

Education Focus

Standing up for public education

Friend of Education Dr. Mary Clarke fought for safe and healthy schools

By Doug Folks

The COVID-19 pandemic created a very challenging, frightening time for our country. Even as thousands of people were dying from the virus, Oklahoma students faced opposition from state leaders who dismissed the urgency of the situation.

As a prime example, the legislature passed and the governor signed SB 658 into law in 2021. The bill prevented the State Department of Education from requiring vaccinations for COVID-19 or implementing a mask mandate for students.

The bill went even further, removing local control over a very serious health issue by restricting how and when school districts could implement mask mandates.

The Oklahoma State Medical Association stepped up for public education and filed a lawsuit against the implementation of SB 658. With the OEA and other groups supporting the lawsuit, a judge granted a temporary restraining order on parts of the law, returning local control back to school districts.

For her leadership of the OSMA and for standing up for public schools and the students they serve, Dr. Mary Clarke was awarded OEA's 2022 Friend of Education Award in early May. It is the association's highest honor.

In addition to fighting SB 658 and the elimination of local control in the

middle of our country's worst health crisis in 100 years, OEA joined forces with the OSMA to be a part of the Healthier Oklahoma Coalition. The alliance created a partnership of health care and education organizations throughout the state, working together to improve the health of all Oklahomans through advocacy and education.

Clarke's words spoke volumes when she said, "Educators are some of the heroes we forget about every day. We cannot do anything without educators. Education is the absolute pinnacle of every successful society."

Throughout 2020 and 2021, Dr. Clarke led efforts to provide timely information to help keep Oklahomans safe. Just as important, she worked to keep schools as safe as possible.

"The courage and commitment of Dr. Clarke and the OSMA to stand up for the health and safety of our students during the pandemic was inspirational," said OEA Pres. Katherine Bishop. "That support gave our members a source of comfort, knowing that we had such an important group standing up for us during a very difficult time."



"Educators are some of the heroes we forget about every day. We cannot do anything without educators. Education is the absolute pinnacle of every successful society."

Dr. Mary Clarke

Let's focus on what we accomplished!

I have never been prouder to call myself an educator than I have this past year and it's all because of you! As teachers, support professionals and administrators, it has been you who have kept our students learning, provided them with the transportation and meals they needed to be safe and healthy. And you've nurtured their spirit and well-being during some of our state's most trying times.

As we look back on the 2021-22 school year and what it was like maneuvering through a global pandemic, we often have a tendency to focus on what was not accomplished. However, I want us to focus on what we did accomplish.

You have endured through the Delta and Omicron surges of COVID-19, which brought disruption to our schools. We defeated bills that would have brought universal vouchers, loss of payroll deductions of our dues and threatened our locals who have collective bargaining. It was you who stood up and contacted your legislators to keep these destructive bills from being heard or passed.

You have shown that you are the experts and know what is happening in our classrooms and in our school buildings. Even though it is summer we can't stop sharing what happens in our public schools. We need to continue to share this in the grocery store lines, in our places of worship, to anybody and everybody who will listen.

Make sure that you are on the agenda at your school board meetings to share both your celebrations and challenges. Those who want to dismantle public education would love for us to be silent and

they thrive when they keep us in a defensive mode. This is our time to reclaim our schools and our voice.

While schools have been able to be back in person, OEA was able to return to in-person events as well this year. In May – for the first time in two years – we were able to hold Delegate Assembly in person and man was it a treat. Not only was it great to see everyone from around the state, but the feel was back with delegates going to a microphone to debate motions.

Delegates passed our 2022-23 OEA Budget, Resolutions and 2023 Legislative Goals. In addition, new business items were brought, debated and voted on. I am proud knowing that OEA's Delegate Assembly is the largest representative body in our state and the ultimate example of democracy in action.

In addition, your OEA Board of Directors last February set a plan into action with strategic goals centered around the areas of Respect, Our Kids and Activism. The board passed a motion that directed Executive Director Carolyn Crowder to oversee the development of a multi-year campaign to achieve the following goals:

- Professional wages and benefits in line with other professionals that have similar education and training requirements.
- Public schools meet the needs of the whole child.
- OEA's influence is felt in every election cycle and every piece of education legislation at the Oklahoma Legislature.

Our strategic goals drive us to one simple message that sums up our why – "Worth It!"



President Katherine Bishop

Why do our education professionals deserve professional wages and benefits? Because our educators are *Worth It!*

Why should our public schools meet the needs of the whole child? Because our students are *Worth It!*

Why should educators be involved in elections and education legislation? Because our profession is *Worth It!*

I hope that you are starting to see this message and we want to hear what this looks like for you. As this school year fades in our rear-view mirror, be proud of your accomplishments, for the lives you have changed and for the differences you have made.

You make me proud!

Katherine Bishop
President

The Education Focus

Volume 39, Vol. 4

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The Education Focus (ISSN 1542-1678) is published four times a year in the fall, winter, spring and summer by the Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

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

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Education Focus, PO Box 18485,

Oklahoma City, OK 73154.

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Oklahoma Education Association
putting education first™

That's all Folks!

By Joe DuVall

For 26 years, Doug Folks has worked behind the scenes to shine a light on OEA members and the mission of the association. At the end of this summer, he will begin a much-earned retirement.

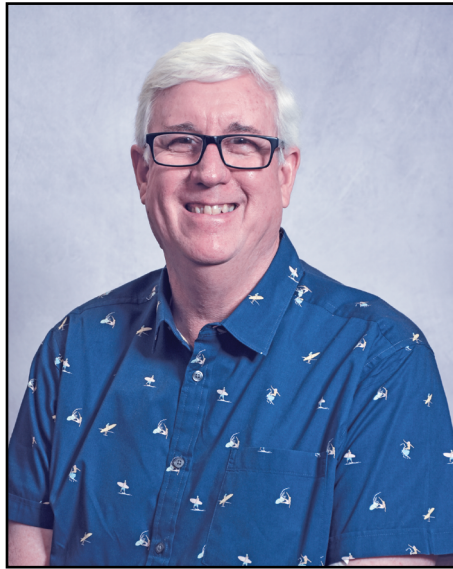
In 1996, Doug Folks had worked as a writer at the Edmond Sun, sports information director for the University of Central Oklahoma, and other public relations positions at multiple companies. However, he was still searching for something more fulfilling.

"I needed something I could believe in," said Folks.

Thanks to some help from now-retired OEA employee Bill Guy, he found that in the educators of Oklahoma.

"Teachers and support professionals are just so giving of their time and their talents, just in general for their job," said Folks. "I always believed in public education, believed in the mission, and it was something that was more than selling a product."

The opportunity to give his time and talents to support people and a cause he be-



Doug Folks

lieved in was something Folks has relished.

"It's so great to work with people who have the same values and interests. Being with people who have the same outlook on life and the same goals is awesome," he said. "I found my people at OEA."

From the initial boom of the Internet in the 90s to the modern era of social media, Folks has been involved in an unprec-

edented evolution of OEA communications. He admits there is a much greater focus on digital communications and social media than when he started, but there is still a demand for print pieces like this very *Education Focus* magazine.

"The important thing is just to meet members where they're at," he said.

That attitude has been a tremendous benefit to OEA during his tenure.

"The value that Doug Folks brought to OEA as a Communication Specialist is beyond words," said OEA President Katherine Bishop. "Doug is that true professional you want standing beside you to find the perfect words to say. Doug is a compassionate and fierce advocate for public education. Thank you for your service!"

Carolyn Crowder first worked with Folks when she was president from 1997-2003. When she returned in 2019 as interim executive director, it made all the difference to see her old friend.

"Doug took me on my first media tour as OEA president," she said. "I was nervous at first, but with his encouragement and support, I made it through without too many embarrassing moments. When I returned to OEA a year and a half ago to fulfill a different role, Doug was still someone I could count on to tell it to me straight and help keep me on the right track. They say you can't go home again – you can when folks like Doug are there to welcome you back."

When asked what he would miss most from his time at OEA, Folks said:

"The people. I made lifelong friends. You don't work someplace 25 years and not have long-lasting relationships," he said. "The OEA staff is so hardworking. They're just like our members; they're just so dedicated to their job. People really give their heart and soul to this association."

If you are lucky enough to know Doug, you know how special it is to be counted as one of his people. From his role on the communications team, to being a former OPSO president and bargaining spokesperson, to interacting as a colleague and friend, no one displays more grace and kindness than Doug Folks. Whether it was a member or a fellow staff member, everyone could count on Doug to lend a friendly ear, show earnest apathy, and provide honest advice that always left everyone he encountered better off for it.

OEA was blessed to have him, his time, his talents, and his energy for 26 years.

Stapleton readies for retirement

Long-time network administrator John Stapleton is retiring from OEA this August, after more than 11 years of heading up the association's IT department.

During John's tenure, he handled the day-to-day computer issues of the staff as well as maintaining the OEA network. He ushered OEA from an in-house network to a Cloud-based computer network that now allows staff to work and answer email anywhere they have an internet connection.

John worked in several different fields before joining OEA, including landscaper, supervisor for the Census in Oklahoma and horse trainer. In the early 2010s, he was laid off from a large, multi-national company that reorganized after a merger.

"It was the Great Recession, and I was an older IT guy in a field dominated by younger men," he said. "When an opportunity came up to interview with OEA, in my field and with an organization with a mission I really supported, I jumped at the chance and was lucky enough to get hired on."

After retirement, he intends to catch up on some gardening and landscaping projects he has been wanting to tackle. He and his wife Kim also have travel plans, pulling their Airstream trailer to camp sites around the country as well as some international trips, like Iceland in October.



Missed opportunities

Too busy looking for solutions to problems that don't exist, legislators leave money on the table for public education

To paraphrase hockey great Wayne Gretzky, you don't pass 100% of any legislation you fail to hear.

With that in mind, "missed opportunities" is the best description of the 2022 Oklahoma Legislative Session. In a year when legislators had a record \$10.3 billion to appropriate, there was no money set aside for raises for teachers or support professionals. No new money for the classroom. No reinstatement of the stipend for National Board Certified Teachers. There were bills filed to do all three.

Instead of creating a path to improve public education, the legislature wasted time trying to pass solutions looking for problems. Such as trying to remove the right of educators to payroll deduct their dues, allowing parents to sue librarians over books in school libraries, or hindering the ability of our local associations to work with their districts for full-time release officers.

There was, however, some good legislation passed and signed into law. Below we take a look at several education-related bills (both good and bad, in our opinion). You can read a much larger, more detailed account of education measures that did pass on our website at okea.org/2022bills.

Biggest Wins

Passing HB 3564 (Mark McBride/Dewayne Pemberton) – Creates the Oklahoma Future Teacher Scholarship and Employment Program, a five-year incentive structure for future teachers. Qualified students enrolled in an Oklahoma public or private college who meet satisfactory

academic progress standards in completing a teacher-prep degree program leading to a standard teaching certificate shall be awarded the cost of tuition, general enrollment fees and other fees for materials and services in the following manner: 1. \$1,000 per academic year for up to three years for full-time students with less than 90 credit hours. 2. \$2,500 for the final academic year for full-time students with 90+ complete hours. Maximum funds awarded will be \$5,500.

The bill also authorizes the Oklahoma State Regents to create incentive payments of \$4,000 per year for up to five years after graduation to those graduates employed as traditionally certified teachers in Oklahoma public schools. If the state regents have insufficient funds, the chancellor may make reductions to the payments. Effective 7/01/2022

Defeating SB 1647 (Greg Treat/Chad Caldwell) – This bill would have created universal vouchers in Oklahoma. Parents could take the state funding allocation and spend it on anything they deem educational – from private school tuition to laptops to transportation. OEA joined a strong coalition that fought this bill and Speaker Charles McCall publicly promised not to hear it. Surprisingly, it eventually failed on the Senate floor by a strong bipartisan vote.

Missed Opportunities

HB 3374 (Tammy West) would have created a law to allow for community schools, a model that brings families, services and neighborhoods together within the school community and would have allowed schools to receive millions in federal grants. The bill wasn't heard on the Senate floor after overwhelmingly passing out of the House.

HB 3757 (Ronny Johns) would have given support professionals a pay increase. **HB 4109** (Mark Vancuren) would have added education employees to the state's Employee Assistance Program. **HB 3072** (Toni Hasenbeck) would have reinstated the \$5,000 stipend for NBCTs. **HB 3565** (Mark McBride) would have given a \$1,000 stipend to all certified educators. None of these four reached the finish line.

Compensation

HB 4388 (Kyle Hilbert/Adam Pugh) – Dedicates annual net proceeds of the Oklahoma Education Lottery Trust Fund over \$65 million to the Teacher Empowerment Fund as a state match to local school dollars allocated for advanced, lead and master teaching certificates. The funding is on a first-come, first-served basis until the cash is exhausted for the school year. Each level shall have a minimum salary increase requirement paid by the school district and matched with state dollars. While the plan is locally controlled, the designation system must include a teacher observation, out-of-classroom time and a student performance component.

School districts may designate teachers for advanced, lead, or master certificates two times per year: once prior to the beginning of the school year and once prior to the beginning of the second semester. Teachers statewide who receive these designations shall be placed in professional development cohorts and provided with additional training opportunities from the SDE. A teacher who works in a school with an enrollment of 40% or more of economically disadvantaged students or a school district with an enrollment of fewer than 1,000 students shall be paid a one-time award in addition to the salary increases for advanced, lead or master teacher. Effective date 7/1/2022

OEA member engagement for the 2022 Legislative Session made a huge difference in our efforts this year. We had 301 individuals from 55 locals attend either a Civication dinner in their area or come lobby with us at the Capitol. By telling our stories and creating relationships with legislators, we defeated vouchers and helped pass a bill to address student loan debt.

SB 1631 (Adam Pugh/Mark Vancuren) – Directs the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability to establish a two-year pilot program for mentor teacher training with the goal of retaining teachers in our state. The mentor teacher (someone who has taught at least five years) shall be provided coaching tools to assist teachers who have been employed for one year. If funds are available, the mentor teacher will receive a one-time stipend of \$3,000. Effective 7/1/22

Curriculum

HB 3092 (Kyle Hilbert/James Lee-wright) – Requires a school's library media program to be reflective of the standards of the community it serves when acquiring materials, resources and equipment. Effective 11/1/2022

SB 1671 (Adam Pugh/Carol Bush) Directs the SDE to develop and make available to public schools certain materials and teaching units related to grade-appropriate education on the Holocaust. Effective 7/1/22

Labor Issues

SB 1579 (Lonnie Paxton/Kyle Hilbert) – Changes the law for full-time release officers of local associations. This bill, which affects only nine people statewide (all in education), says these officers are on leave without pay or benefits from the district. During the release time, officers do not advance on the minimum salary schedule, do not accrue any leave or accumulate service credit within the Teachers' Retirement System. Locals may not use school district office space. Following leave, the office employee can return to their former job or a comparable position. Failure to comply by the local removes it as the bargaining agent in that district. Effective 8/25/22

Mental Health

HB 4106 (Mark Vancuren/Dewayne Pemberton) – Public school districts shall maintain a protocol for responding to students in mental health crisis with the goal of preventing student suicide, self-harm and harm to others. The protocol shall be in partnership with one or more local mental health treatment providers that is certified by the Dept. of Mental Health & Substance Abuse. School employees shall be provided ready access to and regular training on the protocol. It also

requires school districts to provide written notification to parents or legal guardians on when the Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment Survey or an alternative survey will be administered and allows parents to opt their student out of the survey. Effective 7/1/22

SB 1307 (Bill Coleman/Mark Vancuren) – Beginning July 1, 2023, school districts and charter schools that issue student IDs to students in grades 7 through 12 must include phone numbers on the ID for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Crisis Text Line. Effective 11/1/22

Miscellaneous

SB 2 (Michael Bergstrom/Toni Hasenbeck) – Creates the Save Women's Sports Act, establishing restrictions and standards on student participation in school athletics at the elementary, high school and higher education level and permits related lawsuits to be filed. Prior to the beginning of each school year, the parent or legal guardian of a student who competes on a school athletic team shall sign an affidavit acknowledging the biological sex of the student at birth. Effective 3/30/22

SB 615 (David Bullard/Danny Williams) – Directs public schools and charters to designate multi-occupancy rest rooms as for the exclusive use of the male or female sex. Schools will provide access to a single-occupancy rest room or changing room to any individual who does not wish to comply with the provisions. School boards must adopt policies to provide disciplinary action for individuals who refuse to comply, and it forbids boards from adopting policies contrary to the statute. Schools that do not comply shall receive a 5% decrease in state funding. Also allows parents to sue districts that do not comply with the statute. Effective 5/25/22

OHLAP

SB 1673 (Adam Pugh/Jadine Nolan) – Starting with the 2022-23 school year, students applying for the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship program will have an income cap of \$60,000 for families with two or fewer dependent children; \$70,000 for those with three to four dependent children; and \$80,000 for those with five or more dependent children. Effective 7/1/22

Taskforce

HB 2768 (Randy Randleman/Rob Standridge) – Creates the Dysgraphia and Education Task Force and adds dysgraphia to the dyslexia handbook maintained by the SDE. Beginning in 2023-24, the dyslexia awareness program will include information and training in dysgraphia. Effective 11/1/2022

Taxes

HB 3901 (John Pfeiffer/John Montgomery) Reestablishes a Court of Tax Review that will oversee complaints challenging the valuation of real or personal property with a cash value as determined by the county assessor in excess of \$3 million. The court case must be heard within 12 months of the case being assigned. Effective 1/1/23

Teacher Certification

HB 2693 (Danny Williams/Adam Pugh) – Creates the Oklahoma Education Commission with charges to conduct a study on how to improve the quality of instruction and learning through remote modalities. Effective 11/1/2022

HB 3658 (Danny Sterling/Dewayne Pemberton) – Removes the requirement that teaching candidates pass the general education portion of the teaching examination (OGET) to be certified. Effective 5/5/2022

SB 1119 (Jessica Garvin/Kyle Hilbert) – This bill removes the 270 clock hours per semester limitation on adjunct teachers, allowing them to teach full-time. Adjunct teachers will not receive benefits or be required to meet the same requirements as a certified teacher. Effective 7/1/22

Transfers

HB 3038 (Brad Boles/Dewayne Pemberton) – Adjusts student transfer provisions to require schools to admit siblings of students if the school policy gives preference to siblings regardless of capacity. Also allows schools to determine if children of district employees are granted preference in transfers. Effective 5/4/2022

SB 1238 (Tom Dugger/Trish Ranson) – Adjusts provisions related to full-time virtual education programs to align with the requirements of the Open Transfer Act, permitting schools to operate virtual programs for transfer students living out-of-district. Effective 7/1/2022

John Cox Superintendent for Peggs Public Schools



What level of funding do you believe Oklahoma's K-12 public schools need, and as state superintendent, what would you do to advocate for funding?

JC: "I estimate that schools need an additional \$200 million for general revenue that is not earmarked."

Do you support using public funds for tuition for private schools?

JC: "No, I see that as giving money away that we need to use to enhance or help our schools. It will drain our

schools and kill our smaller rural schools."

As state superintendent, what would you do to recruit and retain a larger number of high-quality teachers and education support professionals in Oklahoma?

JC: "So the message has to change that being a teacher – having a servant's heart and being in public ed – it is extremely important. We also need to increase our baseline salary to \$50,000 for an entry level teacher."

What is your position on educating the whole child?

JC: "I'm a Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs person and I think we need to do everything we can to help a child regardless of what it is. The love and the basic needs have to be met before anybody can ever get to the level of self-actualization."

April Grace Superintendent for Shawnee Public Schools



What level of funding do you believe Oklahoma's K-12 public schools need, and as state superintendent, what would you do to advocate for funding?

AG: "We're over a billion dollars short in getting to where we need to be. But we got to get people to understand this is an investment. It's an investment in Oklahoma's future, it's an investment in our kids. Education is a critical component of economic development."

Do you support using public funds for tuition for private schools?

AG: "I do not support anything that would divert funds away from our public schools."

As state superintendent, what would you do to recruit and retain a larger number of high-quality teachers and education support professionals in Oklahoma?

AG: "I think we've got to restore some respect to the profession, number one. We also need educators to know that they can count on consistent ongoing pay raises in this profession."

What is your position on educating the whole child?

AG: "Educating the whole child is incredibly important. Academics are important. But we also all understand that we can't get the academics done if we don't take care of some of these other pieces as well. I'm a big believer in wraparound services within our schools."

William Crozier Retired, Union City



What level of funding do you believe Oklahoma's K-12 public schools need, and as state superintendent, what would you do to advocate for funding?

William Crozier: "I've looked at this for quite some time, so my project would be to reduce the cost of administrators and administration, also keep our money that's going to Washington, D.C., at home ... and we need to get the salaries up. There are too many deductions for health, too many deductions for retirement, too many deductions for other things for teachers."

Do you support using public funds for tuition for

private schools?

WC: "Money should not be deducted from public schools. Public schools shouldn't take the hit when people want to go to a different school ... If people want to go to private school, then they should get a tax credit."

As state superintendent, what would you do to recruit and retain a larger number of high-quality teachers and education support professionals in Oklahoma?

WC: (*paraphrased*) We need more input from teachers on how to do that in their local school.

What is your position on educating the whole child?

WC: (*paraphrased*) All students should have an opportunity. Kids learn differently and should have choices on what they want to do.



Ryan Walters, Okla. Secretary of Education, former history teacher, McAlester

Mr. Walters did not respond to multiple invitations to meet with OEA members of the FCPE interview team.

The Fund for Children and Public Education invited all Republican candidates for State Superintendent of Public Instruction to discuss their views on public education. Some answers have been shortened or paraphrased for space, but you can read complete answers of these questions from each candidate in the Members Only section of our website. The FCPE Steering Committee did not make a recommendation in the primary, and did not meet with Democrat candidate Jena Nelson since she does not have a primary opponent.

Oklahoma's primary election is set for June 28. On the following three pages are 16 races we're paying close attention to, but there are many others. Visit oklahoma.gov/elections to see if there is a primary in your House or Senate district. Remember, legislative districts have been redrawn with data from the 2020 Census.

Many voters are now in different districts and polling places.

Check all the details and make a plan to vote!

✓ A red check mark indicates a recommendation by the OEA FCPE.

Senate District 10

Representing Kay, Osage and Tulsa counties

Republican Primary

✓ **Bill Coleman** (Incumbent), Ponca City, radio station owner
Emily DeLozier, Sand Springs, retired small business owner



Bill Coleman



Emily DeLozier

Senate District 18

Representing Canadian and Oklahoma counties

Republican Primary

Hunter Zearley, Yukon, legislative assistant for Speaker McCall
Jack Stewart, Yukon, civil engineer



Hunter Zearley



Jack Stewart

Senate District 26

Representing Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Custer and Kingfisher counties

Republican Primary

Brady Butler, Fay, oil and gas company owner
Darcy Allen Jech (Incumbent), Kingfisher, rancher, independent insurance agent
JJ Stitt, Kingfisher, gun range owner



Brady Butler



Darcy Jech



JJ Stitt

Senate District 42

Representing Oklahoma County

Republican Primary

✓ **Brenda Stanley** (Incumbent), Oklahoma City, teacher/administrator
Christopher Toney, Choctaw, insurance agent



Brenda Stanley



Christopher Toney

Senate District 48

Representing Oklahoma County

Democrat Primary

✓ **George E. Young** (Incumbent), Oklahoma City, pastor
Rico Trayvon Smith, Oklahoma City, small business owner



George Young



Rico Smith

House District 5

Representing Delaware and Mayes Counties

Republican Primary

✓ **Josh West** (Incumbent), Grove, management
Tamara Bryan, Pryor, principal, former counselor



Josh West



Tamara Bryan

House District 20

Representing Cleveland and McClain Counties

Republican Primary

Anthony Mackey, Noble, municipal employee
Sherrie Conley (Incumbent), Newcastle, former teacher and administrator



Anthony Mackey



Sherrie Conley

House District 24

Representing Creek, Okmulgee and Tulsa Counties

Republican Primary

Bobby Schultz, Bixby, executive director of the Metropolitan Environmental Trust
Chris Banning, Bixby, business owner
✓ **Logan J. Phillips** (Incumbent), Mounds, professor at Tulsa Community College



Bobby Schultz



Chris Banning



Logan J. Phillips

House District 33

Representing Logan and Payne Counties

Republican Primary

✓ **John Talley** (Incumbent), Stillwater, executive director of Fellowship of Christian Athletes
Brice Chaffin, Stillwater, high school art teacher, pipeline operator



John Talley



Brice Chaffin

House District 36

Representing Cleveland and Oklahoma Counties

Republican Primary

John George, Newalla, law enforcement, president of OKC Fraternal Order of Police
Charles De Furia, Luther, profession unknown
Wade Roberts, Choctaw, business owner
Anita Raglin, Harrah, business owner
Donald Paden, Harrah, finance and management



John George



Photo not available for Charles De Furia

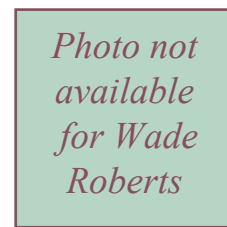


Photo not available for Wade Roberts



Anita Raglin



Donald Paden

House District 37

Representing Kay and Osage counties

Republican Primary

✓ **Ken Luttrell** (Incumbent), Ponca City, business management
Joe Vaden Jr., Ponca City, administrator and commercial
construction estimator for local roofing company



Ken Luttrell



Joe Vaden Jr.

House District 50

Representing Jefferson and Stephens counties

Republican Primary

Deborah Campbell, Duncan, grassroots organizer
✓ **Marcus McEntire** (Incumbent), Duncan, small
business owner
Jennifer Sengstock, Comanche, surgical technician



Deborah Campbell



Marcus McEntire



Jennifer Sengstock

House District 53

Representing Cleveland County

Republican Primary

✓ **Mark McBride** (Incumbent), Moore, construction company owner
Kathren Stehno, Moore, professor at SW Christian University



Mark McBride



Kathren Stehno

House District 57

Representing Beckham, Custer and Roger Mills counties

Republican Primary

✓ **Anthony Moore** (Incumbent), Clinton, attorney
Kristen Kelley Poisson, Weatherford, retired business woman



Anthony Moore



Kristen Poisson

House District 60

Representing Canadian County

Republican Primary

✓ **Rhonda Baker** (Incumbent), Yukon, educator
Ron Lynch, Yukon, small business owner



Rhonda Baker



Ron Lynch

House District 76

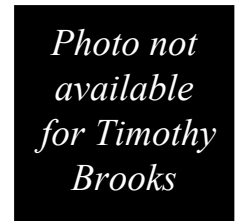
Representing Tulsa County

Republican Primary

✓ **Ross Ford** (Incumbent), Broken Arrow, small business owner
Timothy Brooks, Broken Arrow, insurance agent



Ross Ford



*Photo not
available
for Timothy
Brooks*

Provenzano makes things happen for public ed

As a former teacher and administrator, it's no surprise that Rep. Melissa Provenzano is one of public education's staunchest supporters at the State Capitol. A Democrat representing House



Rep. Melissa Provenzano

District 79 (Broken Arrow and Tulsa), she consistently votes for public education issues and has even authored legislation requested by educators.

Her efforts to support and protect public education are why Provenzano was named OEA's 2022 Outstanding Legislator.

Provenzano has a bachelor's in organismic biology from Northeastern State University and a master's in educational leadership from the University of Oklahoma. She taught biology at Tulsa's Will Rogers High School, then served as an administrator at Booker T. Washington High School and Hale Junior High in Tulsa, and at Bixby High School.

Outstanding Legislator Award

She is a member of the House Common Education and the

Appropriations and Budget Education Committees, among other assignments. In addition, she is Democratic Education Policy Chair and State Director of Women in Government

Provenzano has authored bills intending to protect students and teachers and call for more transparency, such as

- The Oklahoma Student Borrower's Bill of Rights Act, which provides for transparency on student loan processes and protections on persons taking out such loans;
- A bill to require teacher contracts to be for the length and duration of the fiscal year; and
- A bill that makes any public funds paid to educational management organizations subject to the same transparency requirements as other school spending

"Rep. Provenzano is able to reach across the aisle and garner support for legislation favorable to education," said Tulsa CTA president Shawna Mott-Wright, who nominated Provenzano for the award. "She is making things happen for us."

Hicks follows passion to career change

Education is truly a passion for Democrat Senator Carri Hicks. A former teacher and OEA member, Hicks was elected to represent District 40 in 2018 and from the beginning she has been a champion of public education.

Hicks has filed a long list of pro-public education bills and fought against bills that would damage public schools. That dedication to protect public education

Advocate for Academic Freedom Award

earned her the 2022 Advocate for Academic Freedom Award.

The honor is presented to a person or organization whose contribution to the safeguarding of academic freedom has had a significant impact on Oklahoma public schools.

After graduating from Oklahoma City University, Hicks developed skills in fund raising, advertising and publishing while working for the United Way and Saint Luke's United Methodist Church.

But that passion for education stayed with her, so she made a career change, earning a master's in early childhood education. She taught kindergarten in Putnam City before teaching stints in first grade and fourth grade math and science in Deer Creek, west of Edmond.

Frustrated by a lack of dedicated funding for public education, Hicks decided to run for office. She was one of dozens of educators elected after the 2018 walkout, but her campaign was well underway before those historic two weeks in April.

Hicks is minority whip in the Senate and serves on the Education, Health and Human Services, Finance and Energy committees. She has authored bills to modify the definition of "student teacher," require local school boards to adopt a policy for lactating school employees and secured passage of the Seizure-Safe Schools act.

Recently, Hicks was named CEO of Rainbow Fleet, an Okla-

homa City nonprofit focused on early childhood education and quality childcare. She serves on the nonprofit board for STEAM Engine.



Sen. Carri Hicks

A book for kids from all walks of life

Throughout her career as a school librarian, Amanda Kordeliski has always had a goal that students from all walks of life can visit a Norman Public Schools library and find a book about a character or written by an author who looks like them.

She is well known as an advocate for all students, modeling the OEA core values of equal opportunity and a just society.

It is these traits that earned Kordeliski OEA's 2022 Kate Frank Award, one of the association's Human and Civil Rights Awards.

The Kate Frank Award is presented to an OEA member and/or local association who demonstrates a concern for the well-being of association members through the advocacy of members' rights and recognizes the responsibility to assist others in their growth toward an increased level of association advocacy.

In her current position as director of librarians and instructional technology for Norman Public Schools, Kordeliski helps librarians build diverse collections to benefit Norman students. She has written grants and secured donations that have provided

books with diverse characters and authors so that each NPS library has a set of books representing their unique populations.

Kordeliski issues book challenges to NPS librarians, encouraging them to read



Amanda Kordeliski

Kate Frank Award

books from their school collections that include a wide range of diversity of characters and authors.

"Amanda continues to help librarians diversify their collections," said Brittany Arnold, Professional Educators of Norman president, in her nomination of Kordeliski for the award. "She has made it clear that building a truly diversified collection doesn't just mean buying books with diverse characters, but that it takes reading these books and having open and free discussion surrounding the topics that are presented."

Kordeliski's advocacy doesn't stay within NPS. She has served on the Sequoyah Selection Committee, been involved in National History Day, traveled with students to Washington, D.C., and twice won a spot in the prestigious Memorializing the Fallen. She has shared her passion with the Oklahoma Library Association's School Libraries Division and worked with legislators to secure better funding for school libraries.

Teaching is everything to Eschbach

After earning a bachelor's in secondary English, Jessica Eschbach landed her first teaching job. Not teaching high school English, but 7th Grade Eastern Hemisphere Geography.

She says the position came with all the "perks" – no content, no curriculum, an out-of-date textbook, and a one-page pacing guide. Welcome to the real world, right?

As hard as that was, Eschbach says the experience taught her how to be a teacher "in every sense of the word."

Eschbach is OEA's nominee for the 2023 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. NEA's highest honor, the award is presented as recognition, reward and promotion of excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession.

For the last year, Eschbach has served as Oklahoma's State Teacher of the Year, touring the state to visit with teachers, students, civic groups and legislators.

Award for Teaching Excellence

Teaching is part of every aspect of her life. Since that first trying year in the classroom, she has earned a master's of information and library studies and a master's of educational leadership. She spent time as a school librarian and is now an innovative learning coach in Norman Public Schools.

Eschbach's goal as a teacher is to empower her students with everything they need to be successful in the classroom. She also sets her focus on professional development and supporting teachers in the district.

"Jessica was a life-saver for so many," said Molly Dettman, library/media department head at Norman North High School. "From a student who recently lost her mother where Jessica became that



Jessica Eschbach

student's person, and helped her through what was an especially difficult time to also manage virtual learning, to the countless teachers who struggled to connect with students and revamp their curriculum. Jessica provided the support that kept them in the teaching field."

Going where she's needed

Amanda Lee came to Moore Public Schools as a single mom looking for a second part-time job. She was successful in securing a substitute cook position.

Now, 16 years later, she is a child nutrition manager at Oakridge Elementary, having worked her way up to running a school cafeteria. She's also active in her local association, serving as a site representative for the Education Support Professionals of Moore.

ESP Award

For her dedication to the children of Moore and to her association, Lee has been chosen winner of the 2022 OEA ESP Award. In addition, she will automatically be nominated for the National Education Association's 2023 ESP of the Year.

The OEA honor is presented to a member whose activities reflect the contributions of the educational support professional to public education in their job in

the school district as well as their work for the association.

Managing an elementary school cafeteria requires a good deal of flexibility. One minute Lee is making money deposits and ordering large quantities of food, and the next she's serving lunch on the line next to her team.

While Lee is dedicated to making sure her food service department runs smoothly, she makes herself available to serve Oakridge as a test monitor or running copies for teachers when they need a hand.

Paperwork and meal planning are obviously important tasks of running a school cafeteria, but at the heart of the job it's interacting with students she helps feed everyday.

"I find my joy each day knowing that I represent a critical position within this district by ensuring that each child has a hot meal each day and sees a smiling face," Lee said.



Oakridge Elementary's Amanda Lee

Rhonda Hover provides a steady hand

Rhonda Hover has been the foundation and guiding light the Perkins-Tryon Education Association negotiations team for years. In fact, she has been bargaining spokesperson longer than most people can remember.

For at least the past 15 years, Hover has been the voice of the bargaining team, work-

ing to improve conditions for all Perkins-Tryon staff. She works diligently to create good relationships with good administrations and some not quite so easy to get along with.

Hover's dedication to improving the salaries, benefits and working conditions of Perkins-Tryon support and certified employees is why she was named winner of OEA's 2022 Collective Bargaining Award. Under her leadership, PTEA has been able to negotiate a salary schedule above the state minimum and duty free lunch for teachers.

"Rhonda is our rock in the process and we would be lost without her knowledge," said Autumn Focht, PTEA president. "She is blessed with a wonderfully positive attitude and willingness to serve."

Hover is a Title I reading specialist at Perkins-Tryon Grade School. She has a bachelor's in elementary education and a master's in reading, both from Oklahoma State University.

Collective Bargaining Award



Perkins-Tryon Negotiations Chair Rhonda Hover.

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OEA/OAEA offer free OSAT prep

Free, online OSAT Targeted Support Sessions have been scheduled for this summer, sponsored by OEA's Teaching and Learning Center and the association's aspiring educators organization, OAEA.

The workshops will help prepare educators to take the required subject area tests for various teacher certifications.

July's sessions will cover Elementary Math, Constructed Response, Reading and Language Arts; Early Childhood; and Special Education Mild/Moderate.

Each workshop is conducted by faculty from Northeastern State University's College of Education.

Both current OEA and OAEA members and potential members are welcome to register and attend.

Thanks to a National Education Association grant, OEA and OAEA members may register for OSAT voucher codes worth \$60 each to help defray the cost of up to two tests.

This fall, OEA and OAEA will add new sessions on the History/Social Studies/World Government/Economics OSAT. The full fall schedule will be released in mid-July.

The full schedule of sessions and links to register for the workshops and the OSAT voucher codes can be found at okea.org/osatsessions.

For more information on the OSAT Targeted Sessions, contact a member of the OEA's T&L Center:

- East T&L Specialist Kimberly Littrell, klittrell@okea.org
- East OAEA Organizer Heather Cody, hcody@okea.org
- West OAEA Organizer Joshua Frazier, jfrazier@okea.org
- West T&L Specialist Mary Dikes, mdikes@okea.org

July 2022 OSAT Targeted Support Sessions Schedule

Friday, July 1, 9 a.m.-Noon – OSAT Math Foundations

Tuesday, July 5, 3-5 p.m. – Early Childhood Competencies I and IV

Friday, July 8, 10 a.m.- Noon – OSAT Elementary Constructed Response

Saturday, July 9, 10 a.m. – Noon – Early Childhood Competencies II and III

Monday, July 11, 9-11:30 a.m. – OSAT Elementary Math Part 1, Competencies 5, 6, 7, 8

Friday, July 15, 9 a.m.-Noon – OSAT Special Ed Mild/Mod Competencies 13-15, 3-4, CR

Monday, July 18, 9-11:30 a.m. – OSAT Elementary Math Part 2, Competencies 9, 10, 11, 12

Tuesday, July 19, 3-5 p.m. – OSAT Elementary SubArea 1.

Tulsa Metro A/B repeats as Stan Bryant Award winner

Members of Tulsa Metro Zones A and B accept their Stan R. Bryant Political Action Award during May's Delegate Assembly. The award is given to the OEA zone with the largest per member contribution level to the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Tulsa Metro A/B members donated \$7,636.04 to the fund for an average of \$4.56 per member, winning the award for the second consecutive year. Zone directors are Kelli Roberts and LeeAnne Jimenez and the Zone Representatives for the FCPE are Patricia Mott and Angela Statum, all from Tulsa CTA. (Photo by Doug Folks.)



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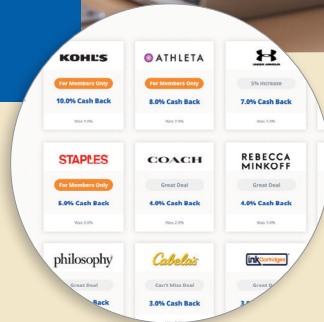
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