

In a separate initiative started at the beginning of the current school year, Jones launched the “Future Lens Project,” matching students with a commu-



Lawton MacArthur High School seniors Madison Scott (left) and Monique Monroe (right) with PEAL member Kimberly Jones and some of the clothing bought with donations to the “Attire to Aspire” program.

nity member successful in a profession to which the students think they might aspire. A different student and professional mentor was featured photographically in each month of calendars that were sold throughout the community to raise money for enrichment programs to assist students in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) network. Over \$8,000 has been raised to support a summer reading program.

For her efforts to help Lawton students, Jones, a member of the Professional Educators’ Association of Lawton (PEAL) has been awarded the OEA’s 2015 Glenn Snider Human Relations Award. The honor is presented to a school district, individual or organization best exemplifying the practice of effective human relations and concerns for human rights.

– Story and photo by Bill Guy

Moore Public Schools speak out against TLE’s Value Added Model

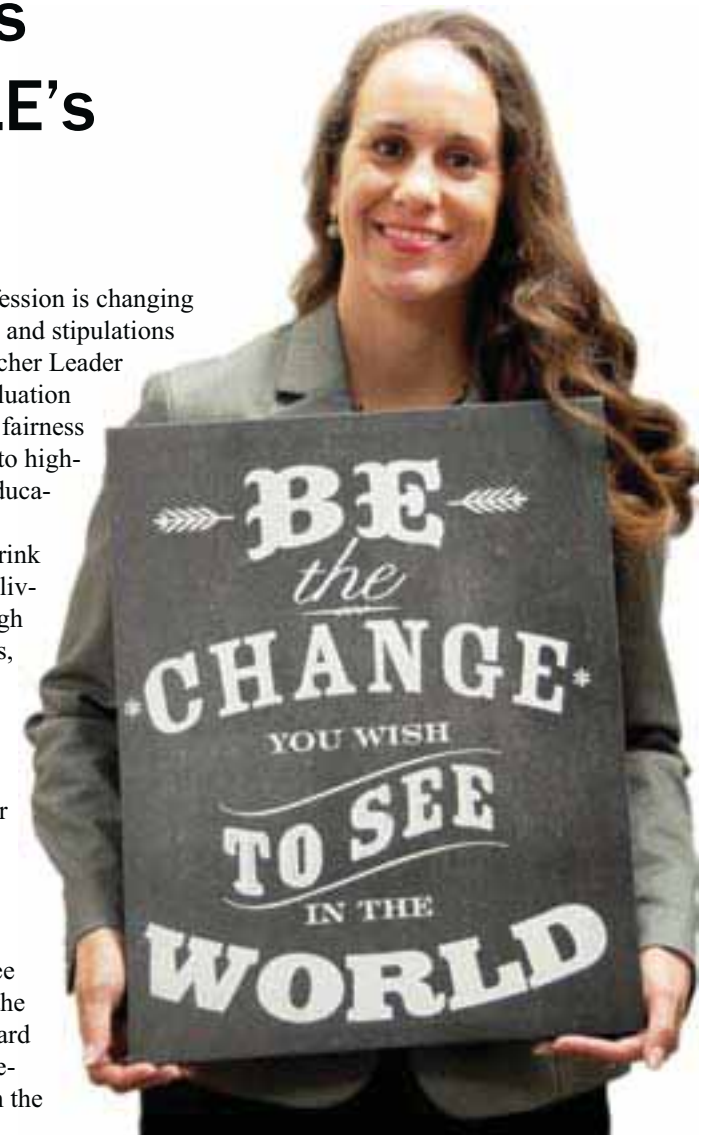
The landscape of public education and the teaching profession is changing rapidly, and with that comes a new set of requirements and stipulations handed out every year. The implementation of the Teacher Leader Effectiveness (TLE) and the Value Added Model (VAM) evaluation method came with many red flags and questions regarding its fairness for teachers and students, and Moore Public Schools decided to highlight those inequities to the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the TLE Commission.

Amy Braun, TLE Facilitator for Moore PS; David Peak, Brink Junior High Principal; and MPS Supt. Dr. Robert Romines delivered a powerful presentation to the TLE Commission. Although their outspokenness could have come with great consequences, Braun knew they had to fight for fairness. She says MPS has never been an outspoken district, but with great support from Supt. Romines, their campaign for change is making waves in the state of Oklahoma.

She also noted that they were not speaking out just for their teachers in Moore, but for teachers and support professionals all across the state, and the response they have received has been nothing but gratitude.

Because of their dedication to research, tireless efforts to expose the inequities of these evaluation tools and desire to see fairness for all educators, Moore Public Schools will receive the 2015 OEA Advocate for Academic Freedom Award. This award 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 in the nation.

– Story and photo by Lauren Burkholder



Moore TLE Facilitator Amy Braun

NPS task force expands to protect students

Response to allegations of a student’s rape and subsequent bullying was swift, with Norman Public Schools officials working directly with the Norman Police Department to complete a thorough investigation and administer appropriate discipline, while maintaining student privacy, dignity and respect.

In addition, NPS immediately expanded an already existing bullying task force, renaming it the Gender-Based Violence and Bullying Prevention and Response Task Force. Made up of educators, parents, students, community members and mental health specialists, the task force is led by Kathy Moxley, Director of the University of Oklahoma’s Women’s Outreach Center and OU sexual assault response team coordinator.

The task force’s primary function is to make recommendations to the district and the NPS Board of Education about additional sexual assault response training for all school staff, any necessary modification of existing school board policies and the development criteria and training requirements for new student support specialists at each of the city’s two high schools who can focus solely on providing assistance to victims of sexual assault, trauma or bullying.

Norman Public Schools has been named the winner of the 2015 Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award for its creation and development of the Gender-Based Violence and Bullying Prevention and Response Task Force. The Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award is presented to a business or group which has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

– Story and photo by Bill Guy



In response to allegations of a student’s rape and subsequent bullying, Norman Public Schools’ Gender Based Violence and Bullying Prevention and Response Task Force is represented by Professional Educators of Norman President Cari Manzer (left), Norman Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Joe Siano (center) and task force chair Kathy Moxley, Director of the University of Oklahoma’s Women’s Outreach Center.

Honoring excellence in communications

2015 Marshall Gregory Awards

Student Print/Web Categories

Year-Round Coverage

Award of Excellence – Aaron Van Steinberg, Edmond Memorial High School

Award of Merit – Savannah Savage, Edmond Memorial High School

News Story

Award of Excellence – Maddie Niblett, Edmond Santa Fe High School, “Being Earnest Earns Grades in Two Classes”

Award of Merit – Rebekah Rice, Edmond Memorial High School, “BPA: The Future Leaders of America Working Together”

Feature Story

Award of Excellence – Mary Bishop, Edmond North High School, “Flashing Forward: Freshies Fret About Freedom, Fitting in, Failure”

Award of Merit – Alex Barker, Edmond Memorial High School, “I Am Iron Dogz”

Opinion/ Blog

Award of Excellence – Alex Barker, Edmond Memorial High School, “The School Trip Deserves Respect”

Student TV Broadcast Categories

Feature Story

Award of Excellence – Ricarda Urso, Chloe Day and Michael Ozmun, Norman High School, “Norman High School Garden”

Award of Merit – Abby Ballard and Reagan Hayes, Norman North High School, “AP Biology Lab”

News Story

Award of Excellence – Aaron Hyde, Norman High School, “Let’s Move”

Award of Merit - Presley Rhea, Norman North High School, “Food Class”

Series

Award of Merit – “Classes,” Timberwolf Tracks, with Shelby Davies-Jones, Gavyn Redd, Presley Rhea, Ari Trujillo, Colton Wallace and Trey Wormington, Norman North High School.

Year-Round Coverage

Award of Excellence – The Broadcasting Class at Norman North High School, Student Director Abby Ballard, Reagan Hayes, Presley Rhea and Nathan Trotter

Professional Print/Web Categories

Feature Stories

Award of Excellence – Katherine Parker, *Norman Transcript*, “NHS Teacher’s Campaign ‘Teach Like Me’ Prompts Better Teacher Recruitment”

News Story

Award of Excellence – Transcript Staff, *Norman Transcript*, “Newsweek Ranks Norman Schools in Top 1%”

Year-Round Coverage

Award of Excellence – *Norman Transcript*; Andy Rieger, Editor

SE-C wins political action award

The Stan R. Bryant Political Action Award is presented annually by the Board of Directors to the OEA Zone with the largest per member contribution level to the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

Zone Southeast C won the 2015 award by contributing \$6.21 per member. SE-C Zone Director was Brenda Calahan, McAlester ACT, and the Zone Fund Representative is Brenda Hebert, Poteau OEA.

Golden Apple Awards

Internal Communications

Newsletters

BEA Line, Editor Judy Allen, Bartlesville Education Association

Did You Know?, Webmaster/Editor Cari Manzer, Professional Educators of Norman

Moore Matters, Editors Ronda Brannum and Elise Robillard, Moore Association of Classroom Teachers

MACT Newsletter, Editors Rebecca Shiplett and Debralee McCoy, McLoud Association of Classroom Teachers

Simply Horse Sense, Editor Jacob Collins, Mustang Education Association

The EEA Advocate, Megan Stewart and the EEA Communications Committee, Enid Education Association

Other

10-Minute Meeting PowerPoint, Professional Educators of Norman, President Cari Manzer

External Communications

American Education Week Poster Contest, Ronda Stuart and Lori Miles, Enid Education Association

Special Communications

Professional Educators’ Association of Lawton, President Ruby Peters



Student artists shine in RAA Poster contest

Competition was once again fierce in OEA’s Read Across America Poster Contest. More than 300 students from kindergarten through 12th grade submitted drawings this year. First and second place and honorable mention awards were given in four categories: kindergarten through 2nd grade; 3rd through 5th grade; 6th through 8th grades and 9th-12th grades. All three place winners received a certificate while first place included a \$75 VISA gift card. Second place winners received a \$50 gift card.

First place winners are (clockwise from top left):
9th- 12th Grades – “Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The

Witch, and The Wardrobe,” by Morgan van Volkinburg, 9th Grade, Tulsa Memorial High School; Alexandra Kokorich, teacher.
6th-8th Grades – “My Friend Flicka,” by Mary Kravchuk, 6th Grade, Bristow Middle School; Dana Parrish, teacher.
3rd-5th Grades – “Ida B,” by Emily Lee, 5th Grade, Barnes Elementary, Owasso; Brenda Busby, teacher.
K-2nd Grade – “Mr. Brown Can Moo,” by Carlie Jones, 2nd Grade, Highland Park Elementary, Broken Arrow; Renae Wagh, teacher.

See all of the winning entries of RAA Poster Contest in the Photo Gallery on the OEA website, www.oeka.org.

Take care of this pesky detail

Is your teaching certificate set to expire June 30?

By Richard Wilkinson
OEA General Counsel

It's that time of year again; time to worry about those pesky housekeeping matters that, if left unattended, can cost you your job.

First on that list is the renewal of your teaching certificate. Standard teaching certificates are valid for a five-year period and expire on June 30 of the fifth year. You

are required to have a valid teaching certificate on file with a school district and you can check with your school administration to determine the expiration date of your teaching certificate if you don't already know or have a copy of your certificate. Why is this important?

• First, your contract of employment has a standard term that requires you to be fully certificated at all times during your employment with a school district.

• Second, it is unlawful for a school district to enter into a contract for a teaching position with a person who does not have a valid teaching certificate.

• Third, it is unlawful for a school district board of education to approve a warrant for a teacher salary payable to a person who does not possess a valid teaching certificate.

• Finally, you risk being terminated from your job if you at any time have a lapse in your teaching certificate while you are performing teaching duties for a school district.

The process for renewal is simple. You can go to the Oklahoma State De-

partment of Education (SDE) website any time after January 1 of the year in which your certificate is set to expire and complete the renewal process on-line. You simply answer the questions on the application and make arrangements to pay the \$50 processing fee and your application will be processed. If you prefer, you can download the application form, complete the application form and send the form via mail to the SDE with your \$50 processing fee and your certificate will be renewed.

You must apply for the renewal of your certificate before the expiration of the certificate or you run the risk of not having a valid certificate before school starts for the ensuing fall semester. According to the administrative rules adopted by the SDE, renewed standard certificates will become effective July 1 following receipt of the application, provided the application is made prior to the expiration of the certificate. If the application for renewal is made after the certificate has expired, the renewed certificate will be dated the first day of the month in which the application and all supporting documents are received by the SDE.

State law requires that all certificate holders be in compliance with Oklahoma state income tax laws before a teaching certificate can be renewed. The SDE is required to submit to the Oklahoma Tax Commission (OTC) a list of individuals who are applying for a certificate renewal and the OTC will notify any person who appears to be in noncompliance. The OTC will work with individuals who have tax-related issues; however, in the event an educator's certificate cannot be renewed due to failure to comply with Oklahoma's tax laws, the renewed certificate will be dated the date the SDE receives notice from the OTC that the

educator has come into compliance. In other words, your certificate will not be back-dated if you have tax problems and you will need to have those issues resolved before a valid renewal is issued. If you start the new school year with an expired certificate, the school district may – but is not required to – place you on a substitute contract for the period that you don't have a valid certificate and pay you the appropriate rate of pay for that position during that period. Upon the renewal of your certificate, the school district then has discretion as to whether to pay you any retroactive teacher salary for the period of time that you were on a substitute contract because of the failure to timely renew your certificate.

The consequences can be harsh, so don't delay. Start the renewal process early to avoid any problems with the renewal or with starting the school year without proper certification. If you have more questions regarding this issue or need help with this process, you can contact your Regional Advocacy UniServ Specialist for assistance.



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- 2014-15 Extra Duty Schedules for the top 40 largest school districts
- 2014-15 Base Salary Comparison, including the larger Oklahoma City Metro schools and a few from outside of the metro.
- 2013-14 Total Compensation Comparison of 23 large school districts.

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