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STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 5, 2018
SUBJECT: Interim Study Update

September 11, 2018

Study on School Bullying, Sen. Rob Standridge

This study attempted to capture the definition and scope of bullying in Oklahoma. Oklahoma has its own unique definition which does not match definitions used at the national level. Specifically, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Dept. of Education have a unified definition of bullying to which Oklahoma does not ascribe. Problems persist with identifying and reporting incidences of bullying and cultural norms both in schools and society at large. Presentations included The Parent Child Center of Tulsa, A New Leaf – a Tulsa program serving adults with disabilities, Epic Charter Schools, and personal stories from a variety of students and parents.

Study on Innovation in Education, Sen. Rob Standridge

This study presented a variety of innovative practices occurring across Oklahoma schools. Presentations included the Bartlesville STEM initiative, Le Monde French Immersion Charter School, Millwood Public Schools' conversion school, Collegiate Hall college preparatory charter school, Epic Virtual Charter School, Paths to Independence – a program serving children and adults with autism spectrum disorders, and the Opportunity Scholarship Fund tax credit. Additionally, the OSDE presented the Champions of Excellence program that will publicly recognize schools for innovative programs based on an established rubric in areas of STEM, Fine Arts, World Languages, Safe and Health schools, Social Studies/Civics, etc.

Study on Classification Reform for OSSAA Members, Sen. Ron Sharp

This study discussed the competitive balance in how schools are classified in the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association (OSSAA). Particularly there is a contention that private schools have a competitive advantage over public schools. The OSSAA has in place certain multipliers that attempt to "level the playing field," but discussion is ongoing and consensus does not exist on how to address the issue. Additionally, it was highlighted that this has been and continues to be an issue that states across the country face.

September 13, 2018

Study on Virtual Charter School Performance, Sen. Gary Stanislawski

This study presented results of a survey conducted by the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board on why parents choose full-time virtual education. The survey found that bullying/threats and overcrowding/limited resources were the top reported reasons that parents choose to enroll students in virtual schools. Respondents noted that they experienced improved student engagement and believed the virtual schools were of significantly better quality. Assessment

results presented by OEQA varied significantly between the virtual schools. Depending on the subject, grade level and virtual school, scores ranged from exceeding to far underperforming the rest of the state. Across the board virtual schools saw a far lower graduation rate than traditional schools; however, the case was made that the mobility of virtual students was not fully captured in the federally-required graduation rate calculation.

Study on SB 1435, Sen. Allison Ikley-Freeman

SB 1435 from the 2018 Legislative Session in its final form directed schools to adopt alternatives to suspension and included a requirement for mental health screenings prior to suspending a student. The bill ultimately did not advance and the interim study sought to identify concerns that remain and possible paths forward. Research, presented by the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) shows that exclusionary practices, like suspensions, do not improve school outcomes and are associated with higher dropout rates and increased contact with the juvenile justice system. The OK Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the OSDE both presented prevention and intervention strategies particularly focused on behavioral health and mental health services as measures that can be taken in order to avoid suspension. Presenters suggested that alternatives to suspensions such as better identifying student needs, increasing access to school counseling services and community resources be adopted.

September 18, 2018

Work Based Learning Initiative, Sen. Jason Smalley

Although titled “work-based learning,” this study focused on the importance of the Work Keys exam provided by ACT. Employers presented the tool as providing value for students by connecting their talents to available careers in Oklahoma and providing a certification upon completion. However, others expressed concerns with cost of the assessment and as potentially discriminatory against those who are visually impaired. Eddie Foreman, CEO, Central Oklahoma Workforce Innovation Board commended the OSDE on creation of the ICAP as well as for building a website that will place career information in one place making it easy for individuals to see possible jobs in their area of interest. He also commended the Superintendent for making the ACT and SAT accessible for all students so that they can receive data similar to Work Keys.

September 20, 2018

Study on the Adverse Childhood Experiences, Sen. Greg McCortney and Sen. Kay Floyd

This study examined the definition and impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Oklahoma. Adverse Childhood Experiences are specific incidences of trauma based on 10-point scale that can affect brain development resulting in developmental delays for children based on how high they score. With an ACE score of 6 or more, life expectancy is reduced to 60 years of age and Oklahoma has recently been identified as leading the country in the percentage of children exposed to one or more ACEs at 49%. To address incidences of ACEs, the study discussed prevention and intervention strategies including positive parenting, home visitation services, increased investments for early childhood programs, strong relationships and engagement. Legislation this year created a Task Force to look more in depth at addressing care for children with high ACE scores.

September 25, 2018

Study on Equitable Funding for Charter Schools, Sen. Gary Stanislawski

Despite the funding formula being designed to provide equitable funding to all schools, charter schools frequently point out that there are funding disparities in sources of revenue. One primary inequality is access to funding for buildings and facilities in that charter schools do not receive a portion of funding from a school district's building fund. Craig Hulse of ReadyCO, an advocacy group for school choice in Colorado, provided information on their Mill Levy Override ballot measure that asks voters to allow a district to collect additional mills on property taxes above the established state cap, 95% of which follows students to district-sponsored charter schools. Other possible solutions presented included a new weight in the funding formula, additional revenue streams that would not take money away from traditional public schools and funding for the public common school building equalization fund already in statute.

Study on the Funding Formula for Virtual Schools and Brick and Mortar Schools, Sen. Ron Sharp

The study began with an overview of how the state funding formula treats virtual schools in comparison to brick and mortar schools, specifically virtual schools receive all of their funds from the state appropriation and none from state-dedicated and local sources, also known as chargeables. Several district superintendents presented frustration with the high mobility of virtual students and the impact that mobility has on student academics. Specifically, superintendents shared that students coming back to brick and mortar schools after enrolling in virtual schools frequently have not made academic progress during that time. Schools also expressed their desire to provide expanded virtual learning platforms for students, but they are unable to compete with virtual schools that can provide monetary incentives to both students and teachers.

Addressing issues to aid in improving effectiveness in education, Rep. Rhonda Baker and Rep. Tammy West

This study sought to identify ways to improve student discipline in schools, which was frequently discussed as a topic of great frustration amongst teachers during the walkout. A school resource officer from Broken Arrow discussed his role as often misunderstood in that it is not one of discipline and enforcing school rules, but rather of developing relationships with students to increase student safety. The OSDE also presented work underway to help educators better understand students who are considered at-risk or may have experienced childhood trauma. In specific, alternative education is an option for students who have fallen behind. The OSDE discussed efforts to support programs across the state and highlighted three programs that are particularly effective – Guymon, Comanche and Jenks. In addition, the OSDE also has an alternative education advisory council working to make recommendations for improving programs in the areas of accountability, evaluation, data and funding.

Examination of Educational Structures & Instruction in Oklahoma, Rep. Colin Walke and Rep. Scott Fetgetter

Three current Oklahoma teachers presented their ideas for improving education in Oklahoma. Amanda James from Walters expressed desire to shift away from a testing-focused environment to one that provided more time for teacher collaboration. Finding time for teachers to work together, plan and learn from each other can be difficult when so many other things demand their immediate attention. Shari Gately from Putnam City shared her desire for additional flexibilities to be allowed for graduation credits so that students are able to pursue courses in their areas of career interest. She expressed concern that ICAP may not find the

success desired if students ultimately are not able to enroll in courses in their identified career path. Finally, Price Brown from Edmond Public Schools shared concerns with limited instructional time and lost instructional time particularly for economically disadvantaged students over breaks and the summer.

Oklahoma reforms & solutions for a 21st century classroom, Rep. Lewis Moore

This study focused solely on the status of the teacher health benefit provided by the state, its long-term health and possible issues that may arise in the coming years. Complaints persist in that teachers are not able to have a spouse or dependent covered by the state on their health plan. However, Frank Wilson, Director of OSEEGIB-HealthChoice, pointed to the ability of the plan to prevent rate increases this year as a result of recent reforms of the system, benefiting state employees and teachers. To control for future costs, HealthChoice is looking at ways to better manage care for the most needy patients through reminders and frequent contact and opportunities to bring down the cost of pharmaceuticals.

Education Reform, Rep. Sean Roberts and Rep. Tess Teague

Byron Schlomach from the 1889 Institute presented research showing that spending per student does not vary significantly across districts of different size. Economies of scale do not appear occur once a district reaches more than 10,000 students. He proposed that there is an ideal size district that ranging between 5,000 and 10,000 students where funding can be used most efficiently. Former Representative Jason Nelson also spoke the need to keep reforms focused on the relationship between the student, teacher and the classroom environment. He presented research that similar schools with large numbers of students who are economically disadvantaged do not uniformly perform poorly academically. Instead, performance is largely based on a student's mindset, their cognitive development and site-based, or local, solutions. Specifically, formative assessment can provide immediate data to teachers to make informed instructional choices for students.

September 26, 2018

Study of Oklahoma's underperforming schools & the effectiveness of Turnaround models being utilized in Oklahoma and other states, Rep. Rhonda Baker

The OSDE was invited to present its approach to school improvement under the new flexibilities offered by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Changes include better targeting limited federal dollars and human resources to fewer schools in order to see greater gains and impact, required use of a needs assessment based on Oklahoma's Nine Essential Elements for School Improvement, required use of evidence-based interventions, and greater emphasis on building relationships for continuous improvement and sustainability. Also presenting was Ed Direction, a firm that works with schools designated for school improvement across the country. In Utah, the group has seen significant improvements in school performance as a result of legislation creating a partnership between the state and specific organizations to provide on-site support and training to struggling schools.

Safety and security in public schools, Rep. Mark McBride

The study included a panel of experts in school security across the state who discussed efforts already underway in to support schools in securing their campuses and recommendations for next steps. Specifically, the Oklahoma School Security Institute presented work from the Safe Schools Committee which has already been implemented including creation of the institute

itself, mental health training programs, required school intruder drills, incident reporting and a school security tip line. Two areas of particular concern were lack of security on school buses and students transitioning between classes across a campus that has multiple buildings. Recommendations for the future included threat assessment plans specific to each school campus, threat management training for dealing with potential threats, use of an app or ability to text a tip, facial recognition or weapon recognition software on school cameras and increased counselors and school resource officers.

October 3, 2018

Advantages of Expanded Learning Opportunities or ELO via school-based and after school activities, Rep. Monroe Nichols

This study primarily focused on the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant provided to Oklahoma through Title IV Part B of the ESSA. Sonia Johnson, who manages the grants for the OSDE, presented the structure of the grant and the benefits to students who participate.

However, only twenty percent of applications are ultimately approved each year.

Approximately 14,000 students are served, though gaps exist in urban areas and for high school students. The Wallace Foundation presented national research showing that quality programs can significantly improve academic outcomes for students. These programs also result in fewer discipline incidences, increased social/emotional learning and helped students develop soft skills. The presenters encouraged the state to find ways to incentivize quality programs to increase the value of the investment from federal and private funds.

School Calendar adjustments, Rep. Chad Caldwell

Oklahomans for School Calendar Reform presented findings from their research showing that the state could save approximately \$5.6m per year on electricity costs from standardizing school calendars across the state with a start date after Labor Day. This date would avoid costly electric bills in August and reduce burdens on parents by shortening breaks throughout the school year. However, the Superintendent from Yukon Public Schools, who also spoke, maintained the savings did not outweigh the benefit to students of having them back in school on a schedule, being engaged, and having access to good nutrition. Additionally, Yukon would have to add 11 days to its calendar at the end of the year if it started after Labor Day putting strain on teachers to continue to engage students after state testing and into the summer. The committee seemed to agree that a reasonable path forward would include more transparency around the setting of school calendars so that parents and communities can be engaged.

District Classroom Spending & Per pupil Expenditures and Education Outcomes, Rep. Chad Caldwell

Oklahoma Achieves presented a publicly-available tool that they developed that divided schools into quadrants based on per pupil expenditure and test scores compared to the state average. They highlighted schools that were in the quadrant of higher than average test scores with lower than average expenditures, positing that these schools should be examined for best practices to share across the state. The OSDE presented statistical research showing that investment in support services, such as counselors, speech pathologists and social workers, would result in academic achievement gains. Based on this year's data, it is predicted that increasing expenditures by \$1,000 for support services would result in a statistically significant gain of three scale score points on state tests. However, multiple years of data should be examined to determine greater reliability. Finally, ExcelinEd presented information on how

other states are offering greater transparency around financial data. They applauded Oklahoma for providing so much rich financial information and its movement toward a dashboard where such information can be displayed in a more user-friendly format.