

FOCUS

FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION- OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2016

WHAT IS

\$ Oklahoma's
Average
Teacher Salary?

OUR KIDS ARE WORTH THE PENNY

Recommended
Candidates for
State Legislative Office

State Teacher of the
Year Jon Hazell Never
Stops Moving

CONTENTS

3 Get
Connected

5 Why OEA Does Not
Recommend Candidates
in Every Race

8 Grants for Breakfast
in the Classroom

2
What, exactly, is Oklahoma's average teacher salary?

A look at the compensation of three Oklahoma teachers and how the national figures and averages are determined.

4
And the recommendations go to...
The OEA Fund for Children and Public Education have recommended more than 20 candidates for office in the general election.

6
Facts vs Myths of SQ 779
While the support for SQ 779 remains very high, there is still some confusion and misinformation about the proposed constitutional amendment.

9
Always Moving
Durant's Jon Hazell, the 2017 State Teacher of the Year, doesn't ever seem to stop, teaching high school science, running a ROPES course and serving as a senior pastor.



OEA and PEN member Catherine Wilson, with her husband, Matthew, participated in the Walk for 779 in Norman on Saturday, Oct. 1.

Photo by Doug Folks.

What is it worth to you?

By Alicia Priest
OEA President

A year ago, I wrote about a small flicker of hope for change in education. Now, we stand on the threshold of something HUGE with major opportunities to change public education for the better. I have one question for the members of the Oklahoma Education Association:

WHAT IS IT WORTH TO YOU?

Gandhi said, "Action expresses priorities." My priorities are my faith, family and making sure that the children of Oklahoma have opportunities afforded to them through a public education. To that end, I hope I live my life in such a way that others recognize my heart and core beliefs as expressed through my actions.

Some of my favorite times are when my priorities intersect. For instance, on October 1, my family got up early and went to walk and knock doors with me for SQ 779. I know they didn't really want to – seriously, can you think of a seventh grader who would desire to spend a Saturday morning that way? But, the fact is, they did. We walked as a family because we are committed to supporting one another's passions.

My heart is full when I think about it. However, my family's efforts, along with my desire to pass this promising constitutional amendment, won't make it pass. It will take all of us – which brings me back to my original question: What is it worth to you?

Is making a difference in your future and the futures of the students you serve worth voting with public education as your priority? If so, see our recommended candidates list (Page 4 and in the Members Only section of okea.org). Is it worth breaching the uneasiness to start conversations about what is happening in your class, your school, your district to make sure others have an opportunity to help public education?

Is it worth it to you to step outside your comfort zone and give a couple of hours to give neighbors information about SQ 779 and ask them to support it? Is a \$5,000 raise and an increase in funding for public education one of your priorities?

You see, we are at a crossroads in our profession. If we simply sit back and hope for the best, I'm afraid we'll get the worst. If we don't engage our communities and help them understand our issues, nothing will change. It's not enough to want the change. Gandhi also said that we must be the change that we wish to see in the world. We must advocate for ourselves and our students – we must BE the change agents.

OEA, there are many opportunities over the next couple of weeks to be the change you want to see in public education – for our students and for our profession. Here are a few:



John, Kenna and Alicia Priest on their way to the next neighborhood, walking for SQ 779.

- Walk and Knock for SQ 779 on October 29
- Volunteer for a pro-public education candidate
- Phone bank or address mailers for a candidate
- Donate to SQ 779 and/or a pro-public education candidate
- Make a plan to get at least 10 people to the polls on November 8
- VOTE ON NOVEMBER 8!

The Education Focus

Volume 34, No. 1

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

Alicia Priest, President
Katherine Bishop, Vice President
David DuVall, Executive Director
Amanda Ewing, Associate Executive Director
Doug Folks, Editor
Bill Guy, Communications
Lauren Burkholder, Social Media Organizing

Need help? Contact your regional team.

Oklahoma City Metro, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest Teams
323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK 73105
800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

Northeast and Tulsa Metro Teams
10820 E. 45th, Suite. 110, Tulsa, OK, 74146
800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

Join the conversation.

okea.org

Facebook – [Oklahoma.Education.Association](https://www.facebook.com/Oklahoma.Education.Association)
and [Student.Oklahoma.Education.Association](https://www.facebook.com/Student.Oklahoma.Education.Association)
twitter.com/okea (@okea)
[instagram.com/insta_okea](https://www.instagram.com/insta_okea)
[pinterest.com/oeaedupins](https://www.pinterest.com/oeaedupins)

The Education Focus (ISSN 1542-1678)

is published seven times annually:
October/November, December/January,
February, March, April/May, June/July
and August/September, 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.

OEA
Oklahoma Education Association
outlining education first.

What, exactly, is Oklahoma's average teacher salary?

By Amanda Ewing
Associate Executive Director

Misinformation abounds on the topic of teacher pay. It doesn't help that just about every pay stub looks different from district to district, making comparisons difficult.

When asked for a figure, the Oklahoma Education Association refers to the NEA's Rankings and Estimates for average teacher salary, which accumulates data from State Departments of Education. Apparently, each state offers a little different information, but the figure most often reported as Average Teacher Salary is actually total compensation, including base salary and fringe benefits such as health insurance.

Since states differ on whether they pay insurance or retirement, comparisons are rarely apples to apples.

If you listen to the anti-public education organization Oklahoma Council on Public Affairs, you might think teachers' requests for more funding to their classrooms and higher pay are completely unwarranted. However, anyone who has worked in public education or has a loved one working in one of our schools knows beyond a doubt that Oklahoma teachers and support professionals are struggling to get by on their current level of wages.

To illustrate the point, we looked directly at educators' pay stubs. We chose three Oklahoma teachers who are at varying points in their careers and work at districts differing in size and location. Their names have been changed, but their school districts and the details of their compensation have not.

The Younger Teacher, Moore

Base Salary – \$33,433

Extra Duty – \$7,000

Sarah is in her fifth year of teaching high school foreign language in Moore. She has a bachelor's degree and receives an extra duty stipend for teaching on her plan time. She utilizes her flexible benefit allowance (FBA), which is paid by the state, to pay for her health insurance. She doesn't cover any dependents.

A quick look at Sarah's pay stub conveys that her salary is \$46,756. Oklahoma's average teacher salary is often reported as \$45,317, and Sarah's salary would seem to confirm that. A closer look, however, reveals that is not the case. Sarah's base salary, as reported on her electronic pay stub, is \$33,433. She then makes an additional \$7,000 for teaching during her plan time.

Moore Public Schools, like most Oklahoma school districts, then adds Sarah's flexible benefit allowance of \$6,323 annually into her "salary," bringing it up to \$46,756. While health insurance is a valuable state-paid benefit, it isn't actual salary. Therein lies the crux of the problem with accurately understanding Oklahoma's teachers' pay.

With other professions, salary refers to the amount of money an employee makes that one can spend on rent, food or other wants and needs. Benefits, on the other hand, consist of things like health insurance, retirement, life insurance, etc. When you combine the monetary values of an employee's salary and benefits, that number is more accurately described as total compensation.

Sarah's salary of \$33,433 provides her \$2,786 per month, before taxes. When you add in the extra duty pay for essentially working overtime by teaching during her much-needed plan time, her gross pay jumps to \$3,369. But when the district includes her health insurance as salary, it gives the appearance that she actually makes \$3,896 before taxes.

The Mid-Career Teacher, Sand Springs

Base Salary – \$38,957

Rachel is in her 14th year of teaching elementary school in Sand Springs. She has a bachelor's degree and covers both herself and her child's health insurance. On her paycheck, Sand

Springs reports Rachel's salary as \$38,957, or \$3,246 per month. Sand Springs does not include health insurance in Rachel's reported salary, making her pay stub a more accurate reflection of what she actually earns.

Each month, Rachel pays \$267.50 out of her check for her child's health insurance. She voluntarily payroll deducts her OEA professional association dues, dental insurance for her and her child, and puts \$50 into a retirement annuity. At the end of the day, after taxes and voluntary deductions, Rachel brings home \$2,059 each month.

The Veteran Teacher, Marlow

Base salary – \$43,950

Roger is an elementary school teacher with a master's degree and 38 years of experience, and is still paid on Step 25 of the state minimum salary schedule. From his check, he also covers his wife's health insurance (\$605 per month), life insurance, cancer and critical care insurance and saves \$300 per month in an annuity for retirement. With an advanced degree and after a lifetime of teaching Oklahoma's children, after his voluntary deductions and taxes, Roger brings home \$2,048 per month.

Roger's example is the most telling of the plight of Oklahoma teachers. His salary compared to his experience makes the case for State Question 779, the penny sales tax that will give all Oklahoma teachers at least a \$5,000 raise. It also explains why we have a teacher shortage. With a post-secondary degree and more than three decades in the profession, he makes just \$43,950 – still short of the so-called average teacher salary of \$45,315.

“The figure most often reported as Average Teacher Salary is actually total compensation, including base salary and fringe benefits such as health insurance.”



get
connected



Lauren S. Burkholder
Social Media Specialist
lburkholder@okea.org

GENERAL ELECTION ONLINE RESOURCES:

- NOVEMBER 2: LAST DAY TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT
WWW.OK.GOV/ELECTIONS/VOTER_INFO/ABSENTEE_VOTING/INDEX.HTML
- NOVEMBER 3-5: EARLY VOTING AT YOUR COUNTY ELECTION BOARD
WWW.OK.GOV/ELECTIONS/EARLY_VOTING.HTML
- FIND YOUR SAMPLE BALLOT HERE:
SERVICES.OKELECTIONS.US/VOTERSEARCH.ASPX



BadVoter.org

NOT SURE WHEN YOU LAST VOTED? CHECK YOUR VOTING HISTORY, AS WELL AS YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, AT BADVOTER.ORG.



Oklahoma.Education.Association



@OKEA



@INSTA_OKEA



Pinterest.com/OKEApins

And the recommendations go to...

✓ **Eric Hall (D) and Greg McCartney (R), SD 13,**

Ada (dual recommendation) – This is a close race with intense engagement by Republicans and Democrats around the state. OEA has members supporting both candidates, each of which is a strong supporter of public education. Eric Hall is the band director at Ada High School (but not an OEA member). Greg McCartney is the owner of a home health and hospice company and is an Ada City Councilperson. Our local interview team was very impressed with both candidates.

✓ **Rep. Todd Thomsen (R), HD 25, Ada** – Rep.

Thomsen is a coordinator for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes program in Ada. He has been a consistent proponent of public education, is in his party leadership as well as on the House Common Education Committee. He has earned our support through his voting record, which shows an unwavering support for all of the education issues important to us.

✓ **Rhonda Harlow (D), SD 19,**

Enid – Rhonda Harlow is an instructional coach in the Enid Public School system. As an OEA board member and active leader in Enid, Rhonda aligns perfectly with every OEA position. She is a strong messenger for public education, and we would be fortunate to have her in the Senate.



✓ **Kevin McDonald (D), SD**

41, Edmond – OEA member Kevin McDonald, an English teacher at Edmond Memorial High School, is with us on every issue. His candidacy has inspired our Edmond local to get involved in his race and he is running a strong campaign. He has over 125 volunteers regularly helping him.

✓ **Macy Gleason (D), HD 29,**

Mannford – Macy Gleason is an SOEA member and her parents are life-long OEA members. Macy is with us on all public education issues, and we would be fortunate to have her in the Legislature. She is undoubtedly outworking her opponent and can win this race.



✓ **Jack Reavis (D), SD 9,**

Muskogee – OEA member Jack Reavis is a social studies teacher in Muskogee. He has been actively campaigning in areas of Tahlequah and Muskogee to win this race, and would a great public education supporter in the Senate.

✓ **Shawn Sheehan (I), SD 15,**

Norman – OEA member and immediate past Oklahoma State Teacher of the Year Shawn Sheehan is with us on all the issues. He currently teaches special education math at Norman High School. His opponent is a private school supporter who has not supported OEA positions on public education in the past.



✓ **Judy Mullen Hopper (D), SD 47, Oklahoma City**

Judy Mullen Hopper is a recently retired OREA member, formerly a longtime Putnam City member. Judy is knocking a lot of doors and doing the work a good candidate should be doing. Because it is difficult to unseat an incumbent, she is going to need every member in that district to help her get the word out.

✓ **Tammy West (R), HD 84, Oklahoma City** – Tammy

West aligns strongly with OEA on fiscal and education issues. She serves on the Putnam City School Board and has an excellent understanding of our issues.

✓ **Rep. Cyndi Munson (D), HD 85, Oklahoma City**

Rep. Munson might be the hardest working candidate in Oklahoma; she never took a break from knocking doors after being elected in a special election in the Summer of 2015. She is a strong advocate for public education.

✓ **Collin Walke (D), HD 87, Oklahoma City** – Collin

Walke ran unsuccessfully for this seat in 2014, but the incumbent is not running this time. Collin has raised more money than his opponent and his name recognition is high in the district due to his previous bid. Collin aligns with OEA's positions on all education issues.

✓ **Forrest Bennett (D), HD 92, Oklahoma City** – Forrest

Bennett is an American government teacher at the University of Oklahoma and formerly worked as an advocate for Oklahoma City Public Schools. He aligns with all of our public education issues. Forrest will be among our strongest allies in the House.

Why doesn't OEA recommend a candidate in every race?

The OEA doesn't take lightly the responsibility of recommending a candidate for election. When the governing Council of the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education announces a recommendation, we aren't simply saying we think one candidate would make a better legislator than another. An OEA recommendation means far more than that.

A recommendation means we believe a candidate, if elected, will be a strong advocate for public schools and their employees. It means that we have determined the demographics in the district are conducive for a candidate to win. It means we have verified that a candidate is working hard by knocking doors, raising money and seeking input from qualified advisors. Perhaps most of all, it means a passionate group of OEA members are committed to working hard for that candidate's election. If a race doesn't have a candidate who meets every one of these criteria, we don't make a recommendation.

✓ Mickey Dollens (D), HD 93, Oklahoma City

Mickey Dollens was a teacher at U.S. Grant High School in Oklahoma City who was a victim of one of the rounds of layoffs due to budget cuts. The event only strengthened his resolve to get elected and advocate for public education. Mickey's opponent expressed opposition to collective bargaining and raising taxes in his interview, as well as a belief that public education has sufficient funding if it would only combat existing waste, fraud and abuse of state funds.

✓ **Jeri Moberly (D), HD 74, Owasso** – Jeri Moberly is an insurance agent and City Councilperson in Owasso, a district that is entirely overlapped by Sen. J.J. Dossett's Senate District. Dossett's campaign team is trying to do for Jeri what they did for him. Jeri is with us on all of our issues. She has been elected four times to the City Council and her four fellow City Council members have voted her to be mayor on previous occasions. She is an active member of the local Chamber of Commerce where she touts public education as the greatest factor in economic development.

✓ **Lloyd Snow (D), SD 37, Sand Springs** – Former superintendent of Sand Springs and longtime vocal advocate for public education, Lloyd Snow won his Democratic primary handily, and he'll now face Sen. Dan Newberry in the general election. Unseating an incumbent is never easy, so Lloyd is going to need a lot of help. This seat is our best shot at changing the Legislature and its commitment to public education.

✓ Rep. Jadine Nollan (R), HD 66, Sand Springs

Rep. Nollan is a former school board member in the Sand Springs school district. She knows our issues and has voted in support of them since she was elected to the House. She serves on the House Common Education Committee, and her voting record shows her strong support of public education in our state.

✓ **Nick Atwood (D), HD 26, Shawnee** – Nick Atwood will likely be the new representative for the Shawnee area, replacing Rep. Justin Wood who decided not to run for re-election. Nick is a strong supporter of public education. At the last reporting period he had raised \$50,000, 10 times more than his opponent.

✓ Bob Ed Culver (R) and Matt Meredith (D), HD

4, Tahlequah – (dual recommendation) This is a competitive contest with two strongly pro-public education candidates. Matt Meredith (D) is a school board member who says education is his number one issue and he'll fight for public education every day. Republican Bob Ed Culver is an oil man whose wife retired after a teaching career in Texas. He also aligns clearly with our positions.



✓ John Waldron (D), SD 39,

Tulsa – John Waldron is an OEA member who teaches history at Booker T. Washington High School. He is doing everything right – he has knocked an astounding 10,000-plus doors and has raised more than \$100,000. John is with us on all public education issues, and he has an excellent chance to win this seat.

✓ **Rep. Katie Henke (R), HD 71, Tulsa** – Rep. Henke is a former early childhood teacher who, as a legislator, has supported OEA's positions on vouchers, the Reading Sufficiency Act and testing. She is a leader in her party and a vocal leader for public education. She has an open door policy with our members and our staff and has developed a good communication rapport with all.

✓ Darla Milligan (D), HD 12,

Wagoner – OEA member Darla Milligan is currently teaching 2nd grade in Okay Public Schools. Rep. Wade Rousselot, who just termed out of this seat, is working hard to help her become his successor. She would be a great advocate for public education in the House.



✓ **Mike Bounds (D), HD 43, Yukon** – Mike Bounds is a realtor and his wife is an OEA member in Yukon. His opponent has opposed most OEA positions in the past. It is always difficult unseating an incumbent, so while Mike is great on our issues, it is going to be a tough fight.

You can find a list of all candidates by legislative district in the Members Only section of our website, okea.org/campaign2016.

Finding the facts behind the myths of SQ 779

It comes as little surprise that there is some confusion and misinformation about State Question 779, the penny sales tax initiative that will appear on Oklahoma ballots on November 8. Here are some of the more common myths we've heard about the initiative and the facts behind them.

Myth – Whatever we get from SQ 779 will just be taken away by the Legislature.

Fact – The initiative has the strongest language possible to prevent the Legislature from reducing funding for education just because SQ 779 generates new revenue.

Myth – The lottery, horse racing and casinos were all supposed to be the answer for education funding. They weren't, so why should we expect anything different with SQ 779?

Fact – While those initiatives may not bring in as much money as promised in the beginning, all of them continue to provide money for education. Last year, the lottery sent \$27 million to education, which was cut \$58 million by the Legislature.

The biggest advantage for SQ 779 is that it is a constitutional amendment that can't be tinkered with by future legislatures. When the SQ 779 campaign says the penny sales tax is expected to raise \$615 million annually, it is quoting a figure based on current sales tax collections, not a guess of what a new industry might generate. SQ 779 is not the answer to all of education's funding problems – and the campaign isn't claiming that it is – but the initiative is by far the best potential new revenue stream in many years.

Myth – The Legislature will take our health insurance away from us if this passes.

Fact – We can't say what bills will be introduced next spring. Eliminating state-paid insurance for education employees is an idea that legislators have brought up in the past and we've not had a problem defeating it every time. We do not believe there is enough political will to take your health insurance, no matter what happens on November 8.



Photo by Doug Folks.

Norman's Sarah Bailey-Price, music teacher at Whittier Middle School, and her son David plan their route during October 1's Day of Action Walk for SQ 779.

Myth – The penny sales tax is only enough money for a one-time raise.

Fact – SQ 779 is a permanent, state-wide sales tax placed in the constitution. Money raised by the additional penny must go to public education annually, as described in the ballot title, including the \$5,000 raise for certified employees (except superintendents).

Myth – Teachers don't deserve a raise; nobody else is getting one.

Fact – Oklahoma teachers haven't had a state-paid salary increase since 2007-08. Since that time, our education system has heaped more accountability and requirements on teachers and the cost of living has continued to rise. Teachers definitely deserve a raise and SQ 779 creates a new, permanent revenue stream to pay for it.

Myth – Our cities will suffer if the one-cent sales tax is passed.

Fact – Municipalities are the largest opponents to SQ 779 because their revenue comes solely from sales tax. Before

writing the initiative, Oklahoma's Children, Our Future conducted extensive polling to determine the best way to improve teacher pay and education funding. Adding a penny to our state sales tax was far and away the most supported idea. Municipalities will benefit from

education employees having higher salaries because they spend that money in their communities, adding millions to the local economy.

Myth – We already have the highest tax rate in the USA.

Fact – Oklahoma's overall tax burden is among the lowest in the country. According to "The Best and Worst States for Taxes in 2016" (*Forbes Magazine*, March 2016), Oklahoma ranks 11th lowest in local and state tax burden at 8.6 percent. Alaska leads the way at 6.5 percent, while New Yorkers pay the highest percentage at 12.7 percent.

Myth – Not everybody will get a raise.

Fact – Every teacher in every public school district will receive at least a \$5,000 raise, including teachers in the best paying districts, those in state-minimum salary districts and even those teachers "off the schedule." It is true that education support professionals are not included in the language guaranteeing a raise. However, the OEA believes the money generated by SQ 779 will give school districts ample money for other line items, including raises for support employees.

Myth – We should believe the governor when she says she'll get us a raise.

Fact – Gov. Fallin can't do anything by herself. The Legislature must first write and pass a funding bill before she can sign it, and the legislature has been unwilling and unable to make any movement whatsoever toward more money for education for nearly a decade. We can't wait any longer, and SQ 779 is the only legitimate proposal to appear in many years.

Outlining the State Questions

By Richard Wilkinson
OEA General Counsel

There are seven state questions appearing on the ballot for the upcoming November 8 election. This article summarizes each of the state questions appearing on the ballot, which will hopefully provide useful information before you enter the ballot booth to cast your vote. The state questions are summarized in the order that they will appear on the ballot.

Death Penalty – SQ 776

SQ 776 is the result of a legislative referendum and seeks to protect the death penalty in Oklahoma. This referendum states, among other things, that when an execution method is declared invalid, the death penalty will remain valid law until it can be carried out using an alternate execution method. This state question was introduced during a prior legislative session when there existed legal challenges to the lethal injection protocol utilized when administering the death penalty in Oklahoma. Those challenges so far have been resolved in favor of the state; however, this state question would presumably preserve a death sentence until an alternate lawful method of execution is enacted if the lethal injection protocol is ever ruled unconstitutional.



“Right to Farm” or “Right to Harm?” – SQ 777

SQ 777 is the result of a legislative referendum and is being promoted as protecting the “right to farm” in Oklahoma. The referendum is lengthy and complex, but this measure would amend the state constitution and prohibit the Oklahoma legislature from passing any law that “abridges the rights of citizens and lawful residents of Oklahoma to employ agricultural technology and livestock production and ranching practices without a compelling

state interest.”

By inserting the phrase “compelling state interest,” this referendum attempts to elevate farming and ranching practices to the same legal status as race, gender and national origin when applying legal scrutiny to any legislative enactment dealing with those interests. In other words, this state question would make it very difficult for any legislative enactment dealing with regulating agriculture or ranching practices to withstand a legal challenge under the state constitution using this standard.



Penny Sales Tax for Education – SQ 779

SQ 779 is the penny sales tax measure spearheaded by University of Oklahoma President David Boren and supported by the OEA. The measure would amend the Oklahoma Constitution and create a limited purpose fund to increase spending for public education in Oklahoma. The revenue created by this fund would be allocated to common education (69.50 percent), higher education (19.25 percent), career tech (3.25 percent) and the State Department of Education (8 percent). The measure would require teacher salary increases



of at least \$5,000 over the salaries paid in the year prior to adoption of the state question. The measure prohibits school districts from using any of the limited purpose funds for school superintendent salary increases or adding superintendent positions as well as prohibiting the legislature or school districts from using these funds to supplant or replace other education funding. The measure also requires that the Oklahoma Board of Equalization annually audit use of the funds raised by

this measure to ensure that other education funding is not supplanted or replaced.

Sentencing Reform Pt. 1 – SQ 780

This measure creates the Oklahoma Smart Justice Reform Act and amends current Oklahoma laws by changing the classification of certain property and drug offenses from felonies to misdemeanors. The measure makes possession of a limited quantity of drugs a misdemeanor.



Property offenses where the value of the property is \$1,000 or greater remain a felony.

The distribution of drugs, possession with intent to distribute, the manufacture and the trafficking of drugs also remain felonies. This measure is intended to streamline certain aspects of the criminal justice system and make reasonable adjustments to the sentencing ranges for certain non-violent criminal offenses.

Sentencing Reform Pt. 2 – SQ 781

This measure creates the County Community Safety Investment Fund. The fund is created only if SQ 780 passes. The fund consists of the costs saved by reclassifying as misdemeanors certain property crimes and drug possession offenses (see SQ 780 above).

The measure requires the Office of Management and Enterprise



Services to determine on an annual basis how much money is saved from implementation of the Oklahoma Smart Justice Reform Act and deposit those savings into the fund. The monies deposited into the fund are required to be distributed to counties for the purpose of funding rehabilitative programs, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment programs.

See “SQ 790” on Page 8

Grants will bring breakfast to all students

Oklahoma school districts can now apply for grant funds from Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom (the Partners) to provide a much-needed healthy and nutritious morning meal to local students and help increase participation of the federally-funded School Breakfast Program.

Three to five state school districts will be selected based on the number of students that qualify for free or reduced priced meals, average daily participation in the school breakfast program and district- and school-level support.

The Partners, a consortium of national education and nutrition organizations, includes the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), the National Association of Elementary School Principals Foundation, the NEA Foundation, and the School Nutrition Foundation. Other states involved in the program are Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and Utah. Across these states, the Partners have a goal of increasing access to a nutritious morning meal for 30,000 students.

Through a \$7.5 million grant from the Walmart Foundation, the Partners will work with state affiliates and rework how school breakfast is delivered by offering it to all students at no charge and moving it from the cafeteria to the classroom. This is an effort intended to improve participation in the federally-funded School

Breakfast Program and boost learning and health.

While most U.S. schools participate in the federally-funded School Breakfast Program, barriers, including school bus schedules, late arrivals to school, pressure to go directly to class and reluctance to be labeled “low-income” have caused school breakfast participation rates to be historically low. Additionally, nearly half of low-income children who are eligible for a free or reduced-

price breakfast through the federal School Breakfast Program are not eating it, according to a 2015 analysis by FRAC.

“Studies show eating breakfast helps children have higher math and reading scores, sharper memories and show faster speed on cognitive tests,” said OEA President Alicia Priest. “When we think about how more than 60

percent of Oklahoma children qualify for free or reduced-priced meals, Breakfast in the Classroom is an opportunity to help a lot more children.”

The application is now open in Oklahoma. To find out if a district is eligible and to review the application, visit www.BreakfastintheClassroom.org.

For more information, contact Marty Bull, OEA organizing specialist, at mbull@okea.org or 800/331-5143.



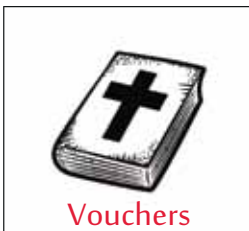
SQ 790 would pave the way for vouchers

Continued from Page 7

Tax Dollars for Religion and Vouchers – SQ 790

This measure would amend the Oklahoma Constitution by repealing Article II, Section 5 of the constitution (commonly referred to as the “no aid” clause) which prohibits the appropriation of any public money or property, directly or indirectly, for religious purposes, including the support of religious schools or sectarian institutions.

This measure was introduced by the legislature in response to an Oklahoma Supreme Court decision holding that the placement of a 10 Commandments monument on State Capitol grounds violated this constitutional provision. Although placement of another 10 Commandments Monument on State Capitol grounds



would be subject to a federal court challenge based on U.S. Supreme Court precedent interpreting the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, this measure would remove the state constitutional impediment to appropriating state aid funding to K-12 parochial schools in Oklahoma.

Alcohol Modernization – SQ 792

This measure repeals Article 28 of the Oklahoma Constitution and restructures the laws governing alcoholic beverages through a new Article 28A and other laws the legislature will create if the measure passes. This measure would allow grocery stores to sell wine and strong beer as well as allow retail liquor stores to sell products



other than alcoholic beverages in limited amounts. The measure would allow the legislature to authorize the direct shipment to consumers of wine. The measure also restricts, with some exceptions, ownership interests in only one area of the alcoholic business – manufacturing, wholesaling or retailing. The legislature would be required to create licenses for retail locations, liquor stores and places serving alcoholic beverages as well as designate the days and hours when alcoholic beverages may be sold. If authorized, a state lodge may sell alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, but no other state involvement in the alcoholic beverage business is allowed.

If you have additional questions or need additional information regarding any of the state questions appearing on the November 8 ballot, please do not hesitate to contact the OEA Center for Legislative and Political Organizing or your Regional Advocacy UniServ Specialist.

Always moving

Durant's Jon Hazell named Oklahoma Teacher of the Year

By Doug Folks

Jon Hazell is the teaching equivalent of a perpetual motion machine.

He doesn't watch TV and he doesn't have an iPod because, "I'm too busy. You'd be surprised how much you can get done if you're not watching TV every night," he said.

While it would make some people tired just thinking about it, Jon proudly admits that he teaches seven days a week. His "day job" is that of science teacher at Durant High School, Monday through Friday. He also sponsors the school's Student Council and Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter. On Saturdays, he runs a ROPES course. And on Sundays, he's the senior pastor at the nondenominational Community Christian Church in Durant.

Even during summer breaks, little changes for him. Jon and his wife, Jeanne, have taken several missionary trips to exotic locales like Africa and Mexico to work with – and teach – underprivileged families.

With that kind of non-stop drive, Jon will have no problem meeting the demands of Oklahoma's State Teacher of the Year. Jon was named the 2017 Teacher of the Year at the State Fairgrounds in late



Photo by Doug Folks.

Jon Hazell talks about how various muscles are identified with Durant High School juniors Kyle Hughes, Jade Clayton, Hannah Hime and Abigail Granger.

August. A change in Oklahoma's program means Jon will fulfill his duties next year, during the 2017-18 school year.

Now in his 34th year, Jon couldn't be happier with his career choice.

"I'm more enthusiastic now than I've been in my entire life. I love this job!" he said with genuine excitement.

It is more than three decades of perfecting his craft, of working with hundreds of young people, that make teaching better now than it was early in his career.

"At my age, with my years of experience, I can look at how much is coming

back to me now. That's where the money is not the most important thing, but the affirmation and the support and the things that I get from my former students.

"The older you get, if you've done your job, the more of that (affirmation) you're going to get. That's what inspires me. It's not an ego thing, it's that I know I did the right thing (to go into teaching). I'm doing the right thing. And when you know that (about yourself), it's something money can't buy."

See "Hazell's father" on Page 10

Balancing life as a public school teacher and a pastor

Separation of church and state can be a hot topic in some corners. But even though State Teacher of the Year Jon Hazell has been a public school science teacher and a full-time minister for more than 30 years, he has no conflict between his faith and his profession.

"One of the main things I teach my students is, don't become a slave to a book or a person. Learn to



think for yourself. Learn to question. Learn to do your own research. I don't have a desire to make a kid believe what I believe," he said.

"I learned a long time ago that my students know my faith right up front. Because I do so much with kids outside of school, they know who I am. So I don't have to stand up in a classroom and say who I am or try to force it at them. ... if they want me to talk to them about faith ... they know when the times are and the places are to do that. I'll be there anytime, anywhere they need that. But it's not my job to stand up here (in a classroom) and proselytize or preach at kids."

Hazell's father, wife offer inspiration

Continued from Page 9

Jon's enthusiasm for teaching comes from watching people treat his father like a rock star. Dr. Don Hazell taught biological sciences at Southeastern Oklahoma State University for 32 years, and Jon constantly runs into people who loved his father.

"You won't meet anybody that ever had him that won't tell you he was the best teacher they ever had in their life," Jon said. "I grew up hearing (how much my dad) influenced their lives. It made me realize, really young, that this is a profes-

sion that you could really, really influence people for good.

"He told me, 'You're not going to get rich doing this, but it is the most rewarding profession you could ever be in. This is the best job you'll ever have if you decide to do it.' That's all he said, and that's all it took."

If the past wasn't enough to keep Jon inspired day-to-day, he comes home to someone he describes as an incredible educator.

Jeannie Hazell is in her 32nd year as a second grade teacher at Durant's Wash-

ington Irving Elementary. While she may not be, "... the kind of person to go out and be flashy and talk (like me), she is the absolute best teacher.

"My wife is the backbone of Oklahoma education," he said. "There are thousands (of teachers) like her. They are just quiet, humble servants. She has a heart for kids."

Verdigris' Morris is a Teacher of the Year Finalist

In the last issue of the *Education Focus*, we ran photos of all OEA members who were named finalists for the State Teacher of the Year. We apologize for leaving out Dr. Kay Morris, kindergarten through third grade reading specialist in Verdigris, and Durant's Jon Hazell, whom you can read about on page 9. Also, Robin Haworth of Tecumseh, who is not a member, was incorrectly listed.



Dr. Kay Morris

TOY duties begin 2017-18

As Oklahoma's State Teacher of the Year, Jon Hazell will serve as an ambassador of public education, speaking to civic and education groups throughout the state, and attending events out of state. But in a break from tradition, he will not fill that role until the 2017-18 school year. Finding a permanent substitute to take the classes of the Teacher of the Year has proven difficult after the school year starts, thanks to a severe teacher shortage. So the State Department of Education has altered the timing of his responsibilities.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

(Required by 39 USC 3685)

The publication's title is The Education Focus (Publication No. 1542-1678). The filing date of the statement is September 29, 2016. It is published bimonthly, with the exception of two issues which are published monthly. Seven issues are published annually, in October-November, December-January, February, March, April-May, June-July and August-September. 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. Doug Folks (405/523-4355) 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 Amanda Ewing 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 28, 2016. 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. 18,000; b. 19,250. Paid or requested circulation through (1) outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541: a. 17,443; b. 17,138; (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. 454; b. 2,010; (4) other classes mailed through the USPS: a. none; b. none. Total paid distribution: a. 17,897; b. 19,148. Free or nominal rate copies for (1) outside-county: a. 78; b. 77; (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. 78; b. 77. Total distribution: a. 17,975, b. 19,225. Copies not distributed (office use, leftovers, spoiled): a. 25; b. 25. Total printed: a. 18,000, b. 19,250. Percentage of paid and or requested circulation is: a. 99.5% and b. 99.6%. Electronic copy circulation is (1) Paid electronic copies: a. 0; b. 0; (2) Total paid print copies plus paid electronic copies is: a. 17,897; b. 19,148; (3) total print distribution plus paid electronic copies is: a. 17,975; b. 19,225; (4) Percent paid (both print and electronic copies): a. 99%; b. 99%. The statement of ownership will be published in the October-November 2016, 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.

Switching health plans was like ‘giving my family a raise.’



Grocery store coupons are a way of life these days for Anne's* family. State budget cuts have Anne and her husband a little worried about their jobs.

"We're saving money just in case, and coupons make a difference."

Anne recently discovered that the right health insurance plan also makes a difference – a big difference.

"Health insurance is so confusing. It's easy to see why people just sort of blindly pick a plan to get enrollment over with. But believe me, comparing costs and benefits is worth the time."

While doing her homework for the 2017 Option Period, Anne found that a popular health plan choice among state workers in Oklahoma comes with a catch.

"The main feature is 'zero-dollar procedures,' which turns out to be nothing of value for my family. Those procedures only apply to certain situations, like outpatient surgeries. I can't remember the last time I needed outpatient surgery."

Anne decided on a different health plan with more beneficial savings for her.

"GlobalHealth features several 'zero-dollar benefits' that I can use every day."

GlobalHealth allows its members to see their Primary Care Physician as often as they need without paying out of pocket.

"My daughter has seasonal allergies and my husband has hypertension, so getting routine care without additional costs protects our family budget. I'll be able to just set up the appointments and go."

Anne expects to make at least a dozen appointments in 2017, and looks forward to leaving her checkbook at home.

"Potentially saving hundreds of dollars that I used to spend at the doctor's office feels like I'm giving my family a raise. That money will now pay for things like gas and groceries, and will certainly go much further than coupons."

Mzorevad1 2017

For a full list of exclusions and limitations, visit GlobalHealth.com/OKeducators

*"ANNE" is a representation and not an actual member.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT MSTSB17



UNLIMITED \$0 PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN VISITS

\$0 LAB TESTS

\$0 X-RAYS

ZERO DEDUCTIBLES

ZERO COINSURANCE*

ZERO SURPRISES



Mzorevad1 2016

A GREAT HEALTH PLAN GIVES YOU FAR MORE THAN OUTPATIENT ZEROS.

At GlobalHealth, we believe your health plan should provide more than discounts on certain procedures. Our plan gives you the freedom to see your Primary Care Physician as much as you want for care you're more likely to need.

Discover the zeros you can use **every day.**

➔ GlobalHealth.com/OKeducators

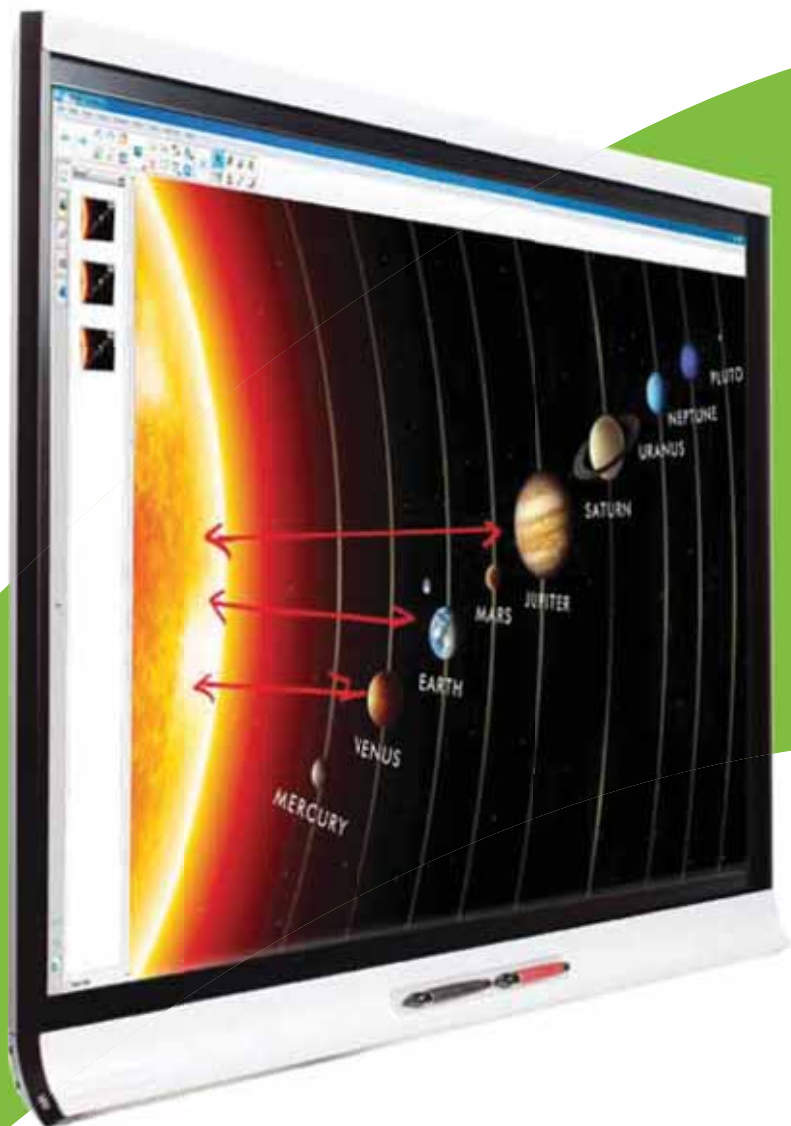
844.299.6999



*Excluding Durable Medical Equipment, Orthotics and Prosthetics, Diabetic Supplies and Infertility Services.

MSBST16

SMART Refresh Program



Trade in to trade up

The SMART Refresh program lets you trade in your existing classroom technology to receive a 13%* discount on any SMART interactive display. SMART products, third-party products, anything goes! Bring in any interactive whiteboard and leave with one of our world class interactive displays.

**Refresh aging
technology with
new world class
displays.**

Avinext

1.800.946.9727 x209
sales@avinext.com

*Discount off of SMART Suggested Net School Price. Resellers may sell for less. For eligibility, you must agree to remove existing classroom technology. Quantity limits and terms & conditions apply.

SMART®

2016 SMART Technologies. All rights reserved. The SMART logo, smarttech and all SMART taglines and product logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of SMART Technologies in the U.S. or other countries. All third-party product and company names are for identification purposes only and may be trademarks of their respective owners.



- 88 papers passed out ✓
- 17 minutes for assembly ✓
- 5 parent drop ins ✓
- 3 tutoring sessions ✓
- 1 standardized test given ✓

**With all
you do,
let us take
care of you.**

American Fidelity is proud to provide insurance benefits and tax-savings solutions for the education employee.

Oklahoma City Branch Office
800-933-1853 • 405-416-8810

Tulsa Branch Office
800-365-2782 • 918-622-6994

Lawton Branch Office
800-288-1239 • 580-248-0011

americanfidelity.com

AMERICAN FIDELITY
a different opinion 



Oklahoma Education Association
putting education first™

Periodicals



NEA members
are entitled to
**Complimentary life
insurance.**

Have you named
your beneficiary?

If you're an eligible NEA member,* you're covered. You have NEA Complimentary Life Insurance issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America (Prudential). It's active right now and you don't have to take a nickel out of your pocket to keep it active.

But you will want to take a minute or so to name your beneficiary. Or reconfirm the choice you already made. Making your choice can speed up benefit payments to loved ones who need them.

*Visit us online or call for eligibility requirements.
NEA Members Insurance Trust is a registered trademark of the NEA Members Insurance Trust.
NEA Complimentary Life Insurance coverage is issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, NJ.

0289584-00001-00

Don't wait! Name your
beneficiary today and get this
FREE tote bag from NEA
Members Insurance Trust.

Go to neamb.com/free-tote

or call 1-855-NEA-LIFE and mention offer
(632-5433)

code: TOTEBAG



DT391016