

The
Education

FOCUS

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association • December/January 2013-14

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into the classroom**

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On the cover – Mustang sixth grader Baylee Cartmill uses her smartphone to complete a classroom assignment.

The Education Focus

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OEA
Oklahoma Education Association
putting education first.

Who's been naughty, who's been nice?

By Pres. Linda Hampton

This is the season to be jolly – so with that in mind I thought I'd share my own "Naughty and Nice for Public Education" list. Due to space, I'll keep my list to four in each group. So, in no particular order, here we go...

The Naughty List

1. The Arnold Foundation – This foundation was founded by Texas billionaire John Arnold. They have committed \$2 million to change the Oklahoma's teacher retirement pension system from a defined benefit to a defined contribution. I have to question why a Texas billionaire is interested in Oklahoma's pension system unless there's money to be made for him. Sadly, his profits will be made by throwing public employee retirees under the bus.

2. ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council) – They "wine and dine" legislators across the country and, in the process, provide these legislators with "model legislation" to use when writing bills. Their sample legislation includes support for privatization of schools and vouchers, plus many other anti-public education "reforms." They clearly put kids last and corporations first. Check to see if your legislator is a member of ALEC.

3. The A-F Grading System – Any system that labels and punishes students, teachers and schools is anti-public education. A-F was intended to give parents a clear, easily understood picture of what's going on in their child's school. The current A-F system has missed the mark. It is neither easily understood nor an accurate picture of a school.

4. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction – The person holding this office should be the strongest advocate for public education. Sadly, instead of support for public education, we are seeing public education being labeled as failing by the very person who should be that advocate. The person in that position should be working with teachers, administration and support professionals, not in opposition to them.

The Nice List

1. Of course, at the top of the Nice List are **teachers, support professionals and administrators.**

You are the face of public education. From the heroic and selfless acts of courage demonstrated during the May tornados to the everyday reality of working in public schools, you make a difference in a student's life and are the key to their future.



Pres. Linda Hampton

2. The OU/OSU Policy Center – Their research has shown that the A-F grading formula is statistically flawed, inaccurate and an overly simplistic evaluation of schools. Rather than caving in to criticism, these researchers have continued to provide information. They have spoken in public meetings to inform parents and the general public about the problems with the current A-F grading formula.

3. Keep Oklahoma's Promises – This is a coalition of public education employees, firefighters, corrections officers, nurses and other middle class Oklahomans who are committed to protecting our pensions. In addition to our TRS pension system, other public pensions are being targeted. If they make changes to one of our systems, the others will be next. Thanks to Keep Oklahoma's Promises for helping us unite with one strong voice.

4. The Oklahoma Education Association – My list wouldn't be complete without including our members and staff. I think it's appropriate to remember that OEA held its first meeting on Christmas Day in 1889 – it was the only day the teachers could get off. That makes us 124 years strong. 124 years of supporting public education, our students and our profession. 124 years of doing the right thing for the right reasons.

Thanks for making my "nice list" and for all you do for Oklahoma's students!

Webinar will cover Project-Based Learning

Putnam City's Michelle Koehn will present Project-Based Learning at 10 a.m. Saturday, January 11. The two-hour webinar is the second of OEA's Targeted Skill Sessions covering Common Core/Oklahoma Academic Standards.

OEA members may participate free of charge while nonmembers may attend at a cost of \$150. Registration links for the January webinar can be found on OEA's homepage, okea.org.

Project-Based Learning teaches skills as well as content, including communication and presentation skills, organization and time management skills, research and inquiry skills, and self-assessment and reflection skills. This workshop will assist participants in making Project-Based Learning an integral part of their classroom learning experience.

Michelle is a National Board Certified Teacher and a member of OEA's Common Core Cadre. She teaches students with moderate to severe disabilities at Putnam City High School.

MACT member defends pension system

Institute's study says changes could hurt TRS

By Amanda Ewing
Associate Executive Director

The Oklahoma Education Association advocated to protect your pensions at both House and Senate interim studies in recent months. But when we weren't given the opportunity to speak at the Joint House and Senate Interim Study in November, we worked with Keep Oklahoma's Promises, a coalition of organizations working to protect pensions, to host a lunchtime seminar on the issue for legislators, staff and the press.

The highlight of the event was OEA's own Tami King, Moore ACT member and 5th grade teacher at Fisher Elementary. Tami made a compelling case that switching to a defined contribution retirement system means she's going to have to regularly manage and worry about her retirement, when she needs to be managing her classroom and worrying about her students, instead.

"Because of these proposed changes I'm now worrying about (retirement). I'm worried about what the changes will do for me" she told the crowd. "I'm worried about what the changes might do to the new teachers coming in. And friends, it is so hard to get new teachers into our system because of all the changes that are affecting them."

King also expressed that educators



Photo by Dawn Jones.

Moore's Tami King (far left) tells why she shouldn't have to worry about her teacher pension system during a presentation at the Capitol.

are definitely not in this line of work for the money and that the current retirement system is modest but safe. She said educators cannot afford to be "risk-takers" with their investments and ended her presentation with requesting education pensions stay with the Teacher's Retirement System since they know educators' needs.

Ross Eisenbrey of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., presented a report during the event titled, "Pension Overhaul Could Hurt Oklahoma Pension Systems." You can find the full report on the pensions page at okea.org, but here are some of the most important points:

- Oklahoma's pension funds have taken important steps towards financial stability since 2006, and have adopted best practices associated with well-funded plans nationally.

- Oklahoma would be ill-advised to abandon our current pensions. Specifically, a 401k-type plan would cost Oklahoma taxpayers 50 percent to 80 percent more for the same benefits because of fees charged by Wall Street firms and lower returns when employees make their own investments rather than managing everyone's investments together.

- Additional cuts in pensions could trigger turnover rates that undermine the quality of schools.

Keep your hands off my pension, pardner!

OEA President Linda Hampton posed the question in one of her recent blog posts, "Why Does a Texas Billionaire Care So Much About Our Pension?" Texan John Arnold has become a billionaire before his 40th birthday by making millions from Enron before it went under, then even more from his next company before its collapse.

In Linda's words, "[H]e is a master of making money, but others seem to pay the price and go under."

Certainly public pension funds in this country paid the price – and a hefty one – \$1.5 billion were lost from pensions around this country with Enron's collapse.

Now John Arnold has set his sights on Oklahoma. He claims he has a plan to improve pensions for all of Oklahoma, and he's even paying \$2 million to special interests in this

state to persuade our lawmakers to agree.

Let's just think about that. What are the odds that this 39-year-old Texan, a billionaire who made his fortune as a Wall Street gambler, is really looking out for your retirement security in your old age? As Linda puts it, "I say follow the money. If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and looks like a duck, it's a duck. In my opinion, this duck is going to do away with our pensions and then move on down the road to the next opportunity to make a buck – or, at least, a few million bucks."

You can read Linda's "Texas Billionaire" and other blog entries from "Simply Said ... with Linda" at okea.org/okea-blog.



get connected



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



FACEBOOK

Oklahoma Education Association

Shares, Likes, Comments!

OEA, 12/3/13: CONGRATULATIONS to Linda Ogle, McLoud Public Schools, for being our OEA Member Highlight!! (We hope you have a fantastic time at the Thunder game!)

OEA, 11/25/13: Day of Action, December 9, 2013, Wear Black!

OEA, 11/24/13: FLASHPOINT, Linda Hampton, President of OEA, spoke about Supt. Barresi, A-F grading system and what she believes is causing the frustration with the Oklahoma education system. (*shared video*)

Peggy Green Bryant, 11/26/13: Way to go, Linda! It could have been so easy to attack Barresi, the person, since Barresi's answer to criticism is to attack the Liberals and the OEA, but instead Linda addressed the issues. Great job!!! Even though Barresi is Humphrey's friend and he condones her abrasiveness, he needs to stop making excuses for her. She is a politician and should be working with EVERYONE to improve public education.

OEA, 11/20/13: Statisticians Tell Jenks Parents A-F Grading System is Not Effective



TWITTER

@okea

Tickling Tweets

OKEA, 11/23/13: Look who's on Flashpoint tomorrow (Sun), KOTV News Channel 4, OKC, 9:30 a.m. Had a great time, thanks for the invite!



OKEA, 11/19/13: Ewing: A teacher who has spent 25 yrs of teaching to max out at salary of \$42,000 (by law) – THAT is the problem with teacher pay in Okla. (*speaking at the interim study on state employee compensation*)

Diane Ravitch @DianeRavitch, 11/13/13: Great businesses hire well-qualified people, support them, mentor them. They don't abuse them, ignore them, seek ways to fire them.

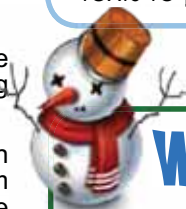
OKEA, 11/8/13: Barresi received a letter grade of "F" in all categories: Competency, Funding, Transparency and Overall Performance. pic.twitter.com/SjXXLMWmg

APP HIGHLIGHT

remind 101

remind101.com

This is a free texting application educators use to send group texts to parents and students.



What are EMOTICONS?

A representation of a facial expression formed by various combinations of keyboard characters (or phone applications) used in electronic communications to convey feelings or intended tone.

Here are some examples...



Reaction to the SDE's A-F Report Cards



Moments before the education budget is released



Reaction to the third grade retention law



Seeing the results of Supt. Barresi's Report Card grade of an "F"



Hearing the statement, "Barresi supports teachers"



After the 2014 Superintendent's election results are announced

STAFF FAVES



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Vice President
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Maureen Peters
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Teaching & Learning
Fav Social Media:
Pinterest



Erin Madden
Legislative &
Political Organizing
Fav Social Media:
Twitter



Brittany Branstetter
Student Organizer
Fav Social Media:
Facebook

Going wireless

Mustang welcomes smartphones and tablets into the classroom

Story and photos by Doug Folks

Schools deal with some real dilemmas when it comes to technology in the classroom. Teachers and administrators know that technology is a powerful tool in the education process, but how can a district afford to put a device in the hands of every student?

While most schools have a policy against cell phones in the class – for students and teachers – some schools are reconsidering that rule. Mustang Public Schools (MPS) not only encourages students to bring mobile devices, it has invested nearly three-quarters of a million dollars to make sure those devices function properly in the classroom.

The district's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy, implemented this school year, is part of a growing trend nationally. Just a year ago, MPS purchased 40 to 50 iPads for every school site. But the Canadian County district quickly discovered the need and the desire for devices

exceeded the capacity of the district to provide them.

"We started to see a greater need for devices within the hands of the students," said Geromy Schrick, executive director of technology at MPS, of the iPad roll out. "Our biggest dilemma was we didn't have enough funds to put a device in the hands of every student. We started seeing a greater usage of the iPads, but a lack of enough devices. So we decided we could implement more Internet access than we could physical devices."

MPS spent \$700,000 from its general fund to upgrade the district's wireless and network infrastructures. Today, the system can handle upwards of 10,000 students on the network at any one time, Schrick said.

"We probably never have that many kids on at the same time because elementary kids don't utilize devices quite like secondary students do," he said, even though students as young as second grade are bringing devices to school.

"We estimated we could see 2,000 to 3,000 devices on the system at the same time. Our students have instant access to the Internet. They don't have to wait to schedule a computer lab or a visit to the library," Schrick added.

Carnie Cullen, Mustang EA president and a sixth grade language arts teacher at Canyon Ridge Intermediate School, says about 90 percent of her students bring devices to school. Most bring smartphones, a few bring tablets. Students who don't have devices are able to check out one of the school's iPads or share with a partner.

So far, system connectivity has been great, Schrick said.

"Our only connectivity problem came when iOS7 (Apple's platform) was released and every kid decided to update their devices on our network at the same time. Other than that I think it's worked pretty well."

Wireless modems are sprinkled throughout the campus, typically one for every two classrooms. There are now 500 wireless access points scattered across the district, compared to 140 last year.

Ryan McKinney, principal at Mustang North Middle School, is a strong supporter of students having access to technology. He implemented a BYOD policy at Mustang High School last year while serving as assistant principal. And while he admits there will always be discipline issues when kids bring devices, the trade-off is worth it.

"We've had some issues, but we're going to have issues whether we have a (BYOD) policy in place or not," McKinney said. "We can either fight it or embrace it, so we're embracing it and we think the payoff is going to be a lot better."

Students do not spend their whole day with a device in their hands, McKinney said. Teachers decide when using a device is appropriate to the lesson, and some even have classroom signs that tell students when devices can be used.

"I still believe the dictionary works, but kids having devices has sped up the process," Cullen said. "You only have the kids for so long. It takes them a while



Canyon Ridge Intermediate students (from left) Baylee Cartmill, Lexi Wiese, Corbin Schultz and Gracie Enlow compare notes on a dictionary assignment using a smartphone and a tablet.

“ Kids who were reluctant to hold a book and read are more interested and anxious to use a device. The willingness to work has increased for special ed kids using iPads. ”
Ryan McKinney, Mustang
North Middle School Principal

to look through a dictionary, but they're pretty quick with their devices, so they get it done a lot quicker.”

Devices can naturally add to the lesson, she added.

“What I like with new vocabulary terms is they can see a picture that associates with that word pretty quickly and it helps reinforce that term.”

Mustang's wireless network has given teachers and administrators greater mobility. Many teachers have an iPad and Apple TV in their rooms, and there are plans to put one in every classroom. Administrators use their iPads during teacher evaluations but also throughout the day.

Even with the big leap to a wireless district, Schrick says his department can't stand still.

“Everything is moving in this direction, as far as wireless and mobility,” he said. “We're really just trying to keep up with the amount of technology being attached and maintaining the system is a pretty big endeavor.”

It's a constant, ongoing process for the technology department. Mustang opened two new schools this year and will open a new elementary in August.

In addition to the wireless network, MPS has implemented Google Docs across the district. Schrick said that soon students will have access to the Google Docs environment, and he hopes to eventually give students email access as well.

“Our next big concern is our complete bandwidth for Internet access,” Schrick said. “We currently have 100 meg for the entire district and we're looking at increasing that, (even though) we're only using about 40 percent of that bandwidth.”



Mustang's Carnie Cullen and 6th grader Lexi Wiese look at a lesson on Lexi's iPad.



Jackson Ridgeway and Tanner Krause, 8th graders at Mustang North Middle School, look up an answer for class using an iPod and iPhone.

“ I don't know if I would have been able to last this year (without a smartphone), it's just broadened my education. It gives me the ability to sit in class and put reminders on my phone if I have a project. I use alarms (on my phone) every night to do homework. ”
Tanner Krause, 8th grade

Technology isn't always the end all

By Kandis West

Hardback book or tablet? It's education's version of asking paper or plastic.

While we were catapulted into the digital age years ago, is there still value to a good old fashioned book? Is there something lost in translation when we move completely from textbooks to e-books?



About 20 percent of all book sales in the U.S. are e-books. Schools are also beginning to trend toward digital books.

We see that trend here in Oklahoma where Crescent Public Schools has virtually eliminated all textbooks in favor of digital sources for secondary students. Every 6th-12th grade student in Crescent is issued an iPad or an Apple laptop. With the exception of sixth graders, the students are allowed to take the devices home.

The immersion of technology comes with pros and cons, according to both teachers and researchers.

Ruth Anderson is a long-time OEA member who has been teaching in Crescent for 42 years. She has seen many trends come and go, but she believes technology is a tool, not a substitute for authentic teaching and learning.

"Technology is hands-on and easily accessible. It gives a first-hand experience to learning," Anderson said. "But, I don't want (the students) to be completely computerized."

She said some of her students still see the iPad as a toy for games instead of a tool to engage them deeper in their learning.

"It is harder for them to focus," Anderson said.

Preliminary research supports Anderson's intuitions. According to the November 2013 article "Why the Brain Prefers Paper" in *Scientific American*, "Even so-called digital natives are more likely

to recall the gist of a story when they read it on paper because enhanced e-books and e-readers are too distracting. Paper's greatest strength may be its simplicity."

Brain researchers have also found that people retain slightly less information when using e-books versus their paper counterpart.

Microsoft researcher Abigail Sellen said, "The implicit feel of where you are in a physical book turns out to be more important than we realized."

This is likely because when people

recall a passage, they often picture it on the page. *Scientific American* author Ferris Jabr stated in the article, "The human brain may perceive a text in its entirety as a kind of physical landscape. When we read, we construct a mental representation of the text that is likely similar to the mental maps we create of terrain or indoor spaces."

So, the combination of too many bells and whistles along with the lack of physicality may hinder people from remembering what they read on computers.

Anderson also noticed another difference in her students using computers when typing information instead of writing it on paper and pencil.

"Computers are impersonal," Anderson said.

For her sixth graders, she believes they can express themselves on paper and pencil in ways that don't exactly translate when using computers.

Recent research by Karin James of Indiana University Bloomington suggests that people use different brain circuits when writing on paper than when typing. The reading circuits of the brain were active in five year old children when writing letters by hand, but not when typing letters on keyboards.

So, what does the research mean for students and teachers across the state? Maybe we should keep the paper and pencil handy ... at least for taking notes.

Anderson suggests that using technology in the classroom is more about blending and balancing and maybe less about total immersion.

Teens & Technology

78% of teens have a cell phone – 47% of them own smartphones.

23% of teens own a tablet computer, which is a level comparable to the general adult population.

95% of teens use the Internet.

93% of teens have a computer or have access to one at home. 71% of teens with home computer access say the laptop or desktop they use most often is one they share with other family members.

From the pewinternet.org survey, Teens and Technology 2013.

Free app provides school info to parents

Technology is vital to the education process, but it's very expensive. Schools across the country are getting a break from Norman-based School Connect, which offers a free smart phone application that is giving schools an incredible communications tool.

The app allows districts and school sites to push messages to parents about school programs or sporting events, or closings due to weather. Teachers use the app to remind students



of assignments and tests. The messages are one-way (no responses allowed), but keep parents informed with the latest information.

Nick Migliorino, CEO of School Connect, created the app while he was an administrator in Norman Public Schools. He started his career as a teacher and coach in Norman, was an as-

sistant principal in Moore and Putnam City, and then a principal at Tahlequah High School before coming back to Norman as director of secondary schools.

Migliorino was the first person to receive a doctorate in technological education from the University of Oklahoma. He always felt that schools needed to have access to smartphone technology, but he realized it was also very expensive.

"I created the app with support from some other people and I've have been giving it away ever since. We give it to about five to 10 districts a week," he said.

More than 140 Oklahoma districts are using the app and another 230 are in the process of customizing their own version of School Connect. Nationally, School Connect is used by 302 districts with 759 working with the company to get their own app. Those districts represent 77,167 staff and more than 4.7 million students. Norman and Edmond are two the most active users of the app in the country.

School Connect is completely free, paid for by ads from Josten's. In addition to the push notices, parents have access to school listings, teacher pages, weather forecasts, club and organization news, staff directories, safety contacts, athletic schedules and customized links. Schools can customize the app to fit their individual needs.

Migliorino's next project is to release an auto-dialer program for schools at about half the cost of other similar services. The program will cost the same for all schools so that it is affordable regardless of district size.

The School Connect app is available for Apple and Android products. For more information, visit schoolconnectservices.com.

Inexpensive bus cameras improve discipline

Discipline has greatly improved on McAlester Public Schools' buses since the district installed cameras in the fleet. Transportation director Billie Sistrunk said the district outfitted 22 buses with "cheap" ball cameras from RTyler Technologies.

Each camera cost \$495 and includes an SD card which contains up to 32 gigs of data – about three weeks' worth of video. Sistrunk typically pulls the videos off the cameras and uploads them to a shared website only when there are disciplinary issues, or to erase old data when the SD cards get full.

"The cameras were installed for student and driver safety," she said. "Student behavior has improved."

McAlester piloted the bus camera project with a dozen units last year and added cameras to the rest of the fleet this fall.

Each unit is hard-wired to the ignition switch so when the bus is running the camera is running, and it continues to record for about two minutes after the bus is turned off.

"We wanted something pretty basic, not complicated," Sistrunk said. Each system is

compatible for up to three cameras on one bus, and McAlester hopes to add cameras to the back of each bus in the future.

Sistrunk said the cameras produce a "...surprisingly good photo," even in low light like early mornings.



Can I collect my salary if my school district runs out of money?

By Richard Wilkinson
OEA General Counsel

With the current climate of sparse education funding becoming a gradual reality year after year, many questions arise as to what will happen to an employee's pay if a school district either runs short of money during the fiscal year, or runs out of money before the end of the current fiscal year. There are several remedies available to address either scenario.

If a school district does not have sufficient funds in its bank account to cover the cost of issuing payroll or other checks, one remedy is for the district to

school district promises to pay the bank at some point in the future the cost of the nonpayable warrant plus applicable interest. Issuing a nonpayable warrant is a

From your counsel

method of dealing with cash flow shortages that may occur during a fiscal year, particularly when state aid allocations have been reduced.

If a school district actually runs out of money during a fiscal year, yet still owes money for services already performed



Richard Wilkinson

what it has lawfully obligated itself to pay during the particular fiscal year.

In those instances, an employee or vendor must first file a lawsuit against the school district alleging that they have a lawful claim for money against the school district. Next, a court must rule that the school district owes the money for the services performed or for the balance of a contract, often referred to as the "entry of judgment."

Finally, once the court enters a judgment, state law requires that any money judgment against a school district be paid out of the sinking fund of the school district over a three-year period. Judgments against a sinking fund may be assigned to a financial institution that will typically pay the employee or vendor face value for the judgment and then collect the judgment and accrued interest on the judgment from the sinking fund over the three-year period.

While issuing nonpayable warrants is a method of quickly paying employees or vendors when a school district suffers cash flow problems during a fiscal year, the legal process of collecting a sinking fund judgment when a school district runs out of money during a fiscal year is more time consuming and may result in a delay in ultimately collecting wages owed an employee.

If either of these scenarios occurs in your school district, you can contact your OEA Regional Advocacy UniServ Specialist or the OEA Center for Legal and Corporate Services for assistance in dealing with these issues.

issue what are referred to as nonpayable warrants. A nonpayable warrant has the same value to an employee or vendor as a regular school check. Even though the warrant is titled nonpayable, the warrant can still be submitted to a bank for deposit, just like any other check.

When issuing a nonpayable warrant, the school district makes arrangements with its bank to issue the nonpayable warrant and the bank agrees to cover the amount of the warrant. In return, the

or for contracts that have been made and approved within the fiscal year budget, then a more complex scenario may be required to collect the money owed for the services performed or the balance of an employment or other contract. An employee or vendor will likely be required to take legal action against a school district, sometimes referred to as a "friendly suit" since there is typically no dispute that the money is owed, only that the district does not have sufficient funds to pay



YUMMY!

Pres. Hampton and VP Priest share their favorite holiday recipes

Sweet Potato Praline

VP Alicia Priest – *My family requests this every Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year, my daughter Kenna made it – and doubled the recipe. It made for great math and memories.*

Ingredients:

1 can (40 oz.) sweet potatoes, drained
1/4 cup granulated sugar
2 tbsp. margarine, melted
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
2 large eggs

Topping:

3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup pecans, chopped
3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
3 Tbsp. margarine, melted

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease shallow 1 1/2-quart casserole dish (this is an important step – otherwise difficult to scrub out what sticks). In bowl, mash sweet potatoes; stir in granulated sugar, margarine, vanilla, cinnamon, salt and eggs. Spoon into prepared casserole dish. Mix topping ingredients; sprinkle on potato mixture. Bake 30 minutes. Serves 6.



Kenna Priest



Pres. Linda Hampton

Hot Cocoa Mix

President Linda Hampton – *When I thought about Christmas food traditions at my house the first one that came to mind was this cocoa recipe. It was given to me years ago by a family member along with a container of the cocoa. I make it every year and often pass on the tradition of giving a Christmas container full of the cocoa and the recipe to friends. For me, a nice, hot cup of cocoa says Christmas and home.*

Ingredients:

1 25 oz. package of instant nonfat dry milk
1 1 lb. box of powdered sugar
1 16 oz. pkg. instant Nestles Quick
1 6 oz. jar of nondairy coffee creamer

To serve, add 2-3 tsp. per cup of hot water.

OEA awards honor education's best

The Oklahoma Education Association's annual awards program honors those who promote and support public education, members who exemplify greatness in the classroom, and local affiliates who excel for their members.

Nominations must be received at OEA Headquarters by January 31. Send nominations so that they arrive by the deadline to OEA Awards, PO Box 18485, Okla. City, OK, 73154; or overnight or hand-deliver them to the OEA at 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105.

You can find a complete description of all OEA awards and nomination forms that can be filled out online at okea.org/awardsbook. Following is an overview of OEA's many awards.

Board of Directors Awards

Nominations for the following awards must come from a current member of the OEA Board of Directors.

Friend of Education – OEA's highest award, the Friend of Education honors a person who has made significant contributions to the betterment of public education. Previous winners include *Oklahoma Observer* founding editor Frosty Troy, Tulsa philanthropist Henry Zarrow and former Gov. Henry Bellmon.

NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence – Each NEA state affiliate may nominate one member for this prestigious award. All affiliate nominees receive expenses-paid travel to the NEA Foundation's Annual Salute to Excellence Gala in Washington, D.C. Five national finalists receive \$10,000 cash awards and the winner receives \$25,000. Contact Rheta Kennedy at 800.522.8091 for a nomination packet.

Claude A. Dyer Memorial Award – Given to an Oklahoma educator who has worked to bring about legislative action for

equitable salaries and desirable working conditions, and has rendered leadership and direction in efforts to protect and advance the civil and human rights and responsibilities of educators.

Political Activist Award – Given to an individual or organization who exhibits a willingness and determination to promote the goals of the OEA through activities in the political arena.

Outstanding Legislator – Presented to legislators for outstanding support of public education and education employees.

Advocate For Academic Freedom – Honors a person or organization whose contribution to the safeguarding of academic freedom has had a significant impact on the public schools in Oklahoma and the nation.

Human and Civil Rights Awards

Kate Frank Award – Presented to the OEA member and/or local Association rendering outstanding and significant service to advancing the cause of member welfare, rights and professionalism.

Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award – Presented to a business or group which has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

F.D. Moon Educational Award – Presented to the person who has contributed significantly to the advancement of education for students.

Glenn Snider Human Relations Award – Presented to the school district, individual or organization best exemplifying the practice of effective human relations and concerns for human rights.

Continued on next page

Bontke will share hazards of social media

The 2014 Advocacy Conference will offer a slightly different format than in years past as Saturday morning of the conference will be devoted to a single, keynote speaker.

"Back to the Future" is the theme for this year's conference, February 21-22, at the Waterford Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City. Online registration is now available from a link on the OEA homepage, okea.org, or at <http://14advconf.eventbrite.com>.

Joe Bontke, ombudsman and outreach manager for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, will provide a keynote presentation on the morning of the 22nd. During his address, "Social Media: Technology and Ramifications in the Workplace," he will discuss the hazards of social media for education employees and how to avoid them.

Bontke has a bachelor's in philosophy and a master's in education, and 27 years of experience in employment law and adult education. He gave a similar presentation at last May's Labor/Management Conference in Oklahoma City.

Breakout session topics during the afternoon of the 22nd will include Advocating for Members using OAMs (Other Academic Measures), Ask a Lawyer, and two different presentations by Bobby Thompson and John Doern of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services.

Conference registration is \$35 per person for active certified members. Registration for education support professional members is \$15 with every third ESP member from the local attending free of charge.

The Waterford is offering a special conference rate of \$87, plus tax, for single or double occupancy. Make your reservations by calling 800/228-9290 or 405/484-4782.

For more information on the Advocacy Conference, contact your regional advocacy specialist.



**EEOC Ombudsman
Joe Bontke**

Instructional Excellence in Education

Teachers Teaching Teachers and Teachers Teaching Students – To recognize individual OEA members for outstanding contributions in instructional excellence, both with students and colleagues. The awards acknowledge the fact that the quality of education in this country can rise no higher than the quality of teaching.

ESP of the Year

Education Support Professional Award – Honoring an individual ESP member whose activities reflect the contributions of an educational support professional to public education.

Media Awards

Marshall Gregory Awards – Recognizing Oklahoma reporters and broadcasters and their newspapers, radio and television stations for significant efforts to provide continuing and accurate coverage of public schools, current education issues and the OEA. Categories for professionals and for high school journalists are offered.

Local Affiliate Awards

OEA Collective Bargaining Award – Presented to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement of education through the collective bargaining process.

Golden Apple Awards – Recognizing OEA local associations for their consistent efforts to provide quality communica-

tions to all of their audiences, including members and other education personnel, local school administration, parents and the community in general.

5 Star Local Awards – The OEA 5 Star Local Program is intended to strengthen local Association programs and to recognize locals who meet the criteria in each program area. Application deadline for recognition at Delegate Assembly is March 15. The application deadline is June 15, for recognition at the Summer Leadership Academy. Five Star Local nomination forms can be found at okea.org/5starlocal.

2012-13 OEA Audit Report

The financial statements of the Oklahoma Education Association for fiscal year ended August 31, 2013, were audited by Luton and Co. An unqualified opinion was issued by the accounting firm stating that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the OEA.

A brief summary of the 2011-12 General Operating Fund follows:

CURRENT ASSETS	\$4,524,941
OTHER ASSETS	<u>3,600</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$4,528,541</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$419,631
LONG-TERM OBLIGATIONS	
Accrued Pension Obligation	739,259
Additional Pension Liability included in net assets	4,681,990
NET ASSETS:	
UNRESTRICTED	
Undesignated	(1,810,664)
Designated for building related expenses	<u>498,325</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$4,528,541</u>
REVENUE:	
MEMBERSHIPS	\$4,773,768
NEA SUPPORT	1,006,619
OTHER	<u>342,957</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	6,123,344
EXPENSES	6,292,758
Transfers for Fixed Assets	<u>(40,774)</u>
Change In Net Assets before pension-related changes	
other than net periodic cost	(210,188)
Pension-related changes other than net periodic cost	<u>326,792</u>
Change in Net Assets	116,604
Net Assets Beginning	<u>(1,428,943)</u>
Net Assets Ending	<u>(1,312,339)</u>

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