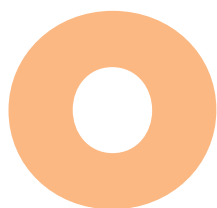


Education Focus

Funding, class size top members' priorities

By Carrie Coppernoll Jacobs



OEA members say education funding and class sizes are the top two issues they would like to see candidates embrace during the 2020 election cycle.

In November, nearly 1,000 OEA members took an online survey about the 2020 election, rating a variety of education issues on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most important.

The survey was designed to help OEA leaders identify the top issues members believe will be at play in next year's general election, when all 101 state representatives and half of the state's 48 senators will be on the ballot.

The survey is one part of OEA's 2020 election campaign, called "Education Is on the Ballot: Strong Oklahoma Schools Start with Your Vote." The goal of the campaign is to arm members with research and data related to key election issues.

In addition to funding and class sizes, members rated benefits, the teacher shortage, teacher and support pay, safety, worker rights, special education, and a cost-of-living adjustment for retirees as top 10 education issues our schools face this election year.

All four of the Together We're Stronger Goals made the top 10.

Education funding was at the top of the list with a score of 4.89 out of 5. Lawmakers added \$50 million to education funding because of the walkout in 2018, and last year another \$75 million was added to the formula.

Teacher pay made the most progress in 2018, with an average pay raise of \$6,100 added to the state minimum salary schedule. This year, lawmakers gave districts an

Top 10 Election Issues

Education funding	4.89
Class sizes	4.71
Benefits	4.70
Teacher pay	4.62
The teacher shortage	4.62
Cost-of-living adjustment	4.51
Support staff pay	4.45
Safety	4.41
Worker rights	4.27
Special education	4.13

Source: OEA 2020 Election Survey

average of \$1,220 per educator to disburse as they chose.

Support professional pay has been a challenge at the Capitol. The legislature gave support staff a state-mandated \$1,250 pay raise because of the 2018 walkout, but did nothing for these employees last year.

A cost-of-living adjustment for retirees has been a frustrating issue for both active and retired OEA members. Lawmakers

gave retirees a paltry stipend in 2018 and then put a COLA bill on ice this session. An interim study this fall showed that all public employee retirement systems – including the Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System – are healthy enough to fund a COLA.

Starting in January, OEA leaders across the state will receive information about election issues that they can use to educate their members, if they so choose.

Filing opens Feb. 1 for spring elections

Nine seats on the OEA Board of Directors will be on the ballot for the association's spring 2020 election. Filing for those positions, as well as at-large positions for Delegate Assembly and NEA Representative Assembly, will be open Feb 1-21.

The elections are scheduled for March 16-27, 2020.

OEA's zone directors represent members at the grassroots level. Each zone is made up of at least 1,000 members who elect their representative on the board. The newly elected directors will take office July 7.

At-large delegates to the Delegate Assembly and NEA RA will attend those meetings this year. The OEA annual meeting is May 8-9 at the Hilton Garden Inn and Edmond Conference Center, and the RA is set for July 2-6 in Atlanta. Oklahoma Delegates will arrive on July 1 for New Delegate Training, Informational Meeting and Oklahoma Night.

Filing forms will be available Feb. 1 at www.okea.org, OEA Headquarters in Oklahoma City or at the OEA regional office in Tulsa. For more information on the elections or filing forms, contact Maureen Peters at 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785 or mpeters@okea.org.

OEA Zone Director Positions

Eight open OEA Board positions are for three-year terms, which expire in 2023. These board members will serve as NEA Delegates in 2021 and 2022:

- **Oklahoma City B:** Bethany ACT, Okla. City University, Putnam City ACT, Putnam City ESP, Southern Nazarene University and Western Heights EA.

- **Oklahoma City D:** Choctaw/Nicomma Park, Crutch ACT, Deer Creek ACT, Jones PEA, Luther EA, Mid-Del ACT, Mid-Del SEMD, Mid-Del AVT, Millwood ACT and Rose State College.

- **Southeast B:** Haskell, Hughes, McIntosh, Okfuskee, Okmulgee and Sequoyah counties.

- **Southeast C:** Atoka, Choctaw, Coal, Johnston, Latimer, Leflore, McCurtain, Pittsburg and Pushmataha counties.

- **Southwest A:** Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger Mills, Tillman and Washita counties.

- **Southwest B:** Cleveland and McClain counties.

- **Tulsa Metro B:** Tulsa CTA and Tulsa PSET.

- **Tulsa Metro D:** Oral Roberts University, Okla. State University Tulsa Langston, Sand Springs EA, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Tech, Union CTA, Union ESP and University of Tulsa.

One (1) open OEA Board position is for a one-year unexpired term, expiring 2021:

- **Tulsa Metro E:** Berryhill EA, Bixby

EA, Broken Arrow EA, Jenks CTA and Jenks ESP.

Statewide Openings

OEA Delegate Assembly Positions:

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

- OEA/NEA Retired 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, 2020 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 Feb. 1.)

Remember these dates

January, 2020

Jan. 24 – OEA Awards Entry Deadline

February, 2020

Feb. 1-21 – OEA Elections Filing Period

Feb. 1 – OEA Committee Saturday

Feb. 28-29 – OEA Organizing Conference

March, 2020

March 6 – Outreach To Teach, Lawton

March 7 – OAEA Spring Convention

March 13-15 – NEA National Leadership Summit

March 15 – OEA Delegate Credentials Due

March 16-27 – OEA Elections Voting

April, 2020

April 10 – NEA RA Credentials Due

May, 2020

May 8-9 – OEA Delegate Assembly

The Education Focus

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OEA Oklahoma Education Association
putting education first.

Stowe, McIlwee enjoyed long, proud careers

Two long-time OEA staff members are waving good bye to colleagues and members this month. Tulsa Metro advocacy specialist Susan Stowe and Northwest teaching and learning specialist Mike McIlwee are both retiring Dec. 31.

Susan celebrated her 35th anniversary with OEA last June. She will be remembered by our members in the Tulsa Metro as a fierce advocate of members rights and an expert on bargaining and negotiations. She has been an advocacy specialist since the mid-90s and was an UniServ director at the start of her OEA career.

She has served as the staff liaison to the bargaining committee for several years and was an active member and leader in the Oklahoma Professional Staff Organization, the OEA staff union. As a classroom teacher, Susan taught kindergarten for seven years and served as a full-time release president for one year in Putnam City.

Mike has been a teaching and learning specialist with OEA since 2007, providing professional development not just in the Northwest but across the state. He has been the staff liaison for the Instructional Professional Development Committee and treasurer for OPSO for several years.



Susan Stowe



Mike McIlwee

Before joining OEA, Mike taught middle school math and science for 34 years – one year in Garber and the rest at Chisholm in Garfield County. Mike, who grew up in the association (his father was a local OEA leader), served on the OEA Board and was active in his local association throughout his teaching career.

Please join us in congratulating Susan and Mike – they will be missed!

Save \$10 on Organizing Conference registration

Early bird registration is now open for the OEA 2020 Organizing Conference, set for Feb. 28-29 in Oklahoma City. Registration is only \$35 before Jan. 25, and then jumps to \$45 per person through Feb. 26.

Arizona EA President Joe Thomas will give the keynote address at the opening session on Feb. 29. Arizona teachers held a state-wide action at their capitol in 2018, right after Oklahoma's walkout.

Friday night's activities will feature a panel discussion of NEON (New Educators of Oklahoma Network) and SINGO, a musical version of bingo as a fund-raiser for the Fund for Children and Public Education.

On Saturday, there will be breakout sessions on topics including a panel discussion on trauma and violence in the classroom, a panel for education support professionals, classroom management and organizing for school board elections, to name a few.

A regional planning session is also scheduled, along with time for OEA Caucuses to meet.

The Embassy Suites Downtown Medical Center Hotel will serve as the host hotel and will be the site of Friday evening's opening session. Rooms are \$105 plus tax a night for up to two guests, and \$10 for each additional guest. Call 405/772-1185 to make reservations, and let them know you are with the Oklahoma Education Association group.

Saturday's conference will take place at Metro Tech's Springlake campus. Registration will be open at 7 a.m., and the program will run from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Visit 2020orgconf.eventbrite.com to register, and find all conference details at okea.org/2020orgconference.



READ UP A STORM

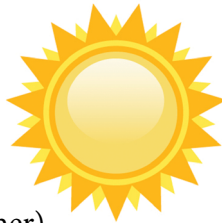
2020 OEA RAA POSTER CONTEST



THE ASSIGNMENT

- Student artists in grades 3-12 draw or paint a picture that depicts weather in literature. (e.g. Cloudy With A Chance for Meatballs or the twister scene from The Wizard of Oz, or non-fiction like Isaac's Storm or the Perfect Storm).
- Lower elementary students (kindergarten through second grade) may participate through the coloring contest. The official coloring sheet can be downloaded from OEA's website, okea.org/raa.
- All Oklahoma public school students are eligible to enter.
- Entries must be submitted on white, unlined 8½ x 11 paper.
- DO NOT FOLD ENTRIES.
- **Each entry must include the following information on a label attached to the back of the drawing:**

- o Title of Entry
- o Student's Name
- o Grade
- o School
- o School District
- o Teacher's name (homeroom or art teacher)
- o School phone number



Entries must be hand-drawn or painted. Computer-generated art will not be accepted. Pictures will be judged on creativity, use of color and content. Extra-credit if your picture includes weather!



DEADLINE

All entries must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, February 14, 2020. Mail, hand-deliver or overnight entries to OEA Focus on Reading, OEA Headquarters, 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105. (Entries received after the deadline will not be judged.)

All entries will become the property of the OEA and must meet all contest rules to be eligible for prizes.

PRIZES

An **Award of Excellence** and an **Award of Distinction** will be given in four categories, as well as an overall **Best in Show**:

- Kindergarten through 2nd grades (\$25 and \$10 gift cards)
- 3rd-5th grades (\$50 and \$25 gift cards)
- 6th-8th grades (\$50 and \$25 gift cards)
- 9th-12th grades (\$50 and \$25 gift cards)
- Best in Show (\$100 gift card)
- Up to three entries in each category will be named honorable mention (certificates only).

Winners will be announced on Monday, March 1, 2020. Prizes for the winning entries will be delivered in March; honorable mention certificates will be mailed to the students' schools.

For more information, contact Doug Folks
800.522.8091 / 405.528.7785 / dfolks@okea.org

In This Classroom, I Can Tell My Story

The Assignment

No matter where we come from, the color of our skin, or how we identify, public schools should be safe places. For this poster contest, create a picture that tells us how you feel safe and accepted in your school.

All Oklahoma public school students are eligible to enter.

Entries must be submitted on white, unlined 8 ½ x 11 paper.

DO NOT FOLD ENTRIES.



Each entry must include the following information on a label attached to the back of the drawing:

- o Title of Entry
- o Student's Name
- o Grade
- o School
- o School District
- o Teacher's name (homeroom or art teacher)
- o School phone number

Entries must be hand-drawn or painted. Computer-generated art will not be accepted. Pictures will be judged on creativity, use of color, content, and how well the artwork meets the assignment

Deadline

All entries must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, January 24, 2020. Mail, hand-deliver or overnight entries to OEA Focus on Reading, OEA Headquarters, 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105. (Entries received after the deadline will not be judged.)

All entries will become the property of the OEA and must meet all contest rules to be eligible for prizes.

Judging

One winner in each category will be chosen, and will be available to download from the Oklahoma Education Association Website, okea.org.

Categories:

- 3rd-5th grades
- 6th-8th grades
- 9th-12th grades
- Up to three entries in each category may be named honorable mention, as determined by the judges.

Prizes

Best in Show – \$100 gift Card

1st Place in each category – \$50 gift card

**Winners will be announced
Monday, February 7, 2020.**

This poster contest was created through NBI #13 at the 2019 OEA Delegate Assembly. The OEA Human and Civil Rights Committee will serve as contest judges.

For more information, contact Doug Folks
800.522.8091 / 405.528.7785 / dfolks@okea.org

The Last Word

with President Alicia Priest

We don't always get to see the action behind the scenes, or how the sausage is made. Believe me, a lot goes into the work of organizing and membership. There are trainings, meetings, listening tours, surveys and disaggregating data, coalition building, organizing, advocating, strategic planning, and more. And then, there are times when the power of what we do for and with our members is front and center on the news and social media.

When members of Western Heights believed they were treated unfairly by their new superintendent, OEA staff was there to help them organize and speak up. The WHEA president and leadership team leapt into action answering media calls, calling for collective actions like wearing #RedForEd and showing up at school board meetings. WHEA stepped up to support one another, and OEA members across the state showed immense support by wearing red and posting messages of support for them.

Another local who has been organizing and feeling the love of OEA is our local in Enid. The Enid Education Association, OEA staff and our OEA members at large have rallied around a member with an amazing level of support. You will want to watch OEA social media for updates and

participate as we move forward supporting Officer Dods and #SafeSchoolsForAll.

Here's the reality: We believe that an injustice to one is an injustice to all, and we have an obligation to stand in solidarity to support one another. We don't just believe that should happen in Oklahoma. We lived that belief when we sent a team to lend our voice with the Little Rock Education Association who went out on a one-day strike. We stood up for Arkansas students, who deserve better than segregated schools.

We must continue to organize. We must continue to use our collective voice, our power to stand up to injustices. Our members are our strength, and we are growing stronger with membership increases this year. I couldn't be prouder of who we are, the engagement and voice our members use when we see problems, the vision of what we want for our students, and the solidarity we show to make action happen.



Pres. Alicia Priest and Muldrow's Mandy Ramey wearing Red for Ed (above) and a scene from the one-day strike in Little Rock, Ark. (left), which included VP Katherine Bishop and a group of OEA members. (Photos provided)



88 papers passed out

17 minutes for assembly

5 parent drop ins

3 tutoring sessions

1 standardized test given

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