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Spring is here, school testing is underway, sports playoffs are beginning and the end of the school year is looming. Only a few more weeks of the legislative session to endure as we continue to work on bills that concern us and budget issues that are always a challenge.

Life at CCOSA is extremely busy! We have begun the construction or should I say destruction of our building and remodeling project. This will probably be a six month endeavor that will last a year! As we grow and plan for the future, this is a much needed and necessary addition to our existing structure. We appreciate your patience as we deal with noise, cut cable lines and other issues related to our remodeling project.

On June 6 and 7 we will be holding the CCOSA EOI (Energize, Optimize, Inspire) Summer Conference in Norman at the Embassy Suites Hotel. Our pre-conference will be on June 5 and is a joint effort with USSA where we will be presenting participants with information on new legislation. Mark your calendars now and be sure to join us for these two exciting events… no grading required!!!

Speaking of legislation, the current session is moving along at a very busy pace. We are still monitoring over thirty-five bills not including the appropriation bills. To date, we have had five education bills signed into law and expect several others to make it through the process. Bills still getting a lot of attention are A-F HB 1658/SB 635, School Grading HB 1313, Common Core HB 2300, Charter Schools HB 1660/HB 2048/SB 267, EpiPen HB 2101, and of course funding bills, including supplemental appropriations for this year. Hopefully we will be closing the books on many of these in the near future. We are still holding our legislative briefings at CCOSA on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 A.M. Due to our construction project, the west lot is closed so parking is a bit of a problem. A special thanks to Dr. Mills and OSSBA for allowing overflow parking across the street.

I feel extremely blessed to be a part of this great organization. Our membership is strong and growing with one hundred and forty-nine new members this year. We have assembled a great staff to assist you in meeting the demands of your positions. Our goal is to better serve you as we move forward in developing programs that provide you more benefits and support. My staff and I are committed to your success and making your job better.

Never before in the life of CCOSA have we had to work to develop mutual admiration between the agencies and branches of government as we have today. Our goal is to build bridges of respect, honesty and collaboration so that the children you serve have a bright and prosperous future.

Please let us know if we can be of assistance. Thanks for joining CCOSA and allowing me to work for you.

Respectfully,

Steven Crawford
CCOSA Executive Director
I want to begin by thanking the OASA membership for the opportunity to have served you and this organization as President this year. I consider it a highlight of my career. I also want to acknowledge the great leadership provided by our CCOSA professional and support staff. Their work on behalf of the schools and students of this state make a significant, positive impact. We have a responsibility to be active participants in our professional organizations. It strengthens our capacity to effectively serve and positively impact all of the students in our local districts.

Just as we begin to celebrate the success achieved by our students and staff during the 2012-13 school year, it is also time to make preparations for the 2013-14 school year. The most challenging aspect of our work is to communicate a forward-thinking vision for our schools to students, parents and the community. Regardless of the challenges we face, our local communities continue to look to us to lead and to be the voice of public education and the students we serve. It is for this reason that the joint effort by the Oklahoma State School Boards Association and CCOSA to develop a statewide vision for public education is vitally important.

During the last few months, a committee of over 60 administrators and board members from across our state has met regularly in a structured, facilitated process to develop a guiding document for the future of Oklahoma education. Our hope is the Oklahoma Visioning Project will be embraced as the transformational vision for the future and for education reform.

Early in our deliberations, the steering committee identified seven areas of focus that we believe significantly impact student achievement. They are:

1. Teaching, Learning and Assessments
2. Expanded Learning Opportunities
3. Financial Resources
4. Climate, Culture, and Organization
5. Physical Resources
6. Partnerships for Human and Organizational Capital Development
7. Governance, Leadership & Accountability

Each committee, comprised of school board members and superintendents, has been working along with university researchers to identify and address transformational recommendations regarding these critical areas of public education. It is our intention to have an update report to the OS-SBA and CCOSA membership at our summer joint conference. Our goal is to complete our work and present a final vision document to our associations by late Fall 2013.

Listening to these leaders representing our boards of education and the superintendents has been inspiring. We believe the results of this project will bring the voice of public school educators into the forefront of the dialogue regarding educational reform, precisely where these voices belong.

The visioning committee has adopted the following vision statement to guide our work: “All public school students will learn in an environment that maximizes their potential and develops leaders who will contribute to a meaningful life in a democracy, propelling Oklahoma forward into a competitive, global society.”
Bergenfield Public Schools drive student growth with data.

Dr. Michael Kuchar is a person who makes things happen.

In his first year as Superintendent of Bergenfield Public Schools in New Jersey, 63 kids dropped out. There were 6 AP courses with an average score of 1.7, and only 55% of seniors applied to a college or university.

Dr. Kuchar rolled up his sleeves and went to work. He dropped NWEA” MAP” and chose STAR Enterprise” assessments to help teachers differentiate instruction and drive growth.

STAR Enterprise simply revolutionized the way his teachers taught.

The teachers increased rigor and achievement. With a laser-like focus, STAR’s learning progressions helped his staff come up with teacher activities and push students to grow.

Last year, Bergenfield had zero dropouts. Its 17 AP courses had an average score of 3.2 and 97% of seniors applied to a college or university. Wow.

Watch Dr. Kuchar tell his story in a short video at www.renlearn.com/lp/21139 or scan the code.

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The Ethical High Ground

BY RICK GARRISON
OASA Ethics Committee Chair
Superintendent, Cheyenne Public Schools

John Adams, the second president of the United States, once said, “Our constitution was made only for moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other” (www.goodreads.com). Adams made this statement while he was dealing with a few “little” situations like the writing of the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolutionary War, and the framing of the United States Constitution.

The great American George Washington once said, “Few people have the virtue to withstand the highest bidder” (www.notablequotes.com). In his book Being George Washington, author Glenn Beck discusses Washington’s virtues:

George Washington was dedicated to living a life of moral excellence… and [his] virtuous principles were regularly observed and imitated among his peers. Washington’s actions attracted … so much admiration and respect that his leadership was sought during the most challenging times of our nation’s founding…. (media.glennbeck.com)

In Abraham Lincoln’s Cooper Institute Address, February 27, 1860, he stated, “Let us have Faith that right makes might; and in that Faith let us to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it” (rogerjnorton.com). Lincoln made this statement while our country was being torn apart by Civil War and his own personal wellbeing was being threatened.

In his book Ethical Behavior, An Administrator’s Guide: Ethics and Values in School Administration, Dr. Clarence Oliver, noted author and educator for the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administrators, recites Oklahoma Statute 51-302:

All public officials and public employees are agents of the people and hold their positions for the benefit of the people. They are bound to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this state and to perform efficiently and faithfully their duties under the laws of the federal, state and local governments. Such officers and employees must observe, in their official acts, high standards of ethics regardless of personal consideration, recognizing that promoting the public interest and maintaining the respect for their government must be a foremost concern. (Oliver 3)

Oliver quotes Chief Executive Officer of C.H. Fenstermaker and Associates, William Fenstermaker, and presents the following information from Fenstermaker’s study The Ethical Dimension of Superintendent Decision Making: A Study of AASA Members:

Administrators, at all levels, cannot afford to become another ‘distrusted’ profession in America. The continued success of superintendents and other school administrators depends on trust and on credibility. It is absolutely necessary for superintendents to know and conscientiously to apply ethical principles in their work roles. Otherwise, the alternative will be a gradual degradation of the profession as a whole—a loss of trust eventually extending not only to superintendents, but to the entire public school system that they represent. (Oliver 41)

In his book, Dr. Oliver quotes Romans 13:3 (NIV), “For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.” History has proven it is difficult to defend against an individual who is willing to live an ethical life. When school administrators take “The Ethical High Ground,” no other action is necessary.
AASA Board Member/Advocacy

BY DR. DAVID PENNINGTON

For this last nine years, I have had the opportunity to serve our state as a member of the AASA Governing Board and Executive Committee, which has allowed me to write an article at least once a year for Better Schools. During these last nine years, I have discussed AASA efforts to modify NCLB, AASA efforts to influence the reauthorization of ESEA, and AASA efforts to first encourage the department to grant waivers to the requirements of NCLB, and recently to stop the use of waivers by the department to rewrite federal education policy without congress. While I would have liked to have been more successful, it has always been interesting, and I have learned that federal policy is always a work in progress. However, for this article I don’t want to talk about policy; instead, I want to talk to you about AASA membership and upcoming Governing Board elections.

Last spring 114 of the 526 school superintendents in Oklahoma were members of AASA which calculates out to 27.38% of all superintendents in our state. Nationwide 41.29% of the nation’s superintendents are members of AASA. The good news is that because three of our neighboring states Arkansas (18.41%), New Mexico (15.91), and Texas (14.45%) have some of the lowest membership percentages in the country, we look pretty good. Over the years, I have made several pleas for membership by pointing out what AASA has done, not only for public education across the country, but specifically Oklahoma. I have written in the past about REAP and about the Jobs money we received in 2010. I could have written that the only reason that Title I and Special Education funds will not be subject to the sequester until July 1, 2013 is because of the efforts of AASA. Instead, what I want to tell you is that AASA needs your membership. AASA is the leading voice on public education in Washington, and its staff, though shorthanded, is a strong well respected voice in the halls of Congress. However in the future, I don’t think that is going to be enough. In our state, we have seen the rising influence of national foundations on state education policy. These foundations have a national agenda, but instead of looking to Washington to implement their reform agenda, they have decided to focus their attention on the state level. In Oklahoma, we know firsthand, how hard it is to stop the reform agenda. These same national foundations have handed prepackaged reform to state department officials and members of the legislature. We need help with this one size fits all reform mentality. In my opinion, the only organization that can provide that help is AASA. However, they can’t provide the help we need without additional staff and they can’t have additional staff without an increase in membership. Please, if you are not currently a member of AASA, join, we need you.

This spring we will be selecting two members to serve as Oklahoma representatives on the AASA Governing Board. These seats are currently being held by Terry Davidson of Comanche, and Kent Shellenberger of Bethany. The term of office is three years and Governing Board members are asked to attend two meetings a year. The first meeting is in February prior to the National Conference, and the second meeting is in July in Washington D.C. Expenses for the first meeting are paid by the Governing Board Member; expenses for the second meeting are paid by AASA. Kent and Terry have done a wonderful job representing Oklahoma, and both are very deserving of re-election if they decide to seek another term in office. If you are interested in federal policy or in serving the superintendents of Oklahoma, I would strongly encourage you to look into running for one of these positions. If you have any question about the Governing Board, please feel free to call your current Governing Board members or past members Lloyd Snow, Steven Crawford or myself. It is a great opportunity to interact, not only with superintendents from our surrounding states, but with superintendents from around the country.

It has been an honor to represent you.

Congratulations Dr. David Pennington, Newly Elected AASA Presiden-Elect!
Advancing Education into the Future

The AdvancED® Accreditation Process, a protocol embraced by over 69 countries around the world, is a clear and comprehensive program of evaluation and external review, supported by research-based standards, and dedicated to helping schools, districts, and education service providers continuously improve.

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Teacher Leader Effectiveness (TLE) Update

BY DR. VICKIE WILLIAMS
CCOSA Associate Director
OASSP Executive Director

This summer three subjects top the list for many Oklahoma educators: school finance, Common Core State Standards and personnel evaluation systems. The Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration (CCOSA) has been busy this legislative session representing you and your districts, ensuring that schools receive the money they need to serve kids. The Oklahoma State Department of Education has taken the lead in disseminating information across the state about Common Core State Standards with REACH coaches and the REACH network of schools sharing information. CCOSA has stepped up and helped districts with the training and implementation of the Tulsa Model and McREL model for teacher leader effectiveness.

Next year, a large number of school districts in Oklahoma are looking at adopting their teacher and principal evaluation systems after a year of piloting the new models. We have learned several lessons during this first year of piloting the new models and how to improve in the future. Agreeing on the focus of personnel evaluation instruments, best practices of evaluators, time management for conducting evaluations and to what extent student performance measures should be factored into computation of indices of effectiveness is complex and challenging work. Changes in evaluation policies and procedures have been the topic of conversation in many debates this year.

There is no question that for teachers and principals to thrive, evaluation systems must be implemented fairly and consistently, with clearly defined standards connected to what matters most for student achievement, and with strong alignment to professional development and growth opportunities. Thoughtfully designed and implemented, evaluations can focus educators on what is needed to improve their craft so students receive the quality of instruction and support they deserve.

Research reveals that student achievement is clearly influenced by how effectively school leaders fulfill their responsibility to monitor the practices of their instructional staff. The personnel evaluation process is key to fulfilling this responsibility. Balancing accountability with support is perhaps the toughest part of the evaluation equation.

As is the case when dealing with money, curriculum, instruction, and student supports, the best decisions on evaluation systems are grounded in research and involve key stakeholders. Implementation is well planned and characterized by constant communication.

For those of you in schools or districts who will have new personnel or additional administrators next year that will need training in the Tulsa Model or the McREL model, training will be as follows:

**MCREL TRAINING**
- Tues.-Wed., July 16-17
  - Great Plains TC, Rm. # 201 A & B
  - Woodward
- Tues.-Wed., Aug. 13-14
  - Jenks Public Schools
  - Math & Science Bldg.
- Tues.-Wed., Sept. 10-11
  - Kiamichi TC, Biz Rm.
  - McAlester
- Wed.-Thurs., Oct. 9-10
  - Great Plains TC, Bldg. 300, Rm. # 301B
  - Lawton
- Thurs.-Fri., Jan. 16-17
  - CCOSA Office
  - Oklahoma City

**TULSA MODEL TRAINING**
- Tues.-Fri., July 23-26
  - Great Plains TC, Bldg. 300, Rm. # 301B
  - Lawton
- Mon.-Thurs., July 29-Aug. 1
  - Gordon Cooper TC, Skylab 1 & 2
  - Shawnee
- Mon.-Thurs., Aug. 26-29
  - Jenks Public Schools,
  - Math & Science Bldg.
- Mon.-Thurs., Sept. 9-12
  - Kiamichi TC, Auditorium
  - McAlester
- Mon.-Thurs., Sept. 16-19
  - High Plains TC, Rm. # 201 A & B
  - Woodward
- Mon.-Thurs., Oct. 7-10
  - Gordon Cooper TC, Skylab 1 & 2
  - Shawnee
- Mon.-Thurs., Jan 27-30
  - CCOSA Office
  - Oklahoma City

We hope you will find the research, tips, and lessons shared about school finance, Common Core State Standards and the personal evaluation systems on the CCOSA website www.ccosa.org helpful. Being a CCOSA member has benefits!
Minister and author Croft M. Pentz said, “These are the good old days we shall be longing for a few years from now.” It seems to me that we ought to have a real sense of responsibility to do all we can to see that, a few years from now, we don’t refer back to these difficult times as “the good old days.” I’ve been in this profession for forty years and could never have anticipated the number and magnitude of the challenges we are facing. Your membership in CCOSA has never been more important. Our elected leaders and directors in this organization have never needed our support and encouragement more.

I serve as one of your representatives on the AASA Governing Board along with Oktaha superintendent Jerry Needham and Dr. Kent Shellenberger from Bethany. The country is divided into seven regions in AASA. Oklahoma is in Region 2, along with Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. The governing board meets twice a year; once in the summer in Washington, DC, and again in February just before the AASA Annual Conference. The Governing Board is responsible for setting policy for AASA and elects a 21-member Executive Committee that meets quarterly to conduct the ongoing business of our organization between the Governing Board meetings. Your three Oklahoma representatives are committed to influencing and supporting policies that best serve the needs of school children around the country. We are also very interested in your ideas and ask that you contact us with input on how we can better represent you.

As a member of the Governing Board, I have become much more aware of the powerful influence of AASA at the national level. I have witnessed, first hand, numerous examples of this organization changing, stopping, or influencing legislation that impacts our profession and the lives of millions of children whose future is dependent on a quality public education system in this country. AASA is, without question, the leading national association in terms of representing public education leadership. If you are not a member of AASA, you are encouraged to join during the coming year and get involved. We need AASA and they need us, now more than ever.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you, and even more grateful for the great job you do in your local districts. Albert Schweitzer said, “Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.” While the job of influencing policy at the state and national levels is important, nothing is more crucial than the example you set in your local school district.
I truly believe that most teachers are only as effective as they know how to be. They are expected to stay up-to-date on the newest research on how children learn, have ongoing access to technical skills, differentiate instruction, have complex content knowledge, drive instruction based on student data, be able to communicate with parents and have every child reading on grade level by the year 2014. This is just a little bit of what we are expecting them to do.

High-quality professional learning activities that provide such access need to be extended to all teachers. How do they have time to get everything done in a day and stay current on the best teaching practices? I don’t believe anyone has the true answer to that yet; but I do know we, as principals, are working together to try to figure out how we can help our teachers grow. We can’t afford to send them to workshops all of the time. Even if we could afford the workshops, we can’t afford substitutes.

Here are a few things that I have found helpful this year in trying to combine professional development in the workplace.

- Professional Learning Communities serve as the most obvious catalyst for teacher professional growth in a collaborative setting.
- Teachers meet once a week to discuss short term and long term objectives. They also use this time to discuss student achievement and obstacles that they may be experiencing.
- It is important to set the tone that allows teachers to respectfully disagree. My department head runs the PLC, but some of the best meetings in which I have been involved included fantastic, passionate debates around what we do for our students. One of the best things about education is that two educators can completely disagree, but believe wholeheartedly that what they are doing is best for kids.
- Provide Substitutes for teachers throughout the year in order to have an extended PLC. Fifty minutes per week is just not enough time.
- Monthly Faculty Expos (AKA staff meetings) are a great way to meet with everyone at one time. I try to communicate all of the housekeeping “stuff” through email so that I can save what limited time that I have with my teachers for instructional time.
- I have a department or grade level host each meeting. These are assigned at the beginning of the year so that they have plenty of time to prepare. If they are hosting the meeting, they have to come up with one team building activity and teach the rest of our staff at least one strategy that they use in their classroom. This has been really neat to see this year. I have watched my teachers learn from one another and then implement the strategy into their own classrooms.
- If there is a topic/issue in which some staff members are truly passionate, invite them to an optional meeting for discussion. In this way, the only people at the meeting are those that have an invested interest. Some of the best conversations have occurred at these optional meetings.
- One way to end a staff meeting is with “appreciations.” Volunteers share 1-2 things that they appreciate about someone else on staff. This helps build relationships throughout the building.
- We have a weekly focus on the board in our workroom that gives the reading and math objectives for the week for each grade level. This allows all of my special teachers and paraprofessionals to know exactly what the students are learning throughout the building. It also opens up communication between grade levels and allows ideas to be shared.

Professional development should be delivered in a way that yields direct impact on teacher practice. It should be for new teachers and veteran teachers. Teaching information, techniques and methods are constantly being updated and changed and this means that our college education alone will not be enough to serve us throughout our whole career. However, by being creative we can find ways to implement professional development into the workplace.
EOI: Energize...Optimize...Inspire (No Test Required)
CCOSA Summer Conference

June 6 & 7, 2013
at The Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center in Norman

Thursday, June 6
KEYNOTE: Greg Risberg

Friday, June 7
KEYNOTE: Dr. Todd Whitaker

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Association News
CCOSA Award Winners!

Congratulations!!!

2013-14 OAESP ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR!
Theresa Kiger
Roy Clark ES
Union Public Schools

2013 OAESP PRINCIPAL OF EXCELLENCE
Paula Palerrmo
Lakeview Elementary
Norman PS

2012 OAESP JAMES BURNETT DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL
Tim Haws
Earl Harris ES
Bethany PS

2013 OASSP HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR!
Stacey Vernon
Will Rogers College JHS
Tulsa PS

2013 OASSP MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR!
Douglas Stafford
Emerson MS
Enid PS

2013 OASSP ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR!
Mona Smith
Glenpool HS
Glenpool PS

2013 OKLAHOMA EDUCATORS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Steven Crawford
CCOSA Executive Director

Lloyd Snow
Superintendent
Sand Springs PS

2013-14 ODSS DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR!

David McCune
Director of Special Services
Enid PS
When asked to write an article about technology for this issue of Better Schools, my first response was “What, I don’t think I know enough about technology to do that.” As a matter of fact, I even asked Dr. Branch if I could pick another topic. She graciously said yes, but then as I thought about it maybe I could make a few comments worth contemplating.

My first thought is an obvious one, but one that I think has taken many of us in education a while to fully grasp. Technology is here to stay and is only going to become more important in education if we want to truly remain relevant. Technology has advanced so rapidly over the last five to ten years that many schools have struggled to keep up. From outdated policies on student use to outdated networks and equipment, educators have been forced to be creative in the ways that we address these concerns.

We must look at ways to write policies that allow students to have access to information and the devices that can help gather that information. At the same time, we must protect our children from the obvious safety concerns associated with the internet and the social media that goes with it. In my opinion, the days of school policies that say students must leave their phones (also known as personal computers) at home or leave them turned off during the day are outdated and make schools look naive and irrelevant. If you have not already done so, I would look at the concept of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device). This can be a great way for school districts to, almost overnight, get technology in the hands of many more students than if schools are trying to provide all of the devices themselves. There are definite pros and cons but if this is something you are considering, a lot of information can be found about how to do it safely.

Two other major issues that I see with technology use in schools are funding and professional development. None of this is new to anyone reading this article, but they are issues that continue to grow exponentially as the need for increased use of technology continues to grow. School administrators have to be the ones that lead the way in efforts to get the funding for upgrades to technology within our schools. Whether by bond issues, grants, donations from community partners, or any number of other ways, we have to be the ones out front making the push to grow in this area. School administrators also must support teachers as they face the daunting task of implementing technology into their classrooms in a manner that is relevant and meaningful to their students. This will require finances, understanding, and a support like many of us have not seen before.

Technology and its use within our schools is an issue that will not go away (nor do I think we want it to). We must do everything within our power to ensure that our students and our teachers have the resources to make them successful. In my opinion, and it is just that, my opinion, it has to be a priority for all of us.
There are a lot of weeds in this world – far too many to count. But among the thorns and thistles of our life, beautiful flowers exist as well. We must train our mind’s eye not only to focus on these flowers, but to seek them out. Our job as school leaders is becoming more and more complex – hence the “weeds!” The role of the principalship is bursting with a multitude of unwanted vegetation that wants to choke the life out of us. And, in case any of you are wondering, I am not referring to the children we serve.

I am speaking about “life in the day of a school,” and the many demands it requires. As with the rest of the administrators from across this state, my daily to-do list is ever lengthening. However, in order to survive the onslaught of organized chaos that is inherent in our job descriptions, I have learned to develop the skill of searching for the positive moments within my day/week. In other words, I focus on the flowers. I even take the time to jot them down and have developed a list that I can refer back to when the day gets tough, reminding me that my work does matter and I am making a difference in the lives of others.

A couple of weeks ago, I received a hug from a parent coupled with a tear of gratitude and heartfelt thank you…I wrote it down. Another time, one of my teachers told me, “You’re always around right when I need you, I don’t know what I would do without you.” These are just a few of “my flowers,” and I can honestly say it warms my heart to read them and helps to motivate me for the days to come. I’m reminded of a scripture in the Bible that states, “Help me to focus on what is good and pure. Renew my mind from within.”

I challenge you; carve out some time for reflection and positive thinking. It allows us to become rejuvenated. Have you ever noticed it takes one great moment with a student, parent, or staff member to give us enough energy to get through the remainder of the day? For some, it could possibly take you through the end of the week!

As school leaders, we must learn to sustain positive energy. Therefore, I encourage you to share your stories of success with each other. It’s tremendously encouraging and can often help to lift either our own or our colleague’s spirits. So, remember, focus on the flowers and not on the weeds. May is just around the corner, and with a great attitude, we can all finish the school year with great success!
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Transfers and IEP Service Agreements

BY ANDREA KUNKEL
CCOSA Staff Attorney

Since transfer time is upon us, I wanted to remind you of changes in the law brought about by the State Board of Education’s adoption of new transfer rules last year.

TRANSFERS

There are three types of transfers available to students with disabilities in Oklahoma – an open transfer, an emergency transfer to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and an emergency transfer for reasons other than to receive FAPE. There are different rules and processes applicable to each type of transfer, and the responsibilities of the resident and receiving school districts differ based upon the type of transfer.

1. Open transfers

The student’s parent files an application for open transfer no later than April 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which the transfer is desired. The board of education of the receiving district approves or denies the open transfer application no later than June 1 of the same year and notifies the student’s parent of the decision. By July 1 of the same year, the student’s parent notifies the receiving school district that the student will be enrolling in that school district. For students who are deaf or hearing impaired who wish to transfer to a school district with a specialized deaf education program, applications may be filed at any time during the school year. Upon approval of the receiving school district, such a student may transfer to the receiving school district at any time during the school year.

When a receiving district accepts the open transfer of a student with a disability, it accepts all financial and legal responsibility for that student during the term of the open transfer.

2. Emergency transfers for reasons other than FAPE

In addition to the open transfer process, students may transfer on an emergency basis. Transfer requests made outside of the open transfer period should be reviewed and treated as emergency transfers. A student’s parent files a written application for emergency transfer with the superintendent of the school district to which the transfer is desired. On an adequate showing of emergency, the superintendent of the receiving school district may make and order a transfer, subject to approval by the State Board of Education. One reason for an emergency transfer is the concurrence of both the student’s resident (or sending) school district and the prospective receiving school district. Before either school district approves an emergency transfer for a student with an IEP based upon the concurrence of two school districts, it is important for the districts to understand the reason for the emergency transfer – for FAPE or for reasons other than FAPE. The reason for the transfer is important because the two school districts bear different responsibilities depending upon whether the emergency transfer is sought for the student to receive FAPE or for reasons other than FAPE.

When the resident and receiving districts concur in the emergency transfer of a student with a disability for reasons other than FAPE, the receiving district bears all financial and legal responsibility for that student during the term of the transfer.
3. Emergency transfers for FAPE

If the resident school district of a student with an IEP determines that it cannot provide the student with FAPE, the resident school district can seek an emergency transfer of the student for FAPE to another school district that agrees to accept the transfer and provide special education and related services to the student. Although an emergency transfer for FAPE is an option available under state law, the resident school district and the prospective receiving school district should consider entering into an IEP Service Agreement (see below) to identify their respective rights and responsibilities.

Beginning with the 2008-09 school year, an emergency transfer for FAPE granted for a child with a disability for three consecutive years to the same school district automatically renews for each subsequent year, and the resident district must continue to pay tuition.

Transfers, generally

Before approving a transfer, the receiving school district must determine whether the appropriate program, staff and services are available. Before approving the transfer, the receiving school district must also consult with the resident school district and the student’s parent to determine how FAPE will be provided.

If the receiving school district approves the transfer and the student enrolls, the receiving school district must provide the student services comparable to those described in the resident district’s then-current IEP until the receiving district either adopts that IEP or develops, adopts and implements a new IEP for the student.

IEP SERVICE AGREEMENTS

An IEP Service Agreement is an agreement between school districts to provide special education and related services to an eligible student with a disability solely for the purpose of providing the student with FAPE. It is also described as the resourcing of special education and related services to a school district that provides special education and related services to an eligible student with a disability on behalf of the resident district. IEP Service Agreements must be in writing and documented in the SDE Student Information System. They are not documented as transfers.

An IEP Service Agreement entered into for three consecutive years to the same district results in automatic renewal of the agreement in subsequent years, and the resident school district remains responsible for payment of tuition.

When the resident and receiving districts enter into an IEP Service Agreement, the resident district bears all financial and legal responsibility for that student during the term of the agreement.

When the resident and receiving districts concur in the emergency transfer of a student with a disability for FAPE, the resident district bears all financial and legal responsibility for that student during the term of the transfer.
In My Opinion

BY CLARK OGILVIE
Superintendent, Owasso
OASA President-Elect

I enjoy the opportunity to write for CCOSA as I find it truly therapeutic to write/vent on what’s going on in public education. As we have passed the half-way point in this year’s legislative session, I see that we now have only 122 school related bills to deal with prior to ‘sine die’ on May 31st. To the average school patron this may seem like a lot of legislation, but we educators know that there are literally several hundred school-related bills filed at the beginning of each legislative session. What I find most disturbing about this circumstance is that we now consider this as normal procedure!

What’s more frightening is the fact that if there had not been lobbying efforts by parents, patrons, school lobbyists and other educators the number may have been 300 bills instead of 122 alive and kicking! Quite honestly I find this very troubling as I have been in the business of educating kids now for over 30 years and it seems to be getting worse and worse. Even as a young school administrator/teacher, I don’t recall my superintendent talking about potential school legislation and having to rally the troops for a trip to the Capitol to lobby on an almost weekly basis. The lone exception of course was HB 1017 which now has historic event status!

I honestly believe this can be tracked to the year 2000 when NCLB (No Child Left Behind) became law and the hunt was on for public school dollars by private enterprise. Now after a dozen years of questionable success, we have moved into yet another ‘reform’ movement that includes a barrage of new legislation to implement CCS (Common Core Standards), A-F grading systems, reading sufficiency, unlimited virtual schools, E.O.I.s, and of course charter schools.

Nationally these so-called reform efforts are being woven into our public education culture by private entities such as the Foundation for Excellence in Education Foundation, The Broad Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, Walton Foundation, GE Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Kovner Foundation, The Robertson Foundation, The Oberndorff Foundation, etc. Organizations such as ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council), Chiefs for Change etc. have been formed to guide these efforts on a state level through additional organizations such as PARCC (Partnerships for Assessing Readiness for College and Careers) and Smarter Balanced member states.

The common thread is that multi-million dollar corporations and businesses are represented here that are in the business of profit first and foremost. Access to public dollars for public education (estimated at 600 billion+!!) is just too enticing. Legislators are almost ‘giddy’ at the prospect of attracting new dollars for their state and their hometown; hence a plethora of new legislation to reform public education without regard for the long-term consequences. In my opinion, it is time to put on the brakes folks and recognize what is being done to public education in our country and at what expense—Thomas Jefferson must be rolling over in his grave! I encourage you to invite your legislator for a cup of coffee to share this perspective.
As this school year begins to wind down, there are several issues that administrators should be mindful of as you begin preparations for the year to come. Despite the countless activities and ceremonies that demand and require your attention, there are a number of functions administrators are likely conducting to ensure a smooth start to the 2013-2014 school year.

One such issue is that of rehiring instructional staff. Subsection E of Section 6-101 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes requires that prior to the first Monday in June, a board of education that has not entered into a written contract with a regularly employed teacher or notified the teacher in writing by registered or certified mail that a recommendation has been made not to reemploy the teacher for the ensuing fiscal year shall reemploy the teacher on a continuing contract basis on the same salary schedule for all other teachers in the district for the ensuing fiscal year if, by fifteen (15) days after the first Monday in June, such teacher has not notified the board of education in writing by registered or certified mail that such teacher does not desire to be reemployed in such school district for the ensuing year.

It is important to note that the notification deadlines that govern the rehiring of instructional staff do not apply to administrators. There is no statutory deadline by which administrators must be notified of rehiring or contract non-renewal. Section 6-101.13 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes outlines the due process rights for administrators as they relate to contract non-renewal or termination. Administrators are entitled to written notification to which states the proposed termination or non-renewal, lists the reasons for effecting the action, and notifies the administrator of their right to a hearing before the school district board of education prior to the action taking place. Administrators have ten (10) days after receiving the notification to request a hearing before the board of education.

Decisions regarding personnel are becoming increasingly difficult to make as local educators continue to face declining revenues with larger enrollments. Nevertheless, administrators must plan for the rehiring of their staff now so that they do not face the prospect of automatic rehire and/or litigation against the district for improper termination actions.

One matter that must be considered during these challenging financial times is Section 6-101.31 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes which went into effect on July 1, 2012 and states that the primary basis used in determining the retention or reassignment of affected teachers and administrators when a school district implements a reduction-in-force plan shall be the ratings of the teachers and administrators affected by the Re-duction in Force. It is important for local administrators to understand that during a Reduction in Force, only the TLE ratings of teachers and administrators affected by the RIF are to be considered.

Put another way, if a school needs to reduce force due to a financial exigency, the school cannot seek out the worst performing employees, reduce them based on their performance
as measured by the TLE and then justify that action due to less revenue. Why? If the position the district caused to be vacated by the “ineffective” educator will have to be filled then the RIF was not necessary for that particular position. If a district has one math teacher and three art teachers, the RIF would be directed at the Art Department and current law would require the district to reduce the least effective art teacher. The point being, we are not looking district-wide for the least effective educators when implementing a reduction in force, we are only looking for the least effective educators within the area or areas “affected” by the RIF plan.

Although these decisions are never easy, they must be made. Talks at the legislative level include supplemental funding for the current fiscal year as well as a healthy increase in the formula for the 2014 fiscal year. Make sure to factor into your budget the full implications of passage of State Question 766, increased enrollment, lost revenue from the Commissioners of the School Land Commission, lost gross production revenue, and increased costs for FBA and reform implementation. The total cost of the items listed could up to $100 million which means that a $100 million dollar increase in appropriations from the legislature may result in fiscal year 2014 being level funded to fiscal year 2013.

Best wishes to you, your staff and your students as you prepare to close out this school year! Your challenges are many, your resources are few, but your rewards are abundant! Thank you for continuing to provide selfless service to your students, your district and our state.
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Book It

BY ROBERT SCHORNICK
Principal, Oologah HS
OASSP President-Elect

Book Review: The Mentor Leader
Secrets To Building People And Teams That Win Consistently
by Tony Dungy

At a time when our schools are transitioning to Common Core with more emphasis being put on state test scores as a means of measuring our students’ growth, we could find it easy to slip into a place where what matters most to us are test scores and lose sight of the individual. However, to be effective leaders we have to put the individuals first, be they students or teachers, and allow the scores to follow. This message is the heart of Tony Dungy’s book The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams That Win Consistently.

As a former NFL coach with a Super Bowl victory as one of his many accolades, Tony Dungy knows quite a bit about strong leadership and positive growth. Just because Dungy is a former football coach; however, doesn’t mean that his leadership philosophy should be dismissed as being only effective for athletes, coaches, or CEOs. According to Dungy, “The primary focus of mentor leadership…is to shape the lives of the people right in front of [the mentor leaders], as they lead, guide, inspire, and encourage those people” (Introduction xvi). That focus, that goal, should also be the goal of administrators and educators every day.

Reading this book and analyzing its relevance to my life led me to the realization that mentor leadership and recognition are important. Probably, like many of you, I am guilty of not always practicing this essential leadership skill. I think that as leaders we need to make a more conscious effort to help students, teachers, and other administrators grow and become more effective in our schools by “developing [their] strengths” and by showing them “genuine concern for their development and success” (Introduction xvii). We need to ask ourselves the following questions: how do others around [us] flourish as a result of [our] leadership, and how does [our] leadership, [our] involvement in their lives—in whatever setting we’re in—have a positive and lasting influence and impact on them. By asking these types of questions, we can gain a fresh perspective on how we approach our roles as leaders. These questions certainly helped me to take a closer look at how I was leading and in what areas I needed to adjust for improvement.

These questions also lead to a resounding element in Dungy’s concept of mentor leadership—learning how to put other people first. If you take only one thing from this book after reading it, let it be this—relationships are ultimately what matter. Dungy stresses, “Mentor leaders understand that if we lose sight of people, we lose sight of the very purpose of leadership” (6). I have challenged myself to consistently follow this principle. When talking to other leaders, I highlight the importance of surrounding myself with great people and employees and of continually building relationships of influence with those individuals by being willing “to walk alongside them, to lift and encourage them, to share moments of understanding with them, and to spend time with them” not “just [to] shout down at them from on high” (13). Remember…great leaders realize that leadership is not about them!

One of the greatest leaders in history, Dwight D. Eisenhower defined leadership as “the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” You truly can’t do everything in your organization yourself. In coaching promising students, teachers, and administrators to become top performing leaders by challenging them, supporting them, and committing yourself to them, your school will reap “good success.” Success that is significant—by “creating a culture that will live on through succeeding generations” (15). So, as I wrap up this article and as you set it down, I challenge you to develop school goals that focus on developing mentor leaders and on creating sustainable success, for what is better than success that lasts?
As we begin to align common core standards, instruction, and state assessments, we must also consider how to align instructional practices for students with disabilities in order to ensure access to the general education curriculum. Writing standards-based IEP’s that target individual needs, but meet grade level expectations will be essential. Goal setting, supplementary aids and services, and service delivery are key components to aligning the IEP with Common Core Standards. Developing a standards-based IEP will help align instruction with the general curriculum. Writing meaningful goals and establishing appropriate accommodations will have a direct impact on exposure within the general education setting. Aligning the IEP to Common Core Standards will also promote a unified system for educating all students. If ALL students will be taking the same assessment, then ALL students need exposure to challenging content on grade level.  

The Oklahoma State Department of Education has notified school districts that modified assessments (OMAAPs) will no longer be available for first-time test takers beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. All students will be expected to be working at grade level and will be assessed utilizing the same standardized assessments except for students participating in the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Portfolio (OAAP). High stakes testing, as well as preparing students to be college and career ready, will impact how we service students with disabilities and how we align IEPs to the general education curriculum.

(Adapted from the work of Carol Kosnitsky, LRP Conference May 2012)
Some things to consider when preparing for the transition to Common Core Standards:

- To promote access to the general curriculum, we need to teach not only to the student’s instructional level, but also to the student’s grade level. This may have a substantial impact on traditional service delivery.
- We need to promote collaboration between general and special educators (ex. PLC’s, Professional Development, Curriculum Mapping etc.).
- For students taking the regular assessment, we need to move away from modifications and instead focus on accommodations.

**Modifications** alter or lower standards or expectations. Examples of modifications are:

- Changes in course content
- Changes in standards
- Changes in expectations
- Changes in location

**Accommodations** do not fundamentally alter or lower standards or expectations. Examples of accommodations are:

- Changes in location
- Changes in timing
- Changes in student responses
- Changes in teaching strategies

- We need to incorporate assistive technology when appropriate.

- [www.donjohnston.com](http://www.donjohnston.com/par) is a website that provides a free download that helps IEP teams determine if reading accommodations are needed and, if so, which ones are appropriate.

- Assistive Technology Assessment: Developing a Written Productivity Profile by Denise DeCoste, Ed.D., OTR, is a book that helps determine appropriate writing accommodations.

- [www.theoatc.org](http://www.theoatc.org/) provides a wealth of information about assistive technology. This is an excellent source for conducting assistive technology consultations and evaluations.

**We MUST teach students with disabilities the same curriculum that we teach students without disabilities.**

The transition to Common Core Standards and the alignment of those standards to the IEP may prove to be a challenging task. How the transition to Common Core will impact educational practices remains to be seen. The Oklahoma Directors of Special Services will help school districts with the alignment challenge when we present Carol Kosnitsky, a nationally-known educational consultant who works closely with LRP, as our keynote speaker at the ODSS Fall Conference on Friday, October 25, 2013.

**HELPFUL RESOURCES:**

Aligning IEPs to the Common Core State Standards: for Students with Moderate and Severe Disabilities by Ginevra Courtade, Ph.D. and Diane M. Browder, Ph.D.

- [www.corestandards.org/the-standards](http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards)
- [www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf)
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