

Oklahoma Educators



Our Children's Advocates for Public Education

2014-15 Media Guide

A Letter From An Education Advocate

Dear Journalists:

A group of vocal, committed, educators emerged in the past three or so years in Oklahoma, as a direct response to the policies our leaders imposed on our schools. Teachers, administrators, and retired educators started using their “teacher’s voice” in personal blogs, bringing our stories and evidence to the public.

We responded to board meetings, to press conferences, to official statements. We highlighted what policies look like in our classrooms, and we held a microscope to our officials’ words and actions.

We networked with each other and learned from each other. We worked to support the Rally for Education last school year and highlighted the ways our State Superintendent did not represent our students’ needs. We used Facebook and Twitter to share and communicate. We used #oklaed to collect our Tweets.

We hammered on common themes that policy makers would have been happy to ignore: The inequities of our A-F school grading, the third-grade flunk law, the actions of our School Board and OSDE. We contacted Legislators. We partnered with parent groups. The community of bloggers amplified our voices and maximized our exposure.

Educators have found their voices in Oklahoma. Now, Michelle Boyd Waters has created a Media Guide to connect bloggers to journalists in the state. Her vision is a larger network: journalists and educators, talking to each other, sharing the truth about [#oklaed](#). I am so excited to be a part of this project.

Sincerely,

Claudia Swisher

Retired Educator

Reading For Pleasure

Norman Public Schools

[Fourth Generation Teacher](#)



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About This Guide

Dear Journalists:

Oklahoma's most precious resource is its children. Aside from parents, some of the most important people in our children's lives are their teachers.

Oklahoma educators devote their lives to enriching, facilitating and directing, not only the learning, but also the daily lives, of Oklahoma school children. Teachers and administrators spend countless hours per week caring for, worrying about, and preparing for our state's children.



More than 46,000 educators serve more than 645,000 students in 1,815 schools in 522 districts in our state, which ranks [44th in per pupil spending](#) and [48th in teacher salary](#). Our public education system is facing a change in administration at the Department of Education, and education leaders are working on creating new standards.

Below is a list of educators who are willing to take the time to talk to you about local and national education issues and policies. They can provide you with professional, pedagogically sound, grassroots perspectives on the issues faced by our public education system.

Please feel free to contact these educators via email, phone, or Twitter to request an appointment.

If you have any questions about this guide itself, contact me at teacher@mrswatersenglish.com.

Sincerely,

Michelle Waters

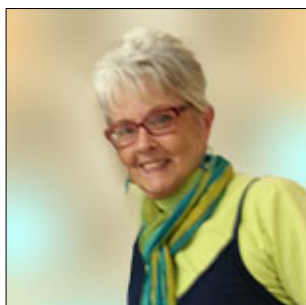
Literature/Language Arts Teacher and Public Education Advocate
Little Axe Middle School



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Oklahoma Education Advocates

This list includes educators with decades of classroom experience who may be retired (and can therefore spend all the time you want explaining education policy from the classroom perspective to you), but maintain their passion for educating Oklahoma's children.



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Claudia Swisher

Retired Educator, Norman Public Schools
National Board Certified Teacher
Regional Coordinator, Education Leadership Oklahoma
Specialty: Reading Education
Email: claudiaswish@gmail.com
Twitter: [@ClaudiaSwisher](https://twitter.com/ClaudiaSwisher)
Website: [Fourth Generation Teacher](#)
Phone: 405-830-8199



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Brett Dickerson

Teacher, Oklahoma City Community College Adult Ed, ESL
Email: brett.dickerson@gmail.com
Twitter: [@BrettDOkc](https://twitter.com/BrettDOkc)
Website: [Brett Dickerson](#)
Phone: 405-760-2363
Statement: "I am an activist, blogger, and teacher committed to full and free participation of all people in life, politics, faith, education, and voting."



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Dr. John Thompson

Education Writer
Former Teacher, Oklahoma City Public Schools
Email: john4853@sbcglobal.net
Twitter: [@drjohnthompson](https://twitter.com/drjohnthompson)
Website: [This Week In Education](#)
Phone: 405-524-3888



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Debra Bailey

Retired Educator; Special Education Teacher; M.Ed. Special Education; National Board Certified Teacher

Email: dbailey7757@yahoo.com

Phone: 405-206-7746

Statement: "I spent 32 years working with special needs students and loved it! I still sub in Norman. I also did the master teacher program with the Department of Education, served as an internal PBS coach, and trained many practicum students and student interns. One of the main reasons I retired is the over testing of our students and the inappropriate mandates from legislators who know nothing about education. Teachers must become more active in politics for the sake of our students."

okeducationtruths

Long-Time Oklahoma Educator

Email: okeducationtruths@cox.net

Twitter: [@okeducation](https://twitter.com/okeducation)

Website: okeducationtruths.wordpress.com

Statement: "When the record on public education in Oklahoma needs to be set straight..."

Doug Folks

OEA Communications

Email: dfolks@okea.org

Twitter: [@okea](https://twitter.com/okea)

Website: Oklahoma Education Association




Phone: 800.522.8091 or 405.528.7785



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Oklahoma School Administrators

These Oklahoma administrators are outspoken about what their schools need to effectively educate ALL Oklahoma students.

 Large Image	<p>Kas Nelson <i>Principal, Vici Elementary School</i> Email: knelson@vicschools.k12.ok.us Twitter: @kasnelson Website: Vici Public Schools Phone: 580-938-1565 Statement: “I am beginning my 15th year as an educator in Northwest Oklahoma, and have been an Elementary Principal for the past six. Also, I am currently serving as the State Representative and Federal Relations Coordinator for OAESP, the Elementary Association that operates through CCOSA.”</p>
	<p>Kenny Ward <i>Middle School Principal, Bridge Creek Public Schools</i> Email: kward@bridgecreek.k12.ok.us Twitter: @kennethdward Website: Bridge Creek Public Schools Phone: 405-227-3364</p>
 Large Image	<p>Lloyd Snow <i>Superintendent, Sand Springs Public Schools</i> Email: lloyd.snow@sandites.org Twitter: @Snowmanis Website: Sandites.org Phone: 918-246-1406 Statement: I am “all in for public education.”</p>



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Clay McDonald

Assistant Principal, Piedmont High School

Email: clay.mcdonald@piedmontschools.org

Twitter: [@McDonaldClay](https://twitter.com/McDonaldClay)

Phone: 405-517-6623

Information: Clay was named the Oklahoma Assistant Principal the Year in 2014. He was also named as a National Finalist for Assistant Principal of the Year in the United States. He is the first Oklahoman to garner this honor.



Dr. Rick Cobb

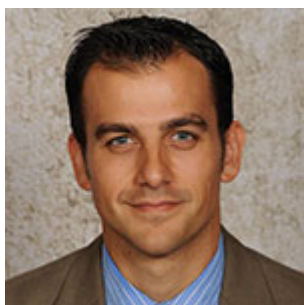
Assistant Superintendent, Moore Public Schools

Email: richardcobb@mooreschools.com

Twitter: [@grendelrick](https://twitter.com/grendelrick)

Phone: 405-488-7011

Statement: "I have spoken to Tulsa, OKC, and local media about the writing test debacle. And I'm glad to continue speaking out as an advocate for public education."



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Tyler Bridges

Assistant Superintendent, Clinton Public Schools

Email: tyler.bridges@cpsreds.org

Twitter: [@bridgestyler](https://twitter.com/bridgestyler)

Website: [Admin Graffiti](#)

Phone: 405-258-8051



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Doug Brown

Superintendent, Idabel Public Schools

Email: doug.brown@idabelps.org

Twitter: [@dougeb00](https://twitter.com/dougeb00)

Phone: 580-286-7639

Statement: "I want to be the go to person in southeast Oklahoma! So many Okies think Oklahoma stops at McAlester or Durant. Believe it or not, we are down here and want to be a part of the conversation."



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Scott Parks

Superintendent, Howe Public Schools

Email: sparks@howeschools.org

Twitter: [@scottparks](https://twitter.com/scottparks)

Website: Howe Public Schools

Phone: 918-721-3306

Information: Rural Oklahoma Supt., Small school PK-12 - 540 students, 1:1 MacBook initiative 3rd-12th

Jason Bengs

Principal, Southwest Elementary, Clinton

Email: jason.bengs@cpsreds.org

Twitter: [@edtechokie](https://twitter.com/edtechokie)

Website: Ed Tech Okie

Phone: 580-331-9544

Statement: "I'm always willing to advocate for public education."

Frank Solomon

Principal, Noble High School

Email: fsolomon@nobleps.com

Twitter: [@fsolomon3](https://twitter.com/fsolomon3)

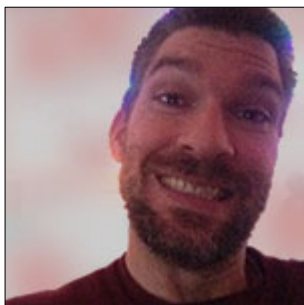
Phone: 405-872-3441

Statement: "Just a Common Sense Administrator standing up my kids! Willing to be open and honest regardless dealing with educational issues."



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Oklahoma Professional Classroom Educators



Scott Haselwood

Math Teacher, Edmond Memorial High School

Email: haselwoodmath@gmail.com

Twitter: [@HaselwoodMath](https://twitter.com/HaselwoodMath)

Website: Haselwood Math

Phone: 405-535-9451



Michelle Waters

Literature/Language Arts Teacher, Little Axe Middle School

Email: teacher@mrswatersenglish.com

Twitter: [@watersenglish](https://twitter.com/watersenglish)

Website: Mrs. Waters English

Phone: 405-306-8819



Jennifer Williams

Instructional Technology Specialist, United Systems

Formerly High School Pre-AP/AP English Teacher, Sperry Public Schools

Email: APEngTeach@gmail.com

Twitter: [@JennWillTeach](https://twitter.com/JennWillTeach)

Phone: 918-691-5229

Statement: "I eat, sleep, and breathe education. Students are my accountability. The state of American education is deplorable."

Rhonda Harlow

Instructional Coach and Reading Specialist, Enid Public Schools

Email: rrharlow922@suddenlink.net

Twitter: [@RhondaHarlow](https://twitter.com/RhondaHarlow)

Phone: 580-747-6989

Statement: "I am a certified Reading Specialist and a National Board Certified Teacher. I serve on the Board of Directors for OEA representing NW-A Oklahoma. I have worked as a Title I Reading Specialist, Literacy Resource Specialist, and an Instructional Coach. Also, I am an adjunct professor for Northwestern Oklahoma State University and am currently working on a Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University."



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Jenny Prather

1st Grade Teacher, Mustang Public Schools

Email: jprather1@cox.net

Phone: 405-354-8069

Statement: "I think this is a necessary step to help the public understand the consequences of legislation and policy in OK."

Anna Scott

4th Grade Teacher, Ponca City Public Schools

Email: scott.anna.m@att.net

Twitter: [@scottam580](https://twitter.com/scottam580)

Phone: 580-491-2733

Statement: "I am an educator and this (2014-2015) school year will be my 6th year in teaching."



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Advice from a Former Reporter and Current Classroom Teacher

Dear Journalists:

Just like you, I spent years working in newspaper rooms, the sound of the presses thrumming in the back shop late at night. I worked on daily and weekly newspapers for cities and counties. I also worked on collegiate and scholastic newspapers. I even did my time on the yearbook staff.

While I understood the ethical and moral obligations of being a reporter, and I feel certain that I upheld them during my time as a reporter, I believe I have an even better understanding of their importance now that I'm a classroom teacher, a parent, and a more experienced (otherwise known as older) member of our community.

As someone who has walked in the shoes of a reporter, and of a teacher, I'd like to offer some advice to those of you who find yourself on the education beat. You probably already know this, but I'm going to share anyway:

1. Keep your promises.
2. Do the research.
3. Ask good questions.
4. Make sure you understand what the educator has said.
5. Strive to quote accurately.
6. Remember that relationships and truth are more important than ratings.

If you have any questions about the 2014-15 Oklahoma Educators Media Guide, please contact me at:

Michelle Waters

MrsWatersEnglish.com

teacher@mrswatersenglish.com

[@watersenglish](https://twitter.com/watersenglish)



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