Better Schools

SAVE THE DATE!

OKLAHOMA’S RALLY FOR EDUCATION.

678,000 REASONS

TOGETHER WE STAND. UNWAVERING.

MONDAY, MARCH 31
OKLAHOMA CAPITOL, 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the south side of the Oklahoma State Capitol.
In This Issue...

1  From the Executive Director
2  OASA President
4  Association News
6  On The Hill/Federal Relations
8  Special Education Update
10  Legal Ease
12  NASSP 2014–2016 Strategic Plan
13  Health, Wellness, Humor
15  Ethics in School Administration
17  Book It
18  Tech Talk
19  Professional Development:

Articles submitted to Better Schools do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs of the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration. All articles are subject to editing.

A publication of the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration Editor . . . Dr. Gracie Branch
 Editorial and Advertising offices at 2901 Lincoln Blvd. Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Membership and advertising rates upon request. Better Schools is owned and published by the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration, Inc.
CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

The legislative process is in full swing. Many bills have been filed and many are being heard that pertain to public education. We are tracking over 300 bills at this time, working hard to provide your views on all legislative issues and advocating for additional funding. I believe that funding is our most critical issue and that is why CCOSA is supporting a “Rally” at the capitol on March 31st for additional funding for public education.

Since the recession of 2008, public education has failed to be the benefactor of the political and financial support necessary to ensure success for all students. It is time for everyone who says they “support public education” to step forward and invest the state’s resources in the public school children of Oklahoma. I know people will criticize you for turning out school, but I believe it is the right thing to do for the future of our students and state. I feel strongly that our “Students are as important as potholes and bridges,” which is why we are using the slogan of “678,000 Reasons to Rally.” If you are happy with your current levels of funding, stay at home. If you are disappointed in your current funding levels, find a way to join us on March 31st and together we can make a difference! Most of the critics of your right to lobby do not support public education; if they did they would welcome you to their world on 23rd and Lincoln Boulevard.

In the near future, we will be sending you parking information, an agenda for the day and talking points. Please review them carefully and plan on visiting with your political representatives inside the capitol after the presentations. The success of the day will depend on you and your commitment to the future of public education. I believe that while we can always improve, public education is the best it has ever been and should be supported financially to provide the majority of Oklahoma’s children even more opportunities for success. I also believe that to grow our state’s economy politicians must invest more in our children.

Thank you for being a member and trusting us to represent you. Please let us know if we can be of assistance to you.

Steven Crawford
CCOSA Executive Director

“There is a place in America to take a stand: it is public education. It is the underpinning of our cultural and political system. It is the great common ground. Public education after all is the engine that moves us as a society toward a common destiny...It is in public education that the American dream begins to take shape.”

— TOM BROKAW
Anyone remember the old movie ‘Groundhog Day’ starring Bill Murray way back in time (1993), not so much so if you are a Boomer! The premise of the movie revolves around a TV weatherman played by Murray who hates covering the annual groundhog day event in Pennsylvania so much that he finds himself in a time loop, waking up each day to repeat this same day over and over again. Of course, everyone expects a different result each day, hence Einstein’s definition of insanity. Sometimes I think our state legislature is a lot like this movie, as well!!!

I see where once again some 3000+ bills have been filed for this legislative session and once again a significant number of them (722 by last count) have the potential to directly affect outcomes in K-12 public education. Never mind that Oklahoma ranks anywhere from 44th to 49th depending on what publication you are reading in funding for education, there is still an apparent desire to ‘fix’ what is wrong with our public school system with no additional funding.

Think I’m exaggerating on this issue—well I would like to call your attention to an artifact that I inherited from my father who spent 40 years in public education in our state, some 30 of those as Superintendent of Berryhill Public Schools. He left me a copy of the OEA’s legislative goals from 1952 which I keep in my top desk drawer to help me keep in perspective what is going on or not going on with our state legislature. This was back when administrators and teachers all belonged to the same professional organization by the way.

The following list is a sampling of these legislative goals:

Goal #1: Retain auto license tax for public education
Goal #2: Inclusion of all real and personal property for tax assessment so that such properties share equitably in financing public education
Goal #3: A plan to provide dedicated revenues to finance adequately the state’s entire part of financing public schools
Goal #4: Adequate appropriations for financing the SDE
Goal #5: The establishment and financing of a kindergarten program for public schools
Goal #6: A minimum guaranteed teacher salary of $2,400 for those with a 4 year degree
Goal #7: A proposed constitutional amendment to elect members of the SDE Board on a non-partisan ballot whose members would in turn appoint a State Superintendent
Goal #8: A law fixing the maximum number of pupils per teacher at 25
Goal #9: Federal financial aid for public education without federal control (and saving the best till last)
Goal #10: Legislation to guarantee the actuarial solvency of the TRS with a dedicated revenue stream derived from specific sources—wow, what a marvelous concept!

Yep, we’ve been down this road before! However take heart, we did get that full day kindergarten program and we did get the state minimum teacher salary raised from $2,400 to $31,000 after only half a century! Heck, we even had class sizes down to a manageable number of 28 at the secondary and 20 at the elementary level with HB 1017’s passage in 1990, but of course the legislature has long since abandoned the funding to make that possible.

Hey, did the ground hog see his shadow in Oklahoma on February 2nd? I missed it—dang, I guess I will have to wait until next year to find out what happened—maybe it will be different next time…
Barlow turns negotiation into collaboration, so everyone is heard, and everyone wins.

Joe Slano
Superintendent
Norman Public Schools

BWA Architects
Boynton Williams & Associates
bwaarchitects.com
Norman Dallas Tulsa

800.825.8625 | bluncks.com

NETCHEMIA TalentEd

SOCS
Simplified Online Communication System

www.SOCS-hero.org

OSAG
Association News

OAESP

A huge thank you to all OAESP members who supported the OAESP Mid-Winter Conference Leadership Roundup!!! Keynote speakers John Antonetti and Steve Seskin did a fantastic job of presenting and the boot scootin social was a tremendous hit!!! Also, OAESP members were able to raise $1,000.00 for the CCOSA PAC!!! A special shout out also goes to the following buckaroos:

- Megan Wilson, OAESP President-Elect, who was our premiere conference planner.
- OAESP Officers and Board Members for all your help in setting up and dismantling the Reed Conference Center Corral!!!
- Katie Mueller and the Reed Conference Center Staff for providing fantastic hospitality, food and service.
- Howard Flaherty and Sadlier Inc. for sponsoring our OAESP Executive Board Meeting Dinner.
- David Shand from LifeTouch who took pictures at our social and gave them to OAESP cowpokes free of charge.
- Brandon Wilson for being our Cowboy DJ for the social.
- Senator John Ford for helping to present our member/technology grants.

Next year’s keynote speaker will be Kerry Purcell featured in the PBS documentary The Principal Story!!!

OASSP

As part of the vision to promote excellence in middle and high school leadership, OASSP annually recognizes principals, assistant principals, and students from across the state for their leadership and for making positive, significant differences in our schools and communities.

Oklahoma is proud to honor exemplary leaders who have been recognized statewide and nationally for their service and leadership. Mr. Clay McDonald, Assistant Principal, Piedmont High School, was recognized as one of three finalists for 2014 NASSP Assistant Principal of the Year. Congratulations to Mr. McDonald and thank you for representing us in such a professional manner at our recent NASSP Ignite “14 Conference in Dallas, TX.

Other state finalists for Assistant Principal of the Year 2014 were Deanna Dobbins, Stillwater Middle School, Stillwater and Marcus “Scott” Allen, Longfellow Middle School, Enid.

Interviews for 2015 High School Principal of the Year and 2015 Middle School Principal of the Year will be conducted during the month of February. Those who have been chosen as finalists for Oklahoma High School Principal of the Year are: Mr. Rodney Maynard, Davis High School, Davis; Mr. Michael Meriwether, Waynoka High School, Waynoka; and Patty Stanley, Newkirk High School, Newkirk.

Middle School finalists for 2015 are: Mrs. Cathy Walker, Stillwater Middle School, Stillwater; Ms. Elizabeth Burns, Ernest Childers Middle School, Broken Arrow; Mr. Jason Galloway, Sequoyah Middle School, Edmond; and Mr. Rob Miller, Jenks Middle School, Jenks.

The top high school and middle level youth volunteers in Oklahoma have announced by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards recognizing Ashten Vincent, 17, Edmond North High School, Edmond and Katherine Prior, 13, Girl Scouts Western Oklahoma City. Distinguished Finalists were Cierra Little Water Fields, 14, Fort Gibson High School, Fort Gibson; Jessica Miller, 18, Wright City High School, Wright City; Erika Vinson, 18, Warner High School, Warner; and Kaylee Young, 17, Cleveland County 4-H, Norman.

Also for the first time, Oklahoma was represented in the Lifetouch Memory Mission Trip in the Dominican Republic. Deanna Dobbins, Stillwater Middle School was one of the 50 volunteers helped to build a vocational school for the children in the impoverished, farming community of Constanza. The new school will offer the students at the elementary school greater opportunities for careers as adults.

Congratulations also go out to Leslie Frazier who was elected to a one-year term on the NASSP Executive Committee.

Leadership as we know plays a significant part in the success of our schools. Thank you to all of our Oklahoma administrators for your part in helping students prepare for college and career.
Please join us for the OMLEA Conference: What Is Your Super Power on Thursday, February 27 - Friday, February 28, 2014 at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Norman. This year’s keynote speakers are Kim Campbell and Mark McLeod. Kim Campbell is a proud middle school teacher from the Hopkins School District in Hopkins, Minnesota. Kim's emphasis is on “Addressing the Achievement Gap…the Time is NOW!” We know that one of the most important issues facing education in America today is the achievement gap. Kim will discuss strategies and techniques that she has found helpful in motivating, engaging, and working with students. Kim is the author of the books If You Can’t Manage Them, You Can’t Teach Them and A Handbook for Closing the Achievement Gap: S.O.A.R. You can follow Kim Campbell on Twitter: @KimCamp4Kids.

Back by popular demand, Mark McLeod is one of the most sought after speakers in education. His high energy and dynamic strategies have motivated and influenced numerous educators across the nation. What Can You Expect After Bringing Mark to Your Event?

• New teachers will gain confidence to lead a classroom
• Veteran teachers will take their classroom performance to the next level.
• Burnout teachers will gain a new passion for education.

So register now at: www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=1342303

The Oklahoma Directors of Special Services held its 2014 Winter Conference on January 23 and 24, in Tulsa. One measure of the success of a conference is to look at the number of participants still there when it wraps up late on a Friday afternoon. By that measure (and many others), the ODSS Conference was a great success! Keynote speaker David Hodgins, a Texas education law attorney and frequent speaker and contributor for LRP events and publications, was funny and informative all day long, keeping his audience engaged and in their seats until the very end.

In addition to planning the upcoming Fall Conference, ODSS members are hard at work analyzing and debating the pros and cons of bills introduced during the Oklahoma legislative session. Reading Sufficiency Act good cause exemptions to retention, dyslexia, graduation and special ed teacher highly qualified and certification requirements are just some of the special education-related topics currently pending. As the legislature has enacted more and more laws that dramatically change the education landscape for all students, it has become more important for ODSS and the other CCOSA groups to consider – and speak up! – to explain how those laws will impact students with disabilities and interact with existing federal laws.

ODSS welcomes input from every CCOSA group and member about issues relevant to the education of students with disabilities.

OASA membership is up this year! We have 682 members with 101 of them being first time OASA members! Over 300 administrators attended the OASA Legislative Conference. Legislative Briefings have begun and are being held every Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m. at the CCOSA Office. OASA board meetings have been moved to the second Tuesday of each month until June to coincide with the legislative briefings. OASA Board of Directors approved the support for the education rally on March 31, 2014. A lot is happening at the Capitol right now and we are working hard to keep you informed! A huge thank you to all of you who called your representatives regarding the A-F hearing and requesting support for HB2642, your calls make a difference. It is also very important this time of year to watch your email for updates and action alerts. You should also be receiving weekly video legislative updates by Ryan Owens. If you are not receiving daily emails from OASA/CCOSA, you need to give us a call (405-524-1191) and confirm that we have an email address listed for you. Finally in OASA news, your ballots are being counted. District Administrators of the Year and OASA officers for 2014-2015 will be announced later this month.

OASA
Do you remember being in high school and college and "cramming" for a test? It occurred to me recently, that although it resulted in a passing test grade, this method probably didn't contribute to my long-term knowledge of the subject matter. Mental, physical, or spiritual growth doesn't occur as a result of urgent preparation for an upcoming challenge. True growth is a result of a daily and weekly commitment to a plan. This is why the emphasis on testing is a big mistake. When we teach to the test, which we are almost compelled to do when the stakes are so high, we are telling our students that life is a sprint. It isn't. Life is a marathon.

Can we please interject some common sense into the conversation? Can we please stop reacting to the whims of politicians and start doing what's best for kids? Can we somehow convince our state and national leaders that when we take the fun out of teaching, we take the fun out of learning? Do we not understand that for every parent who tells us his bright, inquisitive, creative child has come to dread going to school because "all we do is test-prep," there are hundreds more who see the same thing in their children but haven't figured out why? After a recent student demonstration demanding an end to high stakes testing, Rhode Island State Representative Teresa Tanzi challenged her colleagues: "Learning has taken a back seat to test preparation, the culture of the classroom has changed dramatically, and the quality of education suffers. This is an experiment that has no winners: the stakes are too high, the payoff uncertain, and the risk too big for our students to bear."

I am honored to serve as one of your representatives to the Governing Board of the American Association of School Administrators. I understand that this article is supposed to be from that perspective. As Governing Board members, we are your voice to the AASA and to your congressmen. It is critically important that we tell our elected officials that high stakes testing is destructive for our kids and for public education in general. This message needs to be heard in Washington as well as in Oklahoma City. Be assured that your Governing Board representatives will continue to deliver that message.
STAR Enterprise™ assessments approved by Oklahoma SDE

We want you to be among the first to know that STAR Enterprise™ assessments, including STAR Early Literacy™ and STAR Reading™, are now approved as formative assessments for the K-3 Reading Sufficiency Act. You will find them on the RSA-Approved List under STAR™ Early Learning Enterprise.

This is great news for Oklahoma educators, because STAR Enterprise editions are the leading computer-adaptive assessments for determining acquisition of reading skills by PreK-3 emerging readers through ongoing screening and progress monitoring.

As directed by the K-3 Reading Sufficiency Act, reading skills such as phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are to be assessed using a screening instrument approved by the State Board of Education. STAR assessments have now been so approved. They include Student Diagnostic Reports, Screening Reports, and Instructional Planning Reports, which provide a bridge from assessment to instruction.

Call or email your Renaissance Learning™ representatives below for more information:

Sydney Nicholas
(866) 563-1084
Sydney.Nicholas@renlearn.com

Heather Tennyson
(866) 559-6571
Heather.Tennyson@renlearn.com
Dyslexia at Issue

BY ANDREA KUNKEL
CCOSA Staff Attorney

The looming specter of third grade retention under the Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA), among other issues, has ramped up discussion and debate about dyslexia. Although questions abound concerning dyslexia, there is no question that both state and federal law acknowledge this disorder.

During the 2012, Oklahoma legislative session, Governor Fallin signed legislation that could ultimately result in the creation of teacher training pilot programs intended to help teacher candidates in elementary, early childhood education and special education programs at state universities learn the indicators of dyslexia and the type of instruction that children with dyslexia need to learn, read, write and spell. We’re still waiting for the pilot programs, but that same law also included, for the first time, an Oklahoma definition of the word “dyslexia,” as follows:

A specific learning disorder that is neurological in origin and that is characterized by unexpected difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities not consistent with the intelligence, motivation and sensory capabilities of the person, which difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language. Okla. Stat. tit. 70, § 7001.

Beginning in 2013, the Oklahoma Disability Law Center (ODLC) began filing special education due process hearing requests against districts that the ODLC believed had failed to acknowledge dyslexia. In late 2013, the ODLC filed a formal complaint against the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), alleging violation of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), based on remarks made by REAC3H coaches at a parent information meeting regarding RSA retention. The gist of the remarks to which the ODLC objected was that dyslexia is not covered under or included in the IDEA. The Special Education Services section of OSDE investigated the complaint and issued a decision dated January 17, 2014, including the following statement in the Conclusion section:

Concerning the issue of child find, initial evaluations, evaluation procedures, and determining the existence of a learning disability, the OSDE-SES is found to be in compliance with the federal regulations at 34 CFR §§ 300.111, 300.301, 300.304 and 300.309. The OSDE has ensured that policies and procedures are in place to ensure that all children suspected of having a disability, including dyslexia, are identified, located, and evaluated to determine whether they are in need of special education and related services. The Special Education Policies in Oklahoma specifically indicate that the OSDE-SES aligns with the federal regulations outlined in the IDEA regarding the identification and evaluation of students suspected of having a disability. . . . The OSDE Special Education Manual specifically addresses guidance on evaluating students who may have a spe-
specific learning disability and lists dyslexia as a condition that may fall within the definition of that disability category. There is no evidence to support that any policies exist that would give guidance to LEAs that dyslexia is not recognized under the definition of specific learning disability. The OSDE-SES has also demonstrated through written correspondence by the Assistant State Superintendent that the OSDE utilizes the federal disability categories within the IDEA and that those categories were adopted by the Oklahoma State Board in 2007 and 2010.

Additionally, statements made by any REACH3H Coach regarding special education policies and procedures are not a representation of the OSDE-SES. The OSDE Office of Instruction provides a network of training and supervision for these individuals, but any opinions regarding the interpretation of special education policies give no evidence to support the statements made are accurate. (emphasis added)

The quoted section of the OSDE decision acknowledges that dyslexia is specifically mentioned within the definition of “specific learning disability” included in the IDEA implementing regulations adopted by the U.S. Department of Education, as follows:

(10) Specific learning disability—(i) General. Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(10) (emphasis added)

On January 27, 2014, the ODLC issued a Memo, in which it summarized the OSDE decision and stated:

**Therefore, if any school district or any SDE employee tells you that dyslexia is not recognized by Oklahoma, they are wrong.** Please report any such statement to our office immediately, and we will see that such unauthorized statements are responded to appropriately by the appropriate supervisor.

We are pleased to see the end of statements which attempt to avoid obligations to students with dyslexia (or suspected of having dyslexia). It may take awhile to completely end the unauthorized, mistaken statements throughout the entire state, but we are pleased to be working with families toward that goal. (emphasis in original)

Don't get hung up by the word "dyslexia". Don't deny its existence. This disorder is clearly recognized in both state law and within the broad definition of specific learning disability under the IDEA. Oklahoma educators will be involved in many debates and even battles about reading issues, but refusing to talk about dyslexia is a losing proposition.
The month of February signals the start of the legislative session in Oklahoma City. This year legislators filed over 2,200 bills in the House and Senate. CCOSA is tracking over 500 bills that in some way impact common education. From pension reform to the Reading Sufficiency Act to school funding, there are many topics being covered this session. Some of the more entertaining topics include legislation to make dominoes the official game of the state of Oklahoma and legislation to prohibit school districts from suspending students for chewing their breakfast pastries into the shape of a firearm.

One of the more important events that occurs in February is the Governor’s State of the State Address. As part of that address the Governor releases her proposed Executive Budget for FY 2015. It is important to note that the Governor’s budget is merely a starting point for negotiations with legislators. The Governor’s budget was almost $100 million smaller than the preceding year due to the state’s General Revenue Fund under collecting certain revenues.

The Governor proposed a 5% budget reduction to most agencies. A few agencies, including common education, were set to receive funding increases. Against the backdrop of the current revenue shortfall that the state is experiencing, the Governor nevertheless proposed a plan to reduce the top rate of the state’s income tax. Governor Fallin’s plan will reduce state revenues by $118.5 million in FY 2016, providing an annual average tax savings of $30.00 to median income Oklahoma households.

There will be a lot discussion and debate regarding the lowering of the state’s income tax (annual cost $118.5 million), continuing tax incentives for horizontal and deep well drilling (annual cost approximately $300 million), and continuation of the franchise tax (annual cost approximately $60 million). What does this mean to school leaders? This year state leaders will decide the fate of three tax structures that have the potential to annually generate $478.5 million in revenue for core services of government. If these revenue generating taxes are eliminated or kept at an arbitrarily low rate, schools could continue to see funding cuts for some time to come.

Additional funding cuts should be a worrisome prospect to school leaders. Educators are operating with major budget constraints. Schools today have $243.60 less per weighted student than at this same time in 2009. Schools are serving over 85,000 more weighted students today than at this same time in 2009.

What is clear to me is that we need a plan to adequately fund common education. Fortunately Rep. Lee Denney (R-Cushing) has filed legislation (HB 2642) to provide a funding plan designed to Secure Educational Excellence in Oklahoma. In the same way that the state has chosen to invest in infrastructure projects through the Department of Transportation, HB 2642 would provide automatic annual funding increases from the state directly to districts through the funding formula. If H.B. 2642 were to pass, each year for the next ten years the State Board of Equalization would certify a $57.5 million increase to the funding formula on top of the previous year’s base amount. These additional funds would come from revenue that would otherwise go to the state’s General Revenue Fund. In ten years’ time, the annual additional appropriation to schools through the funding formula would be $575 million. These dollars would be subject to the control of local boards of education and could be used by schools to return lost course offerings, reinstate instructional and support staff, and restore the accreditation standards created in HB 1017, for the benefit of students!

Please make plans to attend the Education Rally at the Capitol on March 31! It is vitally important that we support Rep. Denney and H.B. 2642. Educators, parents, board members and students need to tell state leaders that common education is important and that investing in our students will pay the state tremendous dividends. We have 678,000 reasons to Rally!
SAVE THE DATE!

OKLAHOMA’S RALLY FOR EDUCATION.

678,000 REASONS

MONDAY, MARCH 31
OKLAHOMA CAPITOL, 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the south side of the Oklahoma State Capitol.

The Education Rally is a unified effort to encourage Oklahoma Legislators to secure funding for public education.

We have 678,000 reasons to Rally for on March 31!

Event coordinated by: Oklahoma Education Association, Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration, Oklahoma State School Boards Association, Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools, United Suburban Schools Association, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association, Oklahoma Association of Career and Technology Education, and Oklahoma Parents and Teachers Association.

Like OKED Rally
At our last National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Executive Board Meeting, a new strategic plan was unveiled that will reaffirm the NASSP mission. The NASSP membership, through surveys, provided support of the 2014-16 strategic plan goals. The board approved the goals at the November meeting.

The new 2014-15 goals are as follows:

- **Connect** school leaders to exchange knowledge with NASSP and with one another
- **Advocate** on behalf of all school leaders to ensure the success of each student
- **Strengthen** school leadership practices through the design and delivery of high quality professional learning experiences
- **Promote** NASSP student programs to enhance student leadership and create positive school climate
- **Ensure** a unique membership experience with NASSP and student programs
- **Monitor** and enhance organizational vitality

The strategic plan will facilitate the movement of NASSP forward based on feedback from our members. This will also support a strong infrastructure to help support the plan. The work on the plan began in December 2012. It includes goals and objectives for each component. The full plan will appear in the February issue of NewsLeader and was presented to the membership at the Ignite’14 conference in Dallas, Texas.
Fit to be an Administrator

BY PHILIP SMITH
OAESP President, Lawton Public Schools
Hugh Bish ES – Principal

In a day and age of obesity and constant job related stresses, it’s apparent that as educators we must work hard to have a healthy lifestyle. Health, wellness and humor are closely related to one another and play pivotal roles in a person's well-being. In addition, good health habits give us the energy and stamina that we need to do our jobs in today’s schools.

As educators, we work in an environment that requires us to be on our feet throughout the day. Whether we are roaming the halls of our schools, observing building procedures for those TLE's, running down information to meet a deadline, pulling duty outside at recess, or just playing ball with the kids, we are an active profession. To keep up with the challenges of our position as administrators, we should be physically capable of meeting those demands.

A good wellness plan includes keeping your mind fresh and vibrant; ready to make tough decisions at a split seconds notice. How we gain wellness for ourselves is a personal choice of our likes and dislikes. It could be a hobby, a sport or reading, shopping, spending time with family or simply relaxing to ease the day’s pressures away. I prefer to be on a golf course to ease the tensions of the day’s events. As you can see, gaining wellness is one’s preference, but a place that we all need to reach to be fit.

Although administrators are notorious for skipping lunch, having the right amount of fruits, veggies, starches, and proteins in our diet to keep bodies nourished from the inside is also extremely important. Remember that what our food intake doesn't provide, there are always multiple vitamins that can help us reach our daily requirements for healthy nourishment. Staying fit takes a strong commitment to good nutrition and exercise. This means staying the course when faced with the decision of whether to work out today. Remember, today turns into tomorrow, and tomorrow will turn into less and less physical activity.

When we look at fitness it requires healthy bodies, a wellness of mind, and of course there's always a sense of humor that is needed to make our positions a bit on the lighter side. We can’t always be the serious type— never wanting to break that smile or letting our staff's know we are human. So take a load off your minds and enjoy a little laughter to start your day. You're fit to be an administrator!

10 Fun Facts

1. You can't wash your eyes with soap.
2. You can't count your hair.
3. You can't breath through your nose, with your tongue out.
4. You just tried no. 3.
5. When you did no. 3 your realized it's possible, you just look like a dog.
6. You're smiling right now, because you are fooled.
7. You skipped no. 5.
8. You just checked to see if there's no. 5.
9. Share this with your friends to have some fun too.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN
Insurance with a 4.0 GPA.

- Full compliment of Property & Casualty Insurance
- Loss Control & Risk Management Services
- Seminars & Presentations
- On Line Training Programs
- Owned and controlled by
  and for Oklahoma public schools

Oklahoma Schools Insurance Group
toll free 1.866.444.0061

Kellogg & Sovereign Consulting, LLC

Universal Service Management Professionals
Schools & Libraries | Rural Health Care

Celebrating 15 Years of E-Rate • 1998-2013
Our experienced professionals are ready to support you in achieving your funding goals!

CCOSA members receive a FREE E-Rate Analysis
Contact us today with this special code: KS15

Learn2™ Soar.
The learning environment has changed and you need seating that can change with it. Learn2 is the answer. Designed for a fluid, dynamic classroom where a lecture might lead to collaboration...and then to working individually...and then back again. Learn2 facilitates it all. Mobile, flexible, adaptable, it lets students customize their own learning space. So they can reach for their goals and beyond. Learn2 at ki.com

For more information, contact your local KI Sales Representative:
Rodney Guinn
rodney.guinn@ki.com
918.814.9330

Ki
Furnishing Knowledge®
Many of us know Dr. Clarence G. Oliver, Jr., who retired in 1992, as the former Broken Arrow Superintendent of Schools. What many of us may not know is that Dr. Oliver has held a variety of positions throughout the years: United States Army officer, managing editor of the Broken Arrow Ledger as well as other newspapers owned by McWilliams Publications, Inc., publisher of the Broken Arrow Scout and assistant to owner/publisher Bill Rutherford. Dr. Oliver continues his work in education by serving as an Emeritus Dean of Education at Oral Roberts University and most recently is one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Lindsey Nicole Henry Act. However, his most important work for school administrators is the ethics handbook – *Ethical Behavior, An Administrator’s Guide: Ethics and Values in School Administration*.

Our emphasis on ethics in school administration should remain very high primarily because the job requires ethical decisions around the clock. We all know what is illegal is unethical. What is unconstitutional is unethical. However, it’s much more difficult to understand and know the “borderline” areas in ethical decision making such as insinuating, lying, or leaving out important facts when writing or speaking. Dr. Oliver illustrates the difficulty in making “borderline” ethical decisions by quoting studies that were conducted in 1968 and 1996 in which superintendents were asked to respond to an ethical dilemma designed to elicit a response or choice of action. The dilemmas approximated situations that most administrators will encounter at some point in their careers. Only one of the provided choices is considered appropriate based on the guidelines and examples of the AASA Code of Ethics. The results of both studies indicated that less than 50% of the 3,630 dilemma scenarios in 1968 and less than 50% of the 2,790 scenarios in 1996 elicited ethical replies. These statistics alone validate the high emphasis we should place on ethical decision making.

Being a part of the “Ethics” standing committee allows me to focus on the ethical dimension of school administrative decision making as well as the ethical dimension of actions taken by those outside of education. While we all recognize unethical actions such as embezzlement, unlawful bid awards and unprincipled personnel decisions, it requires more awareness to realize acts that may be considered legal and constitutional, but are really unethical. This kind of unethical but legal behavior typically falls under the category of “free speech” where people are convinced of a certain viewpoint through misrepresenting information or leaving out important facts as exemplified by advertisements surrounding the passage of State Question 766.

Dr. Oliver suggests that to be ethical in all situations one should not only consider the ethical aspects of one’s own actions, but consider and point out unethical behavior in others. Martin Niemoller was a German Lutheran pastor who was imprisoned by the Nazis in 1937 in Dachau. Niemoller was freed by the allies in 1945 after spending 8 years in confinement. In the years following his release, he made several famous speeches concerning his captors which were condensed into the following poem, referring to Hitler and the Nazis:

> First they came for the communists,
> And I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a communist
> Then they came for the socialists,
> And I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a socialist
> Then they came for the trade unionists,
> And I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a trade unionist
> Then they came for me,
> And there was no one left to speak for me
Niemoller substituted or added several entities in his speeches over the years in order to make it more relevant for each audience. For example, he used social democrats in place of socialists and incurables in place of communists. His addition of educators (schools) made the poem more poignant for us. The gist of the poem is summarized in the following statement: “We can talk ourselves out of it (objecting to unethical actions) with the excuse that it would have cost me my head if I had spoken out.” For me the lesson is clear, as stated by Martin Niemoller so long ago, to be ethical one must not only object to unfair treatment dealt to oneself but to those actions and statements that are unfair for others. Ignoring the unethical actions and decisions of others is in itself unethical. We must not fear reprisal when we witness unethical actions against others. Even though it may not affect us personally, we still have an ethical responsibility to defend others. A good example is the new A-F report card system. Although some schools received an A report card, their administrators have a responsibility to speak out against this flawed and unethical system of ranking schools. If you do not have a copy of Dr. Oliver’s handbook, I highly recommend that you get one and keep it on your desk. This will ensure that ethics will always be at the forefront of your decision making and that others know the prominent role that ethics play in those decisions.
"After walking a mile in their shoes, I now see America's educators as heroes who deserve our wholehearted respect and support."

If you grew up in the seventies and eighties watching shows like Taxi and Who's the Boss, you can't help but be intrigued by Tony Danza's book about his year as a tenth-grade English teacher. After getting a bachelor's degree in history education in 1973, Tony Danza got his break into boxing and TV. Returning to his original career plan to teach many years later, he documented those experiences in his book, I'd Like to Apologize to Every Teacher I Ever Had. Danza's A&E television production of Teach also provides a lay person's perspective on the difficulty of teaching and the emotional toll it takes on those in the teaching profession. Mr. Danza's book provides insight for someone not yet in the teaching profession, provides support to those in the midst of the profession and provides perspective to those who think they know everything about the teaching profession.

"The rising numbers of low-income and immigrant children, the overwhelming involvement of parents, and the impact of a culture that sneers at knowledge instead of treasuring it all make the classroom a very tough place to work."

Education is a tough profession. In his book, Mr. Danza points out the unexpected personal issues that arise in students' lives that often take priority over teaching. His realization that he must become "engaged in students' lives, their problems and their futures to be successful" is insightful and accurate. Beginning teachers struggle much more with behavior, discipline, and issues arising from the home environment than they do with teaching and curriculum.

"The bottom line is that every one of us has a stake in getting education back on track in America."

This statement from Mr. Danza sums it up. We must all get involved in order to make a difference for our students and our future. Mr. Danza's book provides a new and refreshing perspective on the teaching profession. His book touches on many of the issues that challenge educators across America. I believe every teacher can relate to the final statement Mr. Danza made in a speech at Northeast High graduation to the Class of 2010.

"This has been the greatest year of my life. I learned more and worked harder than I ever have. I met people I will always look up to and students I will never forget. I am a different and better person because of all of you, and I thank you for that."
Bill Gates said of technology that its first rule in relationship to business “is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify its inefficiency.” As administrators and educators, we are in the business of providing an education to a world of digital natives. We have arrived at a time where conversations about technology must be replaced with the implementation of technology, and for this implementation to be successful we must develop a sense of digital leadership in our schools. Without it, we run the risk of running an inefficient business and magnifying that inefficiency through half-hearted attempts to employ technology. I had the privilege of listening to Eric Sheninger, principal at New Milford High School in New Jersey, and commonly referred to as “Principal Twitter,” via a NASSP webinar on digital leadership: “Digital Leadership: Changing Paradigms for Changing Times” (http://www.nassp.org/Content.aspx?topic=2013_14_Calendar_of_Learning_Events). I was intrigued by his Seven Pillars of Digital Leadership in Education, which included communication, public relations, branding, student learning/engagement, professional growth/development, school environment, and opportunity (http://www.teachthought.com/technology/7-pillars-digital-leadership-education/). All of which are important when moving our schools into the 21st century.

In his webinar, Eric emphasized the importance of digital leadership by pointing out that “it is incumbent upon leaders to harness the power of digital technologies in order to create school cultures that are transparent, relevant, meaningful, engaging, and inspiring.” He further argued that “in order to set the stage for increasing achievement and to establish a greater sense of community pride for the work being done in our schools, we must begin to change the way we lead. To do this, leaders must understand the origins of fear and misconceptions that often surround the use of technology such as social media and mobile devices.”

A digital leader simply does not “integrate technology” but explores avenues to enhance the overall school culture through its use. I truly believe it’s our obligation in this day and age to help nurture our employees in this paradigm shift.

I’m certain most principals care as deeply about creating environments that ensure student success as classroom teachers do. However, instruction today looks far different than it did when most of us left the classroom to become administrators. Many teachers and students have embraced social media and other digital applications as ways to learn and to share what they’ve learned. While the procedures are simple, learning through online connections in a school setting is complex. Teachers and even the digital natives need encouragement and advice lest they become overwhelmed. This is why we, as school leaders, must become digitally savvy ourselves. Administrators who lack an understanding of the tools that are redefining learning can’t provide high levels of instructional leadership to their faculties. If we see the value of teachers embracing technology, then we, too, have to embrace the digital age, make use of it, and ensure its accessibility to our teachers.

Certainly, living, teaching, and leading in the digital age can be overwhelming and ignoring technology may seem simpler than coping with its constant changes. However, as leaders of our districts, it would be more sound to take the advice of Mike Clarke who tweeted, “The concept of digital leadership is still developing, but the effective digital leader doesn’t say ‘change takes time’ or ‘there are barriers in the way.’” Digital leadership is rapidly becoming a cornerstone of education. If we want to remain effective, then we must embrace the digital age and take the advice of Brad Gustafon, elementary principal at Wayzata Public School in Minnesota and author of the PD Frontier (#PDpossey): “Start by identifying one or two areas [we] want to grow in and pursue those relentlessly. Engage [our] colleagues, administration, state associations, and workshop organizers. Tell them what [we] need. Challenge them to support [our] learning in a digitally connected age. Challenge [ourselves] to add a ‘digital leadership lens’ to [our] repertoire.”
School leaders are facing an array of change. The challenges set before us are complex. Yet, despite the difficulties we confront, one common insistence remains – teacher quality is probably the most important school-based factor affecting student achievement. So, the next obvious question for administrators would be...how do we help develop and support our teachers so that they can deliver high quality instruction to our students? The apparent answer is providing authentic and relevant professional development opportunities. However, if we were to poll the teachers in our buildings on the effectiveness of our professional development programs, I fear we might find ourselves lacking.

The face of staff development has changed over the years in education. Historically, despite their best intentions, administrators have favored the workshop approach, in which a district or school brings in an outside consultant or curriculum expert. This is normally done on a staff-development day to give teachers a one-time training seminar with little continuity or coherence. However, research has shown in the last decade, that effective professional development for teachers focuses more on authentic teacher learning and conditions that support it. (Webster – Wright, 2009)

It has been my experience as an administrator that any time I need help finding solutions to a school issue or bettering an existing program, all I have to do is seek out the advice from the educators in our building. With that being said, I propose that high quality staff development exists in every school with teachers working collaboratively to refine and expand practices that improve the learning of all students. Who better to plan and develop ongoing relevant professional learning than the committed men and women we work with on a daily basis? Imagine what might happen if we put teachers in charge of leading instructional change!

To be effective, professional development must provide teachers with a way to directly apply what they learn to their teaching. Practitioners must keep abreast of current education reform while upgrading their skill set on a regular basis. When you have well respected peers leading ongoing learning opportunities for school staff members, it generates an enthusiasm for instructional improvement. The learning can also be sustained and continuous. Capitalizing on the expertise of your school’s teaching teams allows you to have a professional development program that is tailor made to your school’s culture and needs.

Administrators, now more than ever, need to take advantage of the “teacher experts” that are walking throughout their hallways. We need to build leadership capacity within our staff, allowing those teachers to share their expertise with others by leading professional development sessions, sharing new ideas, and challenging their peers to think in new ways. By giving teachers an active role in these types of opportunities, it will not only empower them, but also develop a collegial school atmosphere. Such empowerment encourages teachers to place importance on achieving outcomes and quality student performance. In addition, collegial school communities are more likely to achieve overall district goals. So, take a look around your buildings, the best experts might be right under your nose!
Online Enrollment with THEbenefitsHUB℠

THEbenefitsHUB has been the leader in bringing web-based enrollment technology eliminating inaccurate and labor intensive paper enrollments to hundreds of clients throughout the country. THEbenefitsHUB is quick and easy to implement and does not require additional investment in either hardware or software.

Components of the system include:

- Employee Benefit Enrollment,
- Benefit Communication & Administration
- Customized Reporting with Carrier and Payroll Exports
- Customized Client Website
- Product and Instructional Videos

To remain at the forefront of changing technology, our staff developers are continually listening to customer feedback and finding new ways to increase the intuitiveness of the benefit enrollment experience. You will be surprised how easily, quickly and affordably THEbenefitsHUB can redefine benefits administration.

For more information or to schedule a demo, please contact Wiley Copeland at (580)326-2705.

Empowering Employees to Make Informed Benefit Decisions

We don’t just want to help your employees enroll; we want to help them understand. MGM Benefits Group is an employee benefits agency that prides itself on providing a multitude of tools that are designed to educate employers and their employees on the individual products in their benefit offering.

Our extensive video library takes popular core and voluntary insurance products, and breaks them down, detailing each individual benefit in plain language so employees can make the most informed decisions. It is our focus to provide clear, concise plan details in a variety of methods so employees and employers alike will find the educational information convenient, knowledgable and easily accessible.

For more information please contact Wiley Copeland at (580)326-2705.
READ180®

NEXT GENERATION

THE BEST SYSTEM FOR RAISING READING ACHIEVEMENT JUST GOT EVEN BETTER... for EVERYONE!

For more information please contact:
Sherry Evers, Account Executive
(918) 809-1801 SEvers@scholastic.com
A TLE System as Versatile as You

OKTLE uses a new State-of-the-art Web-based application that can be used with iPad, iPhone, Android or any other tablet, smartphone or laptop computer. OKTLE utilizes the Tulsa Model, the default system by State TLE commission and State Board of Education. The Tulsa Model was developed from the ground up, in Oklahoma, with input and involvement from Oklahoma teachers and administrators.

OKTLE A New Name in Teacher Evaluation Brought to You by Barlow and TAS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US TOLL FREE 1-888-808-4827 OR VISIT US AT OKTLE.COM