Better Schools
In This Issue…

1  From the Executive Director
2  CCOSA Chair Welcome
4  Association News
6  Professional Development
8  Federal Relations Information
9  Special Education Update
11  Legal Ease
12  NASSP Representative Update
13  Preschool: Does it Make a Difference?
14  CCOSA Executive Committee
15  CCOSA Staff
16  Book It: A Book Worth Reading
17  Tech Talk:
Technology and the New Principal
18  Thomas Jefferson—First Advocate for "Public Education"
20  Never Stop Learning

American Fidelity Assurance Company

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.
I hope that the 2013-14 school year is off to a great start in your district. Here at CCOSA, we find ourselves in the middle of construction. A self-imposed inconvenience I know, but necessary if we are going to stay current and effective in the years to come. We are scheduled to return to our respective offices (everyone except me) October 12 and have our new conference room available for meetings in November. Hopefully, before Thanksgiving, I will have a new office and life can begin to return to normal for us. We are planning on having an open house to show off our new and improved facilities later in the year.

The CCOSA Executive Committee met in August and approved a CCOSA Budget for FY-14, construction change orders, conference room technology upgrades, June minutes, December 4, 2013 and February 19, 2014 CCOSA Executive Committee meeting dates, a copier contract, and a new CCOSA Candidate Support Committee policy. They were presented reports on the Visioning Project, Better Schools, TLE trainings, legislative issues, the OSSBA/CCOSA Conference, and reports from each association.

We continue to monitor, research, and provide assistance with OAM’s, the A-F grading system, cut score changes, teacher salary proposals, and other issues as they continue to develop. I believe that teachers are underpaid in Oklahoma and clearly deserve a raise supported by a reoccurring revenue stream. We must invest more in public education to grow the Oklahoma economy. The special session just ended and we will be involved with several interim studies over the next few months. Soon we will be sending out a legislative goals survey for you to complete. Please take the time to tell us what you think is important as we approach this legislative session. Be sure to add any topic or goal you want us to review or consider. Our PAC contributions are too low and need to be replenished. We will be asking our board of directors to help us with this effort. In order for Ryan Owens to be effective as our lobbyist, we must be able to fund political events as well as campaign efforts. I challenge every member to find an additional $20 to $50 for the PAC.

The good news is that the Oklahoma economy is still producing positive revenue. If this continues, we should not see cuts to the education budget. We are working to provide you with the most accurate data regarding mid-term allocations. The bad news is that schools are still funded way below the 2009 levels and it is unlikely that we will be able to return to that level this year. What works in Oklahoma is your dedicated efforts to provide children quality education opportunities on less revenue than forty-eight other states. I admire and respect each of you for the job that you are doing. Keep up the good work and fight the good fight. Our children are worth it! Please let us know if CCOSA can be of service to you.

CCOSA Director’s View

I hope that the 2013-14 school year is off to a great start in your district. Here at CCOSA, we find ourselves in the middle of construction. A self-imposed inconvenience I know, but necessary if we are going to stay current and effective in the years to come. We are scheduled to return to our respective offices (everyone except me) October 12 and have our new conference room available for meetings in November. Hopefully, before Thanksgiving, I will have a new office and life can begin to return to normal for us. We are planning on having an open house to show off our new and improved facilities later in the year.

The CCOSA Executive Committee met in August and approved a CCOSA Budget for FY-14, construction change orders, conference room technology upgrades, June minutes, December 4, 2013 and February 19, 2014 CCOSA Executive Committee meeting dates, a copier contract, and a new CCOSA Candidate Support Committee policy. They were presented reports on the Visioning Project, Better Schools, TLE trainings, legislative issues, the OSSBA/CCOSA Conference, and reports from each association.

We continue to monitor, research, and provide assistance with OAM’s, the A-F grading system, cut score changes, teacher salary proposals, and other issues as they continue to develop. I believe that teachers are underpaid in Oklahoma and clearly deserve a raise supported by a reoccurring revenue stream. We must invest more in public education to grow the Oklahoma economy. The special session just ended and we will be involved with several interim studies over the next few months. Soon we will be sending out a legislative goals survey for you to complete. Please take the time to tell us what you think is important as we approach this legislative session. Be sure to add any topic or goal you want us to review or consider. Our PAC contributions are too low and need to be replenished. We will be asking our board of directors to help us with this effort. In order for Ryan Owens to be effective as our lobbyist, we must be able to fund political events as well as campaign efforts. I challenge every member to find an additional $20 to $50 for the PAC.

The good news is that the Oklahoma economy is still producing positive revenue. If this continues, we should not see cuts to the education budget. We are working to provide you with the most accurate data regarding mid-term allocations. The bad news is that schools are still funded way below the 2009 levels and it is unlikely that we will be able to return to that level this year. What works in Oklahoma is your dedicated efforts to provide children quality education opportunities on less revenue than forty-eight other states. I admire and respect each of you for the job that you are doing. Keep up the good work and fight the good fight. Our children are worth it! Please let us know if CCOSA can be of service to you.

Steven Crawford
CCOSA Executive Director

The CCOSA Staff would like to express their sincere condolences for the loss of our dear friend Dr. Jeff Mills, Executive Director of the Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA). Provided below is an excerpt of Mr. Crawford’s remarks at Dr. Mills service.

This past spring Jeff was asked to give the graduation speech at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. He was deeply touched and honored to have this opportunity. I think he worried more about this speech than anything else we experienced. He entitled his speech “Prepare to Fail”. He told the graduates, “That four years ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I’ve been battling it for four years. I continue to view my health as a temporary setback. In life we have a tendency to focus on the negative. There is so much more to life than dealing with what we call failures. Your mission in life should be to leave here today and go show everyone that you are a leader and take advantage of every failure you have.”
CCOSA Chair Welcome

BY RANDY RADER
CCOSA Chair
Assistant Superintendent Elementary Education, Enid Public Schools

On behalf of the Executive Committee of CCOSA, and all of the organizations under the CCOSA umbrella, I would like to welcome everyone to the beginning of another school year! If the beginning of your school year has been like mine, it has been a fast and furious beginning to what is shaping up to be an exciting year.

If you are new to the organization, Welcome! If you are a returning member, Welcome Back! CCOSA and each of the organizations under its umbrella are member driven, member run, and member focused. The elected officers and committee members are here to serve you while you serve the students, parents, and teachers of this great state. In addition to the member elected officers, the Executive Directors, Legal Counsel, and office personnel that make up the hands and the feet of the organization are incredible leaders that are connected to what is real and relevant to public school administrators. I know I speak for all of us when I ask that you let us know how we can help you make the best schools possible for the children in Oklahoma.

As all of you know, we are at what seems to be a very critical crossroads in our state concerning the direction we need to take in order to help each of our children become successful adults ready to compete in an ever changing global economy. CCOSA is one of the leading advocates for students in our state as we move through this era of high stakes testing and politics that impacts us all. The bottom line is that CCOSA is strong and making a difference. Thanks to each of you for your membership and for what you do for kids on a daily, and many times nightly, basis.
STAR Enterprise™ assessments approved by Oklahoma SDE

STAR Enterprise

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
Association News

by Dr. Gracie Branch, OAESP Executive Director

The OAESP Executive Committee met on Wednesday, September 18. The following principals will be serving on this year’s board:

**Officers:**
- President – Philip Smith
- President-Elect – Meggan Wilson
- Past President – Randy Rader
- NAESP Zone 8 State Representative – Kair Ridenhour
- NAESP/OAESP Federal Relations Officer – Lacie Davenport

**District Directors:**
- Northwest Quadrant – Kassandra Nelson, Dustie Shryock
- OKC Area – Holly McKinney, Marsha Stafford
- Southwest Quadrant – Kim Justus, Josh Skiles
- Lawton Area – Sally Greenlee
- Northeast Quadrant – Marci Brueggan
- Southeast Quadrant – Paula Palermo, Dana House
- Tulsa Area – Howard Wyble, Josh Pierce

Jennifer Webb of Club Connect joined us as a special guest. Information on how to bring Club Connect to your school is posted at www.ccosa.org under OAESP member news. Also, please be on the lookout for a legislative goal survey that will be going out soon to all OAESP members. We are interested in your feedback to guide us in formulating this year’s goals.

In addition, mark your calendars for January 30 & 31 for our Mid-Winter Conference at the Reed Convention Center in Midwest City.

**OASSP**

by Dr. Vickie Williams, OASSP Executive Director

Oklahoma Association of Secondary School Principals (OASSP) Executive Board met on Wednesday, September 25, 2013. This year’s association officers are Robert Schornick-President, Chris LeGrande-President-Elect, Dr. Debra Bendick-Past President, Will Parker-NASSP Coordinator, Leslie Frazier and Dr. Debra Thomas, NASSP Board Members, Mona Smith-Assistant Principal Representative, Dr. William Frick and Dr. Jack Green-University Consultants, Teresa Wilkerson and Jason Hayes-State Coordinators for Oklahoma Association of National Honor Society and Dr. Kerri White-State Department of Education Consultant.

**District Representatives for 2013-2014 are:**

- Donovan Smith, Tyrone
- Todd Overstreet, Laverne
- Kyle Simpson, Tonkawa
- Dr. Alan Baker, Cleveland
- Michelle Butler, Tulsa
- Liz Burns, Broken Arrow
- James Buttram, Commerce
- Paul Hocutt, Claremore
- Jeff Lewallen, Elk City
- Keith Campbell, Kingfisher
- Brian Lomenick, Bristow
- Jeremy Holmes, Wagoner
- Garry Ferguson, Tahlequah
- Robert Gilstrap, Newcastle
- Joey Billington, Yukon
- Emily Steele, Edmond
- Peter Liesenfeld, Norman
- Rhonda Barkhimer, New Lima
- Lorraine Caldwell, Poteau
- Mark Haught, Altus
- Dale Spradlin, Waurika
- Kim Holland, Ardmore
- Stan Cochran, Latta
- Jon Shepard, Bennington
- Rod Davis, Broken Bow

At the September meeting, plans for the OASSP Fall Conference were finalized and members formulated legislative goals based on a survey sent out to all OASSP members. The keynote speaker for Fall Conference William McBride will deliver a humorous and very informative presentation about “Conquering the Common Core by Teaching to Gender Differences.” The Common Core requires that students be able to make logical inferences, to understand central themes, and to analyze how characters and events develop across all grade levels. These are skills especially difficult for poor readers—the bulk of which are boys. Recent scientific research is illuminating the differences in cognitive development between the male and female brain. Based on the works of Michael Gurian, Richard Whitmire, Michael Thompson, Cordelia Fine and Leonard Sax, this highly entertaining workshop presents the differences in male and female brain development that affect behavior and learning. Teachers will come to understand that most school practices reinforce how girls learn rather than boys; consequently, boys make up the majority of our behavior problems, failures, and drop outs. Practical literacy strategies will be presented that promote Common Core instruction for both sexes. Make plans now to join us October 30th at the Oklahoma City Marriott.
Association News

(continued)

OMLEA

by Dr. Gracie Branch, OMLEA Executive Director

The OMLEA Executive Committee and Conference Committee are already hard at work! On September 13, the OMLEA Executive Committee met and reviewed the OMLEA Constitution and Bylaws. Ryan Owens, CCOSA Director of Legislative Services, gave a legislative update and discussed the benefits of making a contribution to the CCOSA Political Action Committee (PAC). In a few weeks, a survey will be sent out to all current OMLEA members in order to garner feedback on the 2013-2014 legislative goals. The OMLEA Conference will be held on February 27-28 at the Embassy Suites in Norman. This year’s keynote speakers are Mark McLeod and Kim Campbell. The next conference planning meeting will be October 23 at Cache 5th and 6th Grade Center and the next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for November 5th at Sequoyah Middle School in Edmond.

Officers:
President – Angie Drew
President-Elect/Conference Chair – Linda Baxter
Past President – Andy North

Regional Representatives:
Northwest Regional Representatives – Frank Harrington, Desarae Witmer
Southwest Regional Representatives – Debbie Hoffman, Bubba Tamex
Tulsa Area Regional Representatives – Steven Anderson, Dierdre Hodge
Northeast Regional Representatives – Justin Chase, Ken Latham
Southeast Regional Representative – Nick Carter, Dena Rogers
Oklahoma City Regional Representative – Jason Galloway, Shana Perry

Conference Committee Members:
Kira Kelsey, Chris Tobler, Tracy Mendez and Dena Rogers

ODSS

by Andrea Kunkel, CCOSA Staff Attorney/ODSS Director

Over the 2013-14 year, in collaboration with the Special Education Services Section of SDE, ODSS/CCOSA is implementing a First-Year Special Education Directors Project. ODSS is providing four in-person training sessions and at least two webinars and pairing first-year directors with experienced director/mentors. For each in-person training session attended, the first-year director will receive a $50 stipend, payable at the end of the year. So far, 32 first-year directors have enrolled in this free program. ODSS/CCOSA is also making the in-person training available without charge to other interested special ed directors. Contact Andrea at kunkel@ccosa.org for more information.

The ODSS Fall Conference takes place on Thursday and Friday, October 24 and 25, 2013, at the NCED Conference Center and Hotel in Norman. On the morning of the 24th, Dr. Rene Axtell and SDE-SES staff will provide a state update. Dr. Melody Musgrove, Director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), will follow, discussing special education from the federal perspective. In the afternoon, both breakout session strands will focus on improving inclusion practices, with one targeting small schools and the other medium/large schools. All day on the 25th, Carol Kosnitsky, education consultant and frequent LRP contributor, will guide participants in writing and evaluating IEP goals that align to Common Core State Standards.

Special and general education administrators and teachers can register online at www.regonline.com/odssfallconference.

OASA

by Steven Crawford, OASA Executive Director

The OASA Executive Committee met on September 11th. OASA Officers for 2013-2014 are Dr. Clark Ogilvie, President; Mr. Roger Hill, President-Elect; Mr. Jerry Needham, Vice President and Dr. Joe Siano, Past President. The OASA Executive Committee Meeting dates for the year are scheduled for October 9, November 13, December 11, 2013, January 8, February 5, March 12, April 9 and May 14, 2014.

Registration is now open for the AASA National Conference on Education being held in Nashville, TN on February 13-16. Register at www.aasa.org. The OASA Legislative Conference will be held on January 15th at the Marriott Northwest Expressway, OKC. Check out the CCOSA website for other upcoming conferences and events at www.ccosa.org.
Professional Development

BY ROBERT SCHORNICK
OASSP President
Principal, Oologah-Talala High School

Using Twitter to Create Professional Learning Networks and to Enhance Professional Development

"Building a PLN is like designing your own newspaper every day: you read what and who you wish to follow #edchat" – @drjolly

Many educators fear social media like Twitter. Never having realized the power of social media from a professional viewpoint, I was one of those people until recently. I can now say that Twitter has changed everything! Twitter has opened my eyes to a world of educators and professionals who have inspired me to reach for new heights. More specifically, hashtags like #PLN have taught me that learning networks provide the ability to stay in touch with great people, including experts in the field, colleagues, staff, and other school leaders.

Twitter is not just about “what I did on my vacation.” There are numerous educators on Twitter that are connecting and learning from one another. They are building global relationships that will be invaluable to the future of their own professional development as well as their schools.

Connected educators and leaders are using Twitter to transform traditional sit-and-get professional development into a process that is continual and differentiated. While face-to-face interaction still has its benefits, if you are busy like me, you need flexibility in developing professionally. With Twitter, there are no time constraints on when I want to seek advice, offer opinions, and engage in deep discussions with colleagues.

Our lack of time makes it difficult to engage in organized professional learning while the freedom of social media makes it easy to engage in independent learning. As leaders and educators, each of us must acknowledge that the responsibility for personal and professional development is on the individual and not on the school for which we work.

For many educators, Twitter has made more of an impact on professional learning than any professional development opportunity they have been required to attend. While I do not believe Twitter eliminates the need for high-quality professional development, it does offer a powerful solution for isolation. The learning is real, the ideas are powerful yet simple, and the connections to resources and people are infinite.

Beyond our own professional development, sharing with local colleagues and creating a professional learning network gives us the ability to exhibit leadership and technology skills to others. We can also evaluate and reflect on current research; contribute to the effectiveness of the teaching and administrative profession; and stay on top of current issues and mandates.

So if you are not already on Twitter, consider beginning your own Personal Learning Network and creating a Twitter account for your school today. Don’t let the challenges deter you. Utilize resources such as http://www.edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2013/03/printable-list-best-education-hashtags-infographic to help you decipher educational hashtags that can be confusing. Remember, there are many benefits to joining Twitter, but until you immerse yourself in using it, you will not be able to share them with those you serve. I challenge you to get connected with other educators...happy tweeting! @rschornick

$avvy App Shopping

Be selective about apps that are nothing more than digital worksheets. Focus on apps that are multipurpose and can be used across content areas: A good example is Explain Everything (itunes.apple.com/us/app/explain-everything/id431493086?mt=8), an interactive whiteboard app ($2.99) that lets you create, annotate, animate, and narrate explanations and presentations.

Read Reviews Before Your Technology Purchase!

This seems like a no-brainer, but many people skip this step. Don’t just go by the number of stars; but actually read the review comments. These reviews will often help you avoid bad technology purchases. Check out these educational reviewers: Teach With Your iPad teachwithyouripad.wikispaces.com/, Technology Review childrenstech.com/; and Common Sense Media www.commonsemsmedia.org/. 
Parent Involvement Boosts Attention

Preschoolers' ability to retain attention in the classroom can be improved with increased parental involvement and training according to results from a study conducted by cognitive neuroscientist Helen Neville of the University of Oregon, Eugene. The study, which focused on children whose families live at or below the poverty line, found that the group of children whose parents received a weekly two-hour-long class on parenting showed a 50 percent increase in brain activity compared to children whose parents who received little or no training.

In a trending article from the Center for American Progress, author Kwame Boadi states, “On Capitol Hill “sequestration” may mean a percentage point or two in lower GDP growth, but beyond the Beltway it is more than an abstract economic concept. It means real pain for real people.” These across the board cuts will affect almost every U.S. citizen whether they are an airline passenger, outdoorsman, service member, economic participant, or teacher (National Journal).

Sequestration was authored as a part of the Budget Control Act of 2011 in which automatic cuts of approximately $1.2 trillion dollars were scheduled to take effect over the next 10 years with close to $85 billion scheduled for this current year. The federal government’s budget for 2012 was an escalating $3.7 trillion. Education across the nation received an average of five percent reduction in federal programs, while Oklahoma suffered a 5.3 percent cut. Sequestration is now “live” and definitely delivering a slow stream of decreased funding that is being felt as educators adjust to the downturn in funds.

There is much concern over the institutionalization of the reduced funding. Change for the better does not appear in the near future. The effect of the initiated cuts in March 2013 were felt in August as schools opened their doors for the 2013-2014 school year. Bruce Covert states in his article Back to School With Budget Cuts, “As children begin to head back to school for the 2013-2014 school year, many could find larger class sizes, less staff, and fewer upgrades in areas like computers or textbooks when they arrive. That’s because the coming school year will be the first in which sequestration will make itself felt in all the public school districts across the country.” Covert further states, “A survey of 541 superintendents from 48 states by AASA found that more than half had already accounted for the cuts in their budget for the coming year. Few will have wiggle room to deal with the cuts, as 85 percent said neither their states nor their district could help absorb the cuts. That has meant that over half have reduced personnel, just under half have increased class sizes, nearly 60 percent reduced professional development, and about 45 percent put off buying new technology.”

The economics for education appears bleak. What must not occur is a loss of the real focus: the children for which we are responsible. We cannot lose heart as we plod steadily in times of negative financial news, endless mandates, and what appears as a general lack of apathy from lawmakers and politicians. All the children know is what they know; teachers and schools that care, educate, counsel, feed, encourage, and love students. I am amazed at their ability to command an eager class of kindergarteners and prepare a senior for college; all while listening, observing, training, grading, and always challenging old and new ways of educating.

One of my favorite quotes is from Albert Schweitzer, “Sometimes our light goes out but is blown again into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner flame.” Let us continue to work toward the real goal: educating children.

This past July, Terry Davidson, Jerry Needham, Ryan Owens, David Pennington, and myself joined other educators from across the nation at the AASA Advocacy Conference in Washington D.C. This conference focused on contemporary and imminent educational issues such as the information that has been presented in this article.

Now more than ever, is the time for all of us to be involved and communicate with our Congressional leaders on how budget cuts will impact our schools, students, and communities in our state. Visit your Congressmen and give specific examples of possible personnel reductions, the deletion of programs, and ancillary fallout that can occur with the extensive reduction of funding.

Please be informed, stay involved, and join AASA!

References

Special Education Update

BY ANDREA KUNKEL
CCOSA Staff Attorney

Special education is always in a state of change, and for the 2013-14 school year, much of that change is coming on the state level. Here are just a few of those changes:

Except for 9th through 12th graders who are taking the same modified EOI assessment (OMAAP) for a second time (for example – a student with an IEP taking the English II OMAAP again), modified assessments are no longer available in Oklahoma. For students outside the exception group whose IEPs still reflect that they will be taking an OMAAP during the 2013-14 school year, their IEPs must be changed to reflect that they will be taking either the standard assessment with accommodations or, in rare instances, the alternate assessment (OAAP). To select the OAAP for a student with an IEP, the student’s IEP team must follow SDE’s Criteria Checklist for Assessing Students with Disabilities on Alternate Assessments (Form 12). Districts should make assessment changes on IEPs in time for the October 2013 Child Count. To make the change from a modified assessment to a standard assessment, the parent and the district can agree not to convene an IEP meeting and instead may develop a written document to amend this section of the student’s current IEP. Upon parent request, the district must provide a revised copy of the IEP reflecting the amendment.

Some argue that because modified assessments have been largely phased out, students with IEPs can no longer have modifications in the general education curriculum. Remember, though, if a student’s IEP calls for modifications to the general education curriculum, then the district must continue to implement that provision in the IEP unless/until it is changed through the team process.

To comply with requirements set by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), districts are now required to report not only students’ primary disability and related services, but also their secondary disability, if any. Districts should try to include this information in their October 2013 Child Count.

The Special Education Services (SES) Section of SDE has phased out the Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma manual format used for so many years. In its place, SES has developed Special Education Policies, found at http://ok.gov/sde/documents-forms, which reflect the handful of areas on which the state has adopted a higher standard than that set by federal law and regulations. The State Board of Education approved the Policies on June 12, 2013.

In addition, through a collaborative process, SES has developed a Special Education Handbook, also found at http://ok.gov/sde/documents-forms, which explains, in largely user-friendly language, federal and state law and regulations and expectations for district compliance. SES is putting together a Handbook committee, which will meet once or twice per year to consider changes to the document. The Handbook is not approved by the State Board and can therefore be amended more easily to keep up with changing interpretations in the law.

Handbook readers will find several changes from the Policies and Procedures, most of which were made to clarify existing law or to implement best practices. Readers can check out SES’s Summary of Changes from Previous Policies and Procedures for a run-down of all of the major Handbook changes.

SES also made some changes to its forms, found at http://ok.gov/sde/documents-forms, with the primary goal of reducing redundancy. One of the most helpful documents SES has developed is a Special Education Process Guide, found at the same page, which explains – using references to specific SDE forms – how to complete an initial evaluation, reevaluation and IEP.

Chaired by Representative Jason Nelson and Senator Jim Halligan, the Rethinking Special Education, Competency and Transition (RESPECT) Task Force held its first meeting on September 14, with a second meeting scheduled for October 2, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the State Capitol. Its goals are to: (A) Develop a true statewide system; (B) Achieve evaluation consistency statewide; (C) Employ national experts in IEP process; (D) Use leading education models statewide; and (E) Develop economies of scale. Six committees, which will do the bulk of the Task Force work, have been formed to consider (A) Understanding the Structure, (B) Related Services, Assistive Technology and Equipment, (C) High School Transition, (D) Compliance and Legal Issues, (E) Evaluation and (F) Professional/Personnel Development. This is one to watch!
Barlow focuses on our federal programs so I can focus on education.

Jerry Needham
Superintendent
Oklahoma Public Schools
The start of a new school year brings with it many responsibilities for Oklahoma’s education leaders! One issue that is causing members to call our office involves the frequency of teacher evaluations. Last legislative session the chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees joined forces to respond to a call from education leaders seeking flexibility in the frequency of evaluations of highly effective and superior teachers. Senator John W. Ford (R-Bartlesville) and Representative Ann Coody (R-Lawton) worked to enact SB 207. Codified at Section 6-101.10 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes, SB 207 provides that “every teacher be evaluated once every year, except for career teachers receiving a "superior" or "highly effective" rating under the TLE, who may be evaluated once every two (2) years.”

SB 207 allows education leaders to work with local teachers, school board members and patrons to determine if career teachers with a superior or highly effective rating under the TLE should have to step through the formal evaluation process each year or every other year. Education leaders typically know their superstar teachers and often desire the most effective instructors in a school to model those best practices for their peers. SB 207 acknowledges the ability of our most talented teachers and provides supervisors with the discretion to determine if a formal evaluation is needed each year or every two years.

Despite the clear intent of SB 207, the Oklahoma State Department of Education is nevertheless requiring full implementation of the TLE in the 2015-16 school year prior to districts accessing this newly provided flexibility. Although the law appears to be clearly in favor of providing flexibility in evaluations, your local board of education, teachers and educational leadership team would be wise to adhere to the interpretation of OK SDE as failure to do so will likely result in a deficiency on your school’s accreditation report.

Additional evaluation flexibility was provided to districts via SB 426. Senator John W. Ford (R-Bartlesville) and Representative Earl Sears (R-Bartlesville) focuses on the frequency of evaluation of probationary teachers. Codified within the same section of Title 70 cited above, SB 426 requires that all teachers, except those rated as highly effective or superior, be evaluated once per year. This new language captures probationary teachers.

Gone are the requirements that probationary teachers be formally evaluated twice per year; prior to November 15 and February 10. The law now requires that probationary teachers receive “formative feedback” from the evaluation process at least two times per year, once during the fall and once during the spring. While the term “formative feedback” is not defined in the law, what is clear is that the term “formative feedback” does not include a formal evaluation. It is important for education leaders to work with their local board, teachers and patrons to define the term “formative feedback” and ensure that your local definition is in compliance with the requirements of the teacher evaluation system your district currently uses.

Recent reforms have placed many new responsibilities oneducators. Thankfully the Oklahoma Legislature has identified a common sense strategy designed to provide flexibility regarding the important work of evaluating our Oklahoma teachers and leaders.
This is my first year to serve as your National Association of Secondary Principals Representative. A big thanks to Sammy Jackson, Principal of Kingfisher High School, who has done a great job keeping us informed about NASSP activities and representing our interests to the national association over the past several years.

As a new coordinator, I am learning that I have three main responsibilities:

1. Promoting NASSP’s advocacy agenda and highlighting the achievements of NASSP’s grassroots advocacy efforts in the states.
2. Serving on the NASSP Board of Nominators.
3. Encouraging participation in NASSP programs and activities.

Reaching Out

As NASSP has been tracking the progress of efforts in Congress to reauthorize ESEA, I reached out to Oklahoma Congressman Bridenstine’s office this summer about ESEA. His education coordinator, Erik Zoellner, came to my school to meet with me about it on July 25. I do not anticipate there will be much consensus on the bill between parties; however, it was a good connection I will try to continue. Please consider reaching out to your elected officials through phone calls, emails, and visits to let them know your opinions or concerns on ESEA or any other federal programs that affect your schools.

Subscribe to Updates

Did you know NASSP has informative updates on federal legislative items that affect education? You can subscribe for specific update through visiting the NASSP website and doing a quick search for NASSP’s “Federal Grassroots Network” to subscribe for informative updates. Also, if you use Twitter, did you know you can follow NASSP? Use the following handle: @NASSP. And if you want to follow CCOSA, use the handle @CCOSA.

Register for the National Ignite Conference Now!

If you have never attended the NASSP Conference, this is the year to do it. The national conference is being held in Dallas, Texas, February 6-8, 2014. It is a great year to visit a national conference closer to Oklahoma. Bring your team and learn from national leaders on the following topics: college and career readiness, common core state standards, school law, teacher recruitment and development, technology and more. Visit the NASSP website at www.principals.org for more information.

Leverage Your Membership

As a member of NASSP, you are apart of an organization with more than 27,000 members. NASSP gives you a voice with elected officials and policy makers whose decisions affect the federal government’s role in our schools. Also, members enjoy access to insights from school leaders across the country and internationally through publications like Principal Leadership, NewsLeader, and its E-newsletters Principal’s Update, Middle Level Leader, and AP Insight. In addition, members enjoy liability coverage, legal fee reimbursements, accidental death policies, as well as low-cost life insurance.

Network and Learn Together

School leaders never stop being students, and one of the best ways to keep learning is from one another! This year, make it a goal to reach out to your fellow members through phone calls, emails, attending conferences together, or connecting via social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn, or blogs. Let’s plan on learning from each other soon at our next CCOSA event and at the National Conference in February.
Preschool: Does it Make a Difference?

BY JULIE CRUTCHFIELD
Special Services Director, Collinsville Public Schools
ODSS President

A new school year is under way with new backpacks, binders, crayons and a few tears. Many children will start school for the first time this year. Early childhood programs continue to emerge around the nation and children continue to benefit from this early exposure.

Preschool programs have become essential for the development and preparation of our youngest students. Individuals working in early childhood understand the importance of early education and early intervention. Early education begins with teaching rules, routines, procedures and beginning concepts that students will carry with them each year as they progress in school. Students who lack this exposure in a preschool setting often start off behind their same age peers as they enter Kindergarten. A study conducted by Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Christina Weiland and Professor Hiro Yoshikawa released in March 2013 provides strong evidence to the impact of high quality preschool programs.

The significance of this study of over 2000 students was that regardless of socioeconomic status children that received a year in a quality preschool program, rather than in a daycare, with relatives or in some other preschool program, performed higher in math, reading, and executive functioning skills (see box). The level of education of the certified teachers was found to be a significant contributor to the growth of the students.

Public schools are responsible for looking at the whole child and determining if each child presents health needs or developmental needs that will interfere with his or her educational success. Many schools will begin the year with health, developmental, vision and hearing screenings. It takes the collaboration of professionals, including teachers, nurses, administrators and speech language pathologists, to name a few, to assess students entering school.

Those students that possess developmental delays often require early intervention services to help them “catch up” to their same age peers. The five domains that preschool educators assess and strive to develop for every student are:

- Cognitive Development (e.g. memory, reasoning, academic skills)
- Physical Development (e.g. large and small muscle movements)
- Communication Development (e.g. language and articulation)
- Social or Emotional Development (e.g. self-expression and coping skills)
- Adaptive Development (e.g. eating, toileting, personal responsibilities)

High quality preschool programs are making a difference in public education. Attendance, parental involvement, early intervention and hiring highly qualified preschool teachers are critical to the success of preschool programs. With all of the cuts in public education, we can only hope that this is an area that will not be sacrificed to reduce spending.

Executive Functioning

The cognitive process that regulates an individual’s ability to organize thoughts and activities, prioritize tasks, manage time efficiently, and make decisions.
2013–2014
CCOSA Executive Committee

Mr. Randy Rader
Assistant Superintendent, Enid
CCOSA Chairperson
OAESP Past President

Mr. Robert Schornick
Principal, Oologah-Talala HS
CCOSA Vice Chairperson
OASSP President

Dr. Clark Ogilvie
Superintendent, Owasso
OASA President

Mr. Roger Hill
Superintendent, Altus
OASA President-Elect

Mr. Philip Smith
Principal, Hugh Bish ES Lawton
OAESP President

Mr. Chris LeGrande
Principal, Guthrie HS
OASSP President-Elect

Ms. Meggan Wilson
Principal, Western Oaks MS
OAESP President-Elect

Ms. Julie Crutchfield
Special Services Director, Collinsville
ODSS President-Elect

Ms. Angie Drew
Principal, Mcloud MS
OMLEA President

Sherri Coats
Special Services Director, Byng
ODSS President-Elect

Dr. Gregg Garn
Dean, OU College of Education
Higher Education Representative

Ms. Linda Baxter
Principal, Irving MS, Norman
OMLEA President-Elect
Federal Guide for Developing Emergency Plans


Build Your School’s Creative Capacity!

Developed by educators, for educators, these free modules contain videos, exercises, and handouts—everything you need to build your staff’s creative capacity. Visit Crayola.com/creativelyalive to download materials, or send an email to creativelyalive@carola.com for copies.
Book It:
A Book Worth Reading

BY ANGIE DREW
President, OMLEA
Principal, McCloud Middle School

As a veteran English teacher for many years, often my students would hear an over-repeated phrase coming from my mouth. It sounded something like this – “There are many books that are worthy of reading more than once.” When asked to review a book for Better Schools, the contemplating began. Which one? There are so many that warrant sharing. I thought of all the countless “reads” that sit upon the shelves of my study, but one particular book beckoned my name. It’s a simple little book really, stuffed full of educational insights and inspirations. I assure you my personal copy has tattered pages with coffee stains to match — the true markings of a beloved book.

It’s title says it all … If You Don’t Feed the Teachers They Will Eat the Children by Neila A. Connors. Many of you may be familiar with this book and perhaps have a copy which is sitting on your shelf collecting dust. If so, dust off its pages and get inspired. If you don’t have a copy, I encourage you to get one; you won’t be sorry.

So, why “this book”? I chose to review this with you because I feel like it addresses a topic where most of us in the field of administration find ourselves lacking. It’s not that we aren’t earnestly aware and appreciative of our teacher’s dedication, but it’s easy to let the demands of the day crowd out good intentions.

Primarily, this book is for anyone who agrees that teaching is the most important profession there is. It needs to be read by individuals who recognize that teaching is difficult and teachers need “continual” appreciative acts. Whenever we can provide positive experiences to promote teachers and their efforts, we benefit as administrators, but most importantly, our students benefit.

Education is a serious business that requires every grain of “being” from those who are called to make a difference in the life of a child. Every day in schools across our great nation, there are teachers meeting the demands of our profession and doing it with a smile on their face. Their plates are overloaded and often times they are minimally recognized or appreciated for their efforts.

As their leaders, we must remember to FEED our teachers continuously. It’s easy to look up from our desk and realize the best part of the day is behind us. Days turn into weeks, weeks into months and before you know it, we haven’t taken time to do that which matters most. The best administrative leaders focus on providing a climate where teachers are encouraged to take risks and act as coaches. They make it abundantly clear that the people in the building are important, and they will do whatever it takes to say thank you for winning efforts.

When we make it a priority to treat teachers with respect, and recognize their invaluable contributions, we will see great things happen – the returns are unlimited! Teachers are extraordinary resources and vital components of successful schools. For those of you who need a little prompting or a great idea “to show appreciation,” this book offers 150 different options. I have become increasingly aware that an important part of my job description is to recognize and celebrate teacher success. Our employees want to be esteemed, respected, and honored. It’s my duty to make sure that I make the time to value the people who work alongside of me. I hope you make the time, too. Remember, “one good deed is worth more than a thousand good intentions.”
You've begun your first year as an elementary school head principal. As one of your first responsibilities, you take a look at your school's technology plan. You begin to think about the state of your school's technology issues and you realize that there are shortcomings in both hardware and software capability. What do I do now? That question can be answered in many ways. First and foremost, you've got to set priorities—hardware or software? The next question should be what are my financial capabilities? How much of my budget, if any, can I use for technology? Do I have other accounts like picture money, donations, fund raisers or PTA money that I can use to offset the prices of both hardware and software? If you're a Title I school, your budgetary issues may be easier to resolve.

You set your priority as hardware. Your classrooms don't have Smart Boards, InFocus projectors, or Elmo document cameras for the teachers to use that will enhance the learning process. If you're thinking about Smart Boards, then it'll be a good idea to purchase laptops dedicated to the Smart Board. This will benefit your teachers tremendously, because they can take them home. You start to smile, what a great plan! You're purchasing Smart Boards, InFocus machines, Elmo document cameras and laptops for every classroom, all 16 of them, just what Common Core State Standards are asking you to do. However, did you check with your Information Technology Department or Media Center to see if the bandwidth into your school will actually allow for 16 new computers to be added to your school, or if you have enough ports on your switches to accommodate new computers?

Now you turn your thoughts to software. What can I purchase that will benefit our school? Will web-based programs or stand-alone products be better for our needs? Hint, web-based programs provide more options, but can be considerably more expensive. However, the positives for web-based programs may outweigh the negatives.

- Students and teachers can access this type of programing from home.
- Programs such as Renaissance Place for AR, Study Island, System 44 and Read 180 provide a wealth of instructional and reporting capability.

If purchasing a web-based program may be cost prohibitive, there are other options such as subscriptions to IXL, SoftSeven, and a multitude of teacher sites that provide teacher resources, as well as student interaction.

The options and prices are many and it's your job to find out what's best for your school, at this time. Then a random thought comes to mind; how the smallest of things can upset my grand plans. Remember to relax and choose after all tomorrow is another day!
I had the privilege of being raised by two public school educators; my mom was a teacher and my dad was a superintendent in our community. The importance of public education and public schools was drilled into my head at an early age and to this day I will never forget that fact!

My father often told me stories about one of our greatest presidents, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence. Today when public schools are under attack 24/7 from so many entities that don’t believe in the true value of public education, I think everyone should pause and reflect on some of the wise insight (Jeffersonian Ideals) that President Jefferson had on this very subject.

“And say, finally, whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government or information to the people. This last is the most certain and most legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.”

— Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 1787.

“There are two subjects, indeed, which I shall claim a right to further as long as I breathe: the public education, and the sub-division of counties into wards. I consider the continuance of republican government as absolutely hanging on these two hooks.”

— Thomas Jefferson to Joseph C. Cabell, 1814.

“A system of general instruction, which shall reach every description of our citizens from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest.”

— Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Cabell, 1818.

“If children are untaught, their ignorance and vices will in future life cost us much dearer in their consequences than it would have done in their correction by a good education.”

— Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Cabell, 1818.

Thomas Jefferson is on record as being an advocate of a free tax-supported public education system that would enable every citizen to express their opinions in the political process. It was very clear in Jefferson’s mind that every citizen had a right to a public education that did not favor any group or special interest. Its purpose was to not only enlighten the citizenry with regard to how our government functions, but to provide an opportunity for the many degrees and levels of genius to evolve from all economic ranks of our great country’s population. This system of public education was and is perhaps our country’s greatest strength!

Never give up the cause for public education!
Eliminate the chaos in benefits communication. Streamline your communication by offering important information and documents online through your employee benefits website. Benefits 24/7, an employee benefits website branded specifically to you and maintained through MGM, establishes organization and efficient communication, housing any and all of your benefit information on a website branded specifically to you.

It effectively eliminates the clutter of keeping paper files while giving employees 24/7/365 accessibility to their benefit information from work or home.

BENEFITS 24/7 will:

- Ease day-to-day Human Resources questions through offering answers online;
- Provide 24/7/365 access to your benefit’s brochures, claim forms and administrative forms;
- Offer links to carrier websites, provider directories, benefit guides, educational videos and more;

For more information, please contact:
Wiley Copeland at (580)326-2705 or www.mgmbenefits.com

Supplemental Insurance can help alleviate financial stress associated with paying out-of-pocket for expenses not covered by your regular medical insurance. Typically, Supplemental Insurance can be used at your discretion to cover any and all expenses, including medical expenses or every day monthly bills.

MGM Benefits Group is recognized as an industry leader in the development and administration of competitively priced supplement insurance plans as well as other employee benefit products.

For more information, please contact:
Wiley Copeland at (580)326-2705 or www.mgmbenefits.com
“Providing current accurate information to educate our members is the most valuable service an association has to offer,” says Steven Crawford, Director of the Cooperative Council for School Administration (CCOSA). Attendance at CCOSA workshops and conferences demonstrate the value that our members put on elevating their practice, improving their organization’s performance and increase results for all students.

Secondary school administrators and teachers will have the unique opportunity to participate in learning specifically for them at the Oklahoma Association of Secondary School Principals (OASSP) Fall Conference, October 30, 2013 at the Oklahoma City Marriott.

This year’s conference is the perfect way to build capacity, and help elevate student achievement. Schachter (2013) in District Administration stated that, “Ensuring that principals have the instructional expertise they need, should be a top priority.” District administrators and teachers facing more rigorous evaluations want principals who are qualified instructional leaders. School leaders are evaluated on the extent to which they produce specific results in the actions of teachers. Teachers and instructional support members are evaluated on the extent to which they produce specific results in students. So, it just makes sense to attend a reasonably priced, local, one-day conference, specifically geared for the needs of secondary schools to help improve your schools performance and increase results for students.

William McBride, author of Entertaining an Elephant, will be this year’s featured keynote speaker. The first 100 participants to register will receive Dr. McBride’s book free with registration. Dr. McBride comes highly recommended by our OASSP officers who attended the NASSP Conference in Washington D.C. and who suggest that you bring a team of teachers who will benefit from his motivating message.

Dr. McBride has worked in a variety of public school and university settings as both a teacher and a consultant. In middle and secondary schools, he has served as a Reading Specialist, English, Social Studies and Drama teacher, and a gifted and a talented instructor. On the university level, Dr. McBride has assisted in the training and evaluation of middle and secondary English teachers. For fifteen years, Bill worked as an editor and National Reading Consultant with McDougal Littell/Houghton Mifflin Publishing Co. developing both secondary Language Arts and Social Studies materials. He has contributed to highly successful programs that reflect the latest research in teaching reading, literature, and social studies, including The Language of Literature, The Writer’s Craft, Language Network, Power Words, World History, The Americans, and Creating America. He is now Author-in-Residence for Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. An exciting and inspirational keynote speaker, Bill shares his professional beliefs and teaching strategies at conferences and workshops all over the United States and abroad. His workshops are filled with practical, hands-on activities that teachers can begin using immediately in their classrooms.

A new feature this year will be the announcement of the First Amendment Congress Essay winners during the first General Session. Oklahoma high school students—grades 9 to 12—are invited to enter the 2013 Zach Taylor First Amendment Essay Contest, sponsored by Freedom of Information Oklahoma. Students are encouraged to conduct factual research on the topic, but write creatively and personally. For this year’s essay, pick one of the freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment and write about its importance to our way of life. This is a great opportunity to promote writing and win recognition for your school, students, and teachers.

Join us in Oklahoma City at the Courtyard Marriott on October 30th to hear from inspiring keynoters and cutting-edge thought leaders; participate in interactive learning sessions; explore innovation in the exhibit hall; and build professional relationships that will last a lifetime.

We look forward to seeing you at this year’s OASSP Fall Conference for the opportunity to elevate your practice, improve your organization’s performance and increase results for all students.
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 Oklahoma Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

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