Focus

The Education

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association • February 2015

Stand Up Against High-Stakes Testing

Legislative Session Opens with Optimism

Testing Summit Recommendations

RAA Poster Honors Reading with the Troops

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Need help? Contact your regional team.
Oklahoma City Metro, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest Teams
323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK 73105
800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

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

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The Education Focus (ISSN 1542-1678) is published seven times annually:
October/November, December/January, February, March, April/May, June/July and August/September, for $5 by the Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Periodicals postage paid at Okla. City, OK, and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Education Focus, PO Box 18485, Oklahoma City, OK 73154.
It’s our turn to play offense

By Linda Hampton
OEA President

Going into the legislation session is always a little like the UVWZHHNRIVFKRRO:HEHJLQ about high aspirations. There will be new names and faces as well as individuals we have worked with before. We hope we’ll be quick to gain friends and slow to acquire enemies.

We have, however, learned a great deal about what to expect from our experiences during previous legislative sessions. We have had to call on you to make phone calls, write letters and emails, and make trips to the Capitol. Each time you have responded to our “Call for Action” because you know you are doing the right thing for the right reason – our students. In fact, you responded in mass when 30,000 caring and committed individuals rallied at the Capitol for public education last year.

The opponents of public education have had us playing defense for the past few years. We need to think proactively about what Oklahoma schools are going to need in the future. Furthermore, it is time to replace high-stakes testing with common-sense testing. Students are so much more than a single test score. They deserve an education that inspires their curiosity, imagination and desire to learn. They should never be labeled as failures based on one test given on one day.

Additionally, we know the most important factor in the classroom for a child’s success is the teacher. It is going to take a deliberate, multi-year approach to increasing salaries to make it possible to retain and recruit the best teachers.

Equally important is the realization that our support professionals play a vital role in the education of a child. They feed the students, get them to school safely, clean the buildings and so much more. They cannot be asked to continue to work for compensation that places many of them barely above the poverty level.

As I look to the beginning of the legislative session, I realize it’s not really about where we are today, it’s about our vision of where we want to be tomorrow. I also realize we will very likely be issuing more calls for action to you. It’s great to know you’ll respond positively because that’s simply who you are – professional education employees who care deeply about Oklahoma’s students.

Thanks for all you do and for all you will do.

We’re going back!

Save the Date! • March 30, 2015
Rallying for better education funding and common sense testing

President Linda Hampton
Reading with the Troops for RAA

“Reading with the Troops” is the theme for the Oklahoma Education Association’s 2015 Read Across America celebration, March 2-6. OEA is proud to partner with several of Oklahoma’s military service men and women to create this year’s poster. In addition, children from Mid-Del Public Schools joined the military members, OEA President Linda Hampton and Vice President Alicia Priest for the photo.

OEA staff is providing local associations with copies of the poster, seen here.

Oklahoma active duty and retired military members who participated in this year’s poster include Captain Benjamin Nicholls, Staff Sergeant Joshua Jones, Sergeant First Class Melissa Ritter, Sergeant Lacresha Adams, Specialist Suzie Sutton, First Lieutenant Michael Horn, Naval Aircrrewman Carl Couch, Master Sergeant Robert Turner, Tech Sergeant David Hines and Petty Officer Third Class Teresa Ward.

The 45th Infantry Division Museum in Oklahoma City partnered with OEA this year by providing their grounds as the backdrop for the poster.

The NEA Cat-a-Van will be visiting Oklahoma once again this year, kicking off the week-long reading event in Tulsa on March 2. More information about which schools the Cat-a-Van will visit will be announced soon.

In keeping with our Reading with the Troops theme, we encourage you to:

- Invite local military personnel – active duty, National Guard or retired – to read with your students.
- Join the online conversation by using “#readacrossamerica” and posting your photos.
- Send us photos of your celebration via email to Lauren Burkholder at lburkholder@okea.org – we might be able to use them in our annual RAA video for Delegate Assembly.
- Check out the National Education Association Read Across America web page for more ideas (nea.org/readacross).

Favorite books inspire students for poster contest

Reading a great book sparks our imagination, drawing pictures in our minds. We want Oklahoma students to share those visions of great literature by entering the 2015 Read Across America Poster Contest, drawing or painting a picture inspired by a favorite book. Entries for the contest are due by Monday, March 16.

Prizes will be awarded in four categories – kindergarten through 2nd grades, 3rd-5th grades, 6th-8th grades, and 9th-12th grades. First place in each division will receive a $75 VISA gift card, second place winners win a $50 VISA gift card, and honorable mention winners will receive a certificate.

Winners from each category will be featured in the April-May issue of the Education Focus and on our website, okea.org.

Read Across America Poster Contest Rules:

- All students of OEA members are eligible to enter the contest.
- Pictures will be judged on creativity, use of color and content.
- Entries must be submitted on white, unlined 8 ½ x 11 paper. DO NOT FOLD.
- On the back of each entry, list the book that inspired the drawing, student’s name, age, grade, name of school and teacher, and a school phone number.
- All entries will become the property of the OEA and must meet all contest rules to be eligible for prizes.
- All entries must be received by Monday, March 16, 2015. Mail them to OEA Focus on Reading, PO Box 18485, Okla. City, OK 73154; or hand-deliver or overnight entries to OEA Headquarters at 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105.
- Late entries or entries from non-OEA members will not be judged.

For more information, contact Editor Doug Folks at 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785, or dfolks@okea.org.
Happy Valentine’s Day from OEA!

Oklahoma Education Association

Most popular post: 1/26 – Hofmeister proposes a pay raise for Oklahoma teachers via www.news9.com

327 Likes - 144 Shares - 24 Comments

Trending in Oklahoma Education

#OKTestSummit – Thank you for making this summit meeting one of our most talked about and engaging days on social media!

#OKHigh5 – Continue to use this hashtag to communicate with the Oklahoma State Dept. of Education with your thoughts on Superintendent Hofmeister’s teacher pay raise proposal.

Simply Said … with Linda

“Finding Fact in the Figures: When you look at all of the data, it shows 75% of Oklahoma students are reading adequately or above. Additionally, out of that 25% scoring below basic, some are Ds, not failures. That’s far different than the 70% the article would have you believe are failing. So, yes, numbers don’t lie, but you should certainly use all the data rather than labeling students as failures to try to convince folks that public education shouldn’t be adequately funded.”

Read more at okea.org/oea-blog.

Lauren S. Burkholder
OEA Social Media & Media Relations
lburkholder@okea.org
Standing up against high-stakes testing

When it comes to strengthening the education profession, the top concern for OEA members remains finding solutions to the toxic testing culture suffocating public education. Nearly two years ago, OEA board members conducted listening sessions with members throughout the state. Testing was at the top of their list of concerns for the profession. The association’s efforts to challenge the label-and-punish testing culture have been strong and varied. From working on legislative fixes to convening a first-of-its-kind summit on testing to a dynamic new documentary, the association has attacked the problem of toxic testing on all sides.

Testing Summit seeks legislative consensus

In response to increasing concerns from parents and teachers that Oklahoma is over-testing its K-12 students, the Oklahoma Education Association hosted the “High Stakes Testing Summit: Building Legislative Consensus.” Attendees representing teachers, administrators, parents, students, community groups, the Osage and Cherokee Nations, and legislators spent time in December and January dissecting a wide-range of testing-related topics. Following are recommendations that came from the summit:

**Federal and State Regulations**

**Recommendations**

- Cease the use of assessments for high-stakes determinations affecting students, teachers, schools and teacher preparation programs.
- Eliminate non-federally mandated tests.
- Align assessments to college entrance expectations; eliminate End-of-Instruction exams and replace them with the ACT.
- Institute a moratorium on profit-driven testing until Oklahoma has developed and fully implemented new state standards AND has developed the accompanying assessments.
- Use a valid, reliable, useful assessment system to assist all schools and build educator capacity.
- Adopt transparent assessments, including the ability for review of tests after completion to reinforce learning and to evaluate the quality of norm-referenced tests.

**Special Education Recommendations**

- IEP students should never be subjected to high-stakes testing. The student’s IEP team should be the only entity to determine the appropriate, multi-path approach to state assessment for each IEP student.
- The definition of “graduation cohort” must be changed to better assist IEP students and districts with graduation requirements.

**Reading Sufficiency Act Recommendations**

*For the Legislature*

- Make the “Student Reading Proficiency Team” permanent.
- Fully fund RSA requirements to include those requirements for students receiving remediation beyond third grade.

*For the State Department of Education*

- Ensure that the third grade reading assessment measures grade-level reading skills.

Stephanie Hyder, Director of Executive Search Services - Legislative and Board Services for OSSBA, makes a point during a discussion on federal and state testing requirements.
Third grader Owen Dalton appears on screen in black and white, a tight shot of his face emphasizing not only his somber expression but the seriousness of the topic.

“We work hard every single day, and it’s all leading up to one test. One test,” he says, driving home the point of how critical the third grade reading test is to his future. “I think it puts too much pressure on us.”

In less than 30 seconds, Owen sets the tone for OEA’s film documentary on our ridiculous testing culture. The 27-minute video includes interviews with people from all walks of life, interspersed with facts about Oklahoma testing. The story clearly outlines the challenges and consequences of high-stakes testing, and calls on the viewer to take action to end toxic testing.

In addition to Owen, a third grader in Norman, the video features a high school senior from Yukon and a middle school student from Jenks talking about their testing experiences.

Vice President Alicia Priest. OEA staff will work with local associations, school administrations and parent groups to schedule community meetings on testing. Hampton and Priest will lead the meetings, showing the video and generating support for legislative changes to the state’s testing plan.

Contact a member of your regional team to schedule a Common Sense Testing Tour in your district.

For the Oklahoma Education Coalition

- Educate local districts about mid-year promotion policy.
- Pursue initiatives that educate Oklahomans about the importance of early literacy and support adult literacy.
- Promote the availability and accessibility of reading materials to Oklahoma families beginning at birth.

A-F School Report Card Recommendations

**The Oklahoma Center for Education Policy at OU and the Center for Educational Research and Evaluation at OSU recommendations:**

1) A new approach to measuring meaningful learning should be:

- Provide graduate-level tuition discounts or other incentives to increase the number of certified Reading Specialists in Oklahoma.
- Encourage class-size reduction at all grade levels to positively impact student literacy.

**Summit attendees’ recommendations:**

- Utilize already existing student and district data in an online, customizable format to help parents make critical education decisions.
- Replace the current A-F system with a locally determined and controlled school improvement plan which is designed, implemented and assessed by the district and reported to the community and state on a yearly basis.

**TLE Quantitative Measures recommendations**

- Delay the quantitative portion of the TLE Evaluation System for a minimum of two years; if a delay is not implemented, replace VAM with SLOs for all teachers.
- Explore various quantitative models which utilize strong, peer-reviewed and academically research-based methods which emphasize reflection and can be implemented over time.
- Give districts the control to determine the percentage of tests scores that will be used for evaluation purposes.
Legislative opportunities await in 2015

When the 2015 session of the 55th Oklahoma Legislature convened on February 2, the landscape of both houses had shifted to an even more conservative makeup than ever before. Thanks to gains made during November’s election, Republicans now outnumber Democrats 72-29 in the House, and 40-7 in the Senate.

What might be a surprise, though, is what appears to be a renewed energy in the Legislature to address some of education’s biggest issues in a positive way. Leadership in both houses has recognized the need for better education funding and teacher pay raises as well as addressing the over-testing of students and the use of those test results in teacher evaluations and school grades.

“We sense a real opportunity to make positive changes for education this year,” said OEA President Linda Hampton. “There seems to be a real desire by legislators to find new money for education and to inject some common sense into our out-of-control testing culture.”

Going on offense

While OEA lobbyists have spent most of their time fighting bad legislation over the last few years, the team will have several positive bills to push for this session. OEA’s top priorities this legislative session are to push for common-sense testing changes and an increase in salaries for both certified staff and support professionals.

• Numerous bills have been filed to increase teacher and support professional pay.
• Testing is sure to be a hot item during the 55th Legislature. Leading the pack are bills to make permanent the changes to the Reading Sufficiency Act from the previous session. A law passed last year (and the subsequent veto override) to allow a team of parents, educators and administrators to retain or promote third graders, was good only for 2013-14 and 2014-15.
• For students with special needs, there are bills that would allow their IEP team to make all testing decisions as they deem them meaningful and appropriate.
• There is a strong push to modify graduation requirements for high school students, especially to replace the End-of-Instruction assessments with the ACT and to remove the high-stakes aspect that requires EOI passage to gain a diploma.
• Regarding the TLE, legislation has been proposed to either postpone or eliminate the quantitative half of the evaluation. OEA is pushing bills to prohibit the use of test scores and Value Added Measures. We are also asking for the State Department of Education to use any delay granted by the legislature to ensure that any program adopted is both thoughtful and guaranteed to be accurate.
• While there are many bills addressing the A-F Report Card System, most of them include a moratorium while the new leadership at the State Department develops a better, more equitable system.
• OEA will also be supporting bills to reinstate funding for the full National Board Certified Teacher application process, plus a bill that would provide a $500 classroom supply stipend for all teachers.

Still a need to play defense

When it comes to bad legislation, OEA will be fighting a renewed effort to create voucher programs. There are two bills to allow parents who make 2.5 times the federal poverty rate or less to take the state aid assigned to their children and use it for private school tuition or homeschool costs. There is absolutely no accountability in these measures on how the money can be spent.

Several legislators are pushing for the expansion of charter schools statewide. Most of these bills do not give local districts any input or control. Parent Trigger legislation is also making a return. The bills would allow 51 percent of parents in a school to sign a petition to convert their school site into a charter or fire half the staff and administration.

Other bad legislation OEA will be closely monitoring includes education deregulation, elimination of payroll deduction of association dues and collective bargaining changes. There have been some shell bills filed concerning pension “reform,” but at this point we do not know the intention of the authors.
How to increase funding in spite of a $300 million shortfall

By Amanda Ewing
Chief Lobbyist

“Y
ou can’t get blood from a turnip,” the old saying goes. One could interpret this to mean that if the money for a pay raise isn’t in the budget, there’s nothing we can do about it. But what does the state’s $300 million shortfall actually mean?

Believe it or not, state revenue collections are actually up compared to this time last year. The problem, however, is that last year the legislature spent all the state revenue they had available, and then they scoured state agency accounts known as revolving funds to find an additional $400 million to appropriate. That $400 million was the result of many years of accumulation; it doesn’t just replenish each year in time to spend it again – so we call it “one-time funding.”

That leads us to this year, where we have more money to spend, but still not enough to equal last year’s budget when you include all that one-time funding. Fortunately, in Gov. Fallin’s State of the State Address on February 2, she stated that there is more than enough money still left in various agencies’ revolving funds to make up the $300 million shortfall. But those revolving funds won’t last forever. They likely won’t last beyond next year.

Eventually, unless we find recurring sources of money to put in place of one-time funding, we’ll get to a point where we just can’t fill that budget hole. Furthermore, we in public education aren’t just asking for the same appropriation that Common Education received last year. We need more, and we need it now. After seven long years, it’s time teachers and support employees receive a statewide raise. Since cutting expenditures further simply isn’t realistic, we have to find more revenue.

This session, our legislature has a myriad of options to increase public education funding, including:

See “Legislature” on Page 11

Knowledge is power!

The OEA works diligently to ensure you have the latest information on what’s happening at the Capitol. Here’s how you can stay informed throughout the session.

• Legislative Updates are sent to home email addresses every Friday afternoon, and Alerts are sent as needed. If you aren’t receiving the Updates/Alerts, email your name, school district and home email to Brenda Snider at bsnider@okea.org. She’ll update our membership database so you begin receiving these emails. Updates and Alerts are also posted in the Members Only section of our website.

• Text alerts to your smart phone are sent only when immediate contact with your legislators is needed to encourage a vote for or against a bill. If you are not already part of the texting program, email your name, school district and phone number, including area code, to Lisa Cobb, lcobb@okea.org. In your email, ask Lisa to “Include me in the OEA Texting Program.” According to FCC rules, we must have your written permission to text you.

• Top 4 @ 4 is a new weekly benefit from the OEA Legislative and Political Organizing Center. Chief Lobbyist Amanda Ewing will conduct a 10-minute webinar every Wednesday to update you on the week’s four most pressing topics. To take part in the briefing, check your email for a link to participate at 4 p.m. every Wednesday. Space is limited to the first 500 to sign in login to each webinar.

• Facebook and Twitter – During the session, we post frequent updates from the Capitol and, at times, live tweet during education committee meetings or floor debates. Follow us at facebook.com/Oklahoma.Education.Association and on Twitter, @okea.
Greetings!

When I was asked to write a letter for this edition of The Education Focus, I was thrilled. One of the most important things we can do right now, and one I am working toward every day, is to ensure that the State Department of Education will always be there to help and support teachers.

We are already on the path to achieve some big goals for the sake of our schoolchildren. To achieve these goals, we need your insights and your voices. No one knows more about how to lead students to success than you.

The impact of a teacher is immense, but not easily quantified. What you produce cannot be bottled, boxed or placed in a bin, yet your influence is reflected all around us each day.

It’s bewildering, then, that our teachers – handed the awesome responsibility of educating future generations – too often find themselves treated as incidental.

One of the chief reasons I ran for the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction was my frustration with what appeared to be disregard for our profession. I believe the State Department of Education has a simple but critical obligation to our teachers. We need to give educators the support, resources and autonomy to practice their profession.

Oklahoma is fortunate to benefit from the incredible work our teachers do helping to prepare our young people for productive, fulfilling lives. As state schools superintendent, I will be a tireless champion for excellence in education. I will fight to ensure that our profession is treated with respect and compensated fairly.

It is long past time for our state to solve the teacher shortage. Our teachers are demoralized. In Oklahoma we are losing teachers to other states and other industries. We must develop and implement a comprehensive plan to attract and retain top talent in our profession.

That means raising teacher pay and reducing unnecessary mandates. That means ensuring teacher evaluations are fair and accurate. That means reducing the dizzying array of standardized testing that takes time away from rich instruction.

These goals are hardly out of reach, but will require a serious commitment to invest in our state’s education. I am so grateful for the hard work and dedication of Oklahoma teachers, and I look forward to working with you now and for years to come!

Sincerely,

Joy Hofmeister
Superintendent of Public Instruction
R
gardless of your view on the
Oklahoma Teacher and Leader
Effectiveness Evaluation System
(TLE), there are some gaping cracks in
the system ready to pull even the most
capable teacher down to the “INEFFEC-
tive” depths. To help quality teachers
avoid this trap, or at the very least assist
them in preparing to correct evaluation
inaccuracies, we’ve compiled a list of
four things every teacher should track.

1 – Advanced Students
Track the number of students in your
class exempted from state testing be-
cause they are advanced. While many
believe having the most advanced and
gifted students in a classroom helps raise
the teacher’s TLE score, the opposite
is very possible. Specifically, many ad-
vanced students are exempt from taking
state tests because they are considered proficient, but the TLE does not take
those students into account.

Hence, the only students in a teach-
er’s class whose tests will “count” are
the poorest performers. Each year, keep
track of how many students in your
class are exempt from state testing, and
work with your advocate to show that
your score should be recalculated to
take into account students who would
have tested as proficient but were
exempt.

2 – Administrator Comments
Document comments from admin-
istrators (building and central office)
setting arbitrary evaluation ceilings. We
have heard numerous stories across the
state from members whose principals
shared that the central office directed that
no teacher in the building was to receive
greater than a (fill in the blank) score on
their rating, because the building was
failing overall.

Any such mandate is a direct violation
of the TLE standards and it is important
that any teacher overhearing such a com-
ment documents what was said, who said
it, when it was said and the identities of
others in the room when the statement
was made. If you believe your TLE score
was arbitrarily lowered due to this type
of mandate, the most important evidence
will be documentation of those state-
ments and multiple witnesses who can
confirm the account.

3 – “High Needs” Students
Track unbalanced assignment of high
needs students or students with behav-
ior problems. Many teach-
ers who are
proficient at
handling high
needs students
or discipline
problems find
themselves
assigned a dis-
proportionately high number of
those students in comparison
to other teachers of the same subject or
grade level. It is inevitable that such a
practice negatively impacts that teach-
er’s TLE score because there simply
isn’t as much time available to meet the
needs of other students in the class.

Track the number of high needs and
discipline problem students assigned
to your class in comparison to those of
other teachers, understanding that no
class assignment roster can be perfectly
balanced. Even better, work with your
building level administrator and fellow
teachers to ensure that each class is ap-
propriately balanced.

We have heard numerous
stories across the state from
members whose principals
shared that the central office
directed that no teacher in the
building was to receive greater
than a (fill in the blank) score
on their rating, because the
building was failing overall.

4 – Testing Accommodation
Denials
For your students with special needs,
document any denial of testing accom-
modations and/or alternative assessment
qualification. The State Department of
Education’s approach to testing accom-
modations and determining who may
take the alternative assessment has been
extraordinarily restrictive, arbitrary and
fails to take into account the in-
dividual needs and unique
concerns of special
education
students. If you
believe a neces-

dary accom-
modation has
been denied,
document your objection thoroughly.
Similarly, if you believe a student should
take the alternative assessment, but was
forced to take the standard assessment,
objectively document your concerns.
Failure to accommodate and failure
to allow alternative assessments when
needed not only hurt the teacher’s TLE
score, but do irreparable damage to the
student’s progress and morale.

If you are facing any of these issues
and are unsure of how to proceed, con-
tact your OEA Regional UniServ Advo-
cacy Specialist for assistance.
Filing is open through February 20 for the open Board of Director positions as well as delegate at-large positions to the OEA Delegate Assembly and the NEA Representative Assembly.

Online elections for these positions as well as for OEA Vice President will be held in March. The polling site will be accessible from the home page of OEA’s website, okea.org.

The OEA Board of Directors is designed to represent members at the grassroots level. Each zone is made up of at least 1,000 Association members who elect their representative on the board. The newly elected Zone Directors will take office on July 7.

At-large delegates to the Delegate Assembly and NEA RA will serve at this year’s meetings. The OEA annual meeting is April 24-25 at the Reed Conference Center in Midwest City and the RA is set for July 1-6 in Orlando.

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

**OEA Zone Director Positions**

All nine open OEA Board positions are for three-year terms that expire in 2018. These board members will serve as NEA Delegates in 2016 and 2017.

- Northeast A, representing Adair, Craig, Delaware, Mayes Nowata and Ottawa Counties.
- Northeast C, representing Cherokee and Muskogee Counties.
- Southwest A, representing Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger Mills, Tillman and Washita Counties.
- Tulsa Metro A, representing Tulsa CTA.
- Tulsa Metro E, representing Berryhill, Bixby, Broken Arrow, Jenks CTA and Jenks ESP.
- OKC Metro A, representing Crooked Oak, Harrah, Mid-America Bible College, Moore, Oklahoma Christian and Oklahoma City Community College.

- OKC Metro C, representing Edmond, ESE-OKC, OEA-OKC and University of Central Oklahoma.
- OEA Board of Directors/Administrator-at-Large.

**Statewide Openings**

**OEA Delegate Assembly Positions:**
- OEA/NEA Retired Delegate(s)-at-Large to OEA/DA.
- OEA Administrator 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 Representative Assembly Positions:
- NEA Retired Delegate(s)-at-Large to the NEA/RA (successor delegates only).

**Regional Positions Open**

**Category I Delegate-at-Large**

- 2015 NEA Representative Assembly
  - Northeast Region (1 opening).
  - Northwest Region (1 opening).
  - Oklahoma City Metro Region (1 opening).

*(No Category I elections in the Southeast, Southwest or Tulsa Metro Regions.)*

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**Have you elected your local representatives to the Delegate Assembly yet?**

**Credential forms are now available at okea.org/elections.**

**2015 Delegate Assembly**

**April 24–25**

**Reed Conference Center**

**Midwest City**

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**Benefiting You. Benefiting Students.**

**Make the Most of your Membership.**

When it comes to professional evaluations, your association has your back. That’s why your association guarantees evaluations are fair and the process is transparent. Plus, as a member, you can even take part in creating evaluation systems.
Members who itemize deductions and meet the two percent UHTXLUHPHQWIRUDGGLWLRQDOPLVFHOODQHRXVGHGXFWLRQVDUHDEOH to deduct most of their membership dues. Following is a chart of how much can be deducted (all but the 7.6 percent attributed to lobbying) for your OEA/NEA due. Members should also check with their local associations for the amount of non-deductible local dues spent on lobbying. For additional help, contact your tax professional.

Legislature has ability to overcome shortfall

Continued from Page 7

• Modernize our sales tax. Right now, we only tax goods; services are exempt. If we are taxed when we purchase laundry detergent or a lawn mower, we should tax dry cleaning or lawn services, too. We could also tax online purchases like many other states do, helping local businesses that often lose out to online sales for that reason.

• Curb unnecessary tax breaks for corporations when the incentives haven’t been proven to create jobs or stimulate our economy.

• Adopt combined corporate reporting. Some corporations avoid paying taxes on money they make in Oklahoma by shipping their profit to sites in other states with lower taxes. This also puts local businesses at a disadvantage, as they pay taxes here on the money they make here. A majority of states have already adopted this type of reporting.

• Avoid further income tax cuts. This is a no-brainer—Oklahomans already pay among the lowest state and local tax rates in the nation.

• Utilize $134 million from the overflowing Rainy Day Fund, which would require a declaration of an emergency by the governor and a two-thirds vote of the legislature.

Another way one could understand the saying, “You can’t get blood from a turnip,” is that you can only get from someone what they are willing or able to give. The Legislature is able to provide public education with additional funding this year. Are they willing?

Most of your dues are tax deductible

Members who itemize deductions and meet the two percent requirement for additional miscellaneous deductions are able to deduct most of their membership dues. Following is a chart of how much can be deducted (all but the 7.6 percent attributed to lobbying) for your OEA/NEA due. Members should also check with their local associations for the amount of non-deductible local dues spent on lobbying. For additional help, contact your tax professional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Deduction Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time active certified</td>
<td>$438.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halftime active certified</td>
<td>$230.99</td>
</tr>
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<td>Full-time active support</td>
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<td>Halftime active support</td>
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<td>Substitute</td>
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<td>Reserve certified</td>
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<td>Reserve support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired-Lifetime member</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
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We wrote the book on savings

Having all your insurance with Horace Mann doesn’t just add up to convenience; it can add up to savings.

Ask your Horace Mann agent about savings on **auto insurance** and **home insurance** if you have more than one type of insurance (including annuities) with us.

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- Life Insurance*,**  
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- Accident Only Insurance*,+  
- Tax-Deferred Annuities**  
- Section 125 Plans

*These products may contain limitations, exclusions and waiting periods.  
**Not eligible under Section 125.  
+This product is inappropriate for people who are eligible for Medicaid coverage.  
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