



August 19, 2015

Honorable Members of the State Board of Education  
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Dear Members, State Board of Education:

Stand for Children Oklahoma commends State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister and the Oklahoma Department of Education for prioritizing resources to ensure every Oklahoma high school junior who wishes to do so is able to take the ACT college-entrance exam at no expense. This move is game-changing policy that has the potential to positively impact graduation and college readiness rates in our state and ensure more Oklahoma students are on a path to success after high school. Other states that have implemented similar efforts are seeing dramatic increases in the number of students pursuing a college degree. And, we know that will be the case in Oklahoma as well.

Approximately 25 percent of Oklahoma students do not take the ACT and, many who do, especially students living in poverty, only take it once. Research indicates this puts these students at a critical disadvantage in avoiding college remediation and identifying financial aid opportunities, which both lead to far too many students who never end up in Oklahoma colleges at all.

With so much at stake for high school students based on ACT performance, they deserve the opportunity to take the exam at no expense to themselves at least once...and to do so prior to their senior year when there is still time to address achievement deficiencies in order to avoid college remediation. By simply being offered the exam during their junior year, many of our students who are not encouraged to pursue college and who would otherwise not take the ACT will now understand they are indeed able to pursue a college education. These students undoubtedly have the potential for post-secondary success if simply encouraged and given the chance, and this move certainly gives them that chance.

With public resources scarce in our state, we applaud the leadership of the State Department of Education for doing far more than using a public pulpit to build awareness for the barriers to college-readiness and college-going rates. Agency leadership has actually taken the bold initiative to implement innovative, cost-saving steps to redirect agency resources to better support students and to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Oklahoma students.

Without hesitation, we submit to you our approval of this exciting and meaningful project, and urge you to lend your support to it beyond this pilot year in your advocacy efforts as Board of Education members and with state policy makers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber England". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Amber England, Executive Director  
Stand for Children Oklahoma

