

5,324 weeks, since the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre

MILDRED LUCAS CLARK was born 4 months after a white mob destroyed her family's home during the Race Massacre.

It's long overdue for the criminals who destroyed the Greenwood community in 1921 to be held accountable. Each week we remember a departed member of our community.



Tulsa Educators Who Overcame The Pandemic's Challenges

By GARY LEE, THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE
COVID-19: EDUCATORS On A2

IN THE ERA OF COVID-19 SERIES
ABOUT THIS SERIES: THIS ARTICLE IS PART OF AN ONGOING THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE SERIES ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON TULSA, OKLAHOMA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM, PARTICULARLY WITHIN BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND PEOPLE OF COLOR COMMUNITIES. THE SERIES, REPORTED AND WRITTEN BY THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE MANAGING EDITOR, GARY LEE, WAS FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS (NABJ).

STATE

DEMOCRACY WATCH: SEVERAL ELECTION MEASURES FAIL TO ADVANCE

By KEATON ROSS, OKLAHOMA WATCH

The picture of which bills are and aren't likely to become law is becoming much clearer. Last Thursday, April 13 was the deadline for lawmakers to advance non-appropriation bills out of opposing chamber committees.

ELECTION MEASURE On A6

STATE

AS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS NEAR, OKLAHOMA GOP EYES TIGHTER VOTING RULES

By KEATON ROSS, OKLAHOMA WATCH

Proposals to curb party-switching ahead of primary elections and boost pay and legal protections for precinct officials are moving forward this legislative session.

Bills making it more difficult for voter-led groups to get an

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS On A6

STATE

AFTER SQ 820 DEFEAT, MEDICAL CANNABIS BILLS FOCUS ON ENFORCEMENT

By MATT PATTERSON, NONDOC

State Question 820's defeat last month ended Oklahoma's conversation about adult recreational cannabis use for now, but how it impacts the existing medical marijuana program remains to be seen as legislators amend, debate and vote on bills regarding

SQ 820 DEFEAT On A8



PHOTO ADOBE STOCK

STATE

As OKC Pursues A 'Housing First' Strategy, Gov. Kevin Stitt Offers Opposite Rhetoric on Homelessness

By MATT PATTERSON, NONDOC

As a member of the Mental Health Association of Oklahoma's street outreach team, Shelah Farley is the tip of the spear when it comes to addressing chronic homelessness in Oklahoma City.

Farley and several others spoke at an April 4 OKC City Council workshop on homelessness in the city, telling

HOUSING FIRST On A10

OPINION

WAKE UP, EVERYBODY: 12 BLACK WOMEN EDUCATORS YOU SHOULD KNOW

By JOY S. JONES, WORD IN BLACK

America's public education system has historically been an appallingly hostile environment for Black children. From school funding disparities and disproportionate exclusionary discipline, to the school-to-prison pipeline and the dearth of Black children referred to gifted education, there's plenty of evidence that the system continues to miseducate and underdevelop its Black youth.

BLACK WOMEN EDUCATORS On A16

STATE

'Additional Terms': Legislature weighs \$245 million Request to Seal Panasonic Deal

By TRES SAVAGE, NONDOC

State leaders would like to land a \$5 billion Panasonic battery manufacturing plant with 3,500 new jobs in northeast Oklahoma, and the company has "entered into an agreement" that could allow it to take advantage of \$698 million in economic development incentives set aside by the state Legislature last year.

PANASONIC DEAL On A12

“Black and brown students suffered in great numbers, particularly during the peak of the pandemic.”

TRACI MANUEL, Booker T. Washington English, teacher, 2022 Tulsa
Teacher of the Year and 2023 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year.

Life After COVID

TULSA – It all started when former McKinley Elementary School Principal Lynnette Dixon first got word that the global coronavirus pandemic would require her school – and all others across metropolitan Tulsa – to shut down after spring break. That was back in March 2020, when the seriousness of the COVID-19 virus was first surfacing. *“I had not ever heard of ‘No School’ in all of my 30 years as an educator,”* recalled Dixon in an interview with the Oklahoma Eagle.

The announcement sent her into a quandary. That quandary, however, lasted only one day. Even though COVID-19 was still largely a mystery, Dixon realized there was no time to waste. An African American native of the Historic Greenwood District, and veteran educator, she was no stranger to dealing with complex situations.

FIRST, DIXON MOBILIZED MCKINLEY’S TEACHERS AND STAFF, THEN CONNECTED WITH THE PARENTS OF HER STUDENTS. Eventually, she’d be knocking on the doors of students, giving pep talks to her teachers and staff, all along reassuring everyone that whatever happened, the ship that was their small Pre-K to fifth-grade place of learning would remain steady. Dixon’s mission: to guarantee that even amidst a global health crisis, all McKinley students received the best possible education, and that all the school’s teachers and staff could safely engage in that pursuit. She took a take-no-prisoners approach to fulfill that mission and kept it for nearly two years.



New APPROACHES

Parents and teachers explored new and innovative approaches to reaching Tulsa, Oklahoma students.

COVID-19: EDUCATORS *from A2*

Dixon’s attitude was summed up by a primary motto: “We got this,” she told herself and anyone else who would listen. “Failure was not fatal.”

Across town at Carver Middle School, English teacher Traci Manuel faced other teaching dilemmas.

One major issue centered around the socioeconomic differences among her students and how the pandemic magnified those fissures. On the one hand, many Carver students she said were from “European-rooted” middle to upper-middle-class families who had ample resources to hire tutors and employ many other resources to help them overcome the challenges of the pandemic.

On the other hand, some of the students of color were from less privileged families who lacked the financial or educational background to support their students through the challenges of the pandemic.

“Black and brown students suffered in great numbers, particularly during the peak of the pandemic,” Manuel said in an extensive interview with the Eagle.

Manuel had to reach deep inside her well of teaching skills to find ways to address the learning gaps brought on by the gulf in means between families and students.

She used books and teaching methods that resonated among students from different socio-economic strata.

In 2022, Manuel’s initiative, efforts and leadership did not go unnoticed. She was named Tulsa Teacher of the Year.

In March, she was selected Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. She is the first African American to win the state’s highest teaching honor in 49 years, according to the Oklahoma Education Association. The remarkable distinctions were surely due at least partly to Manuel’s deft management of complex classrooms during the pandemic.

“What a gift you are to our state...We believe in the equalizing power of public education,” Rebecka Peterson, the 2022 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year, said of Manuel.

The pandemic flummoxed teachers

The impact of the COVID-19 virus was brutal for Tulsa Public Schools’ teachers. The same woes that burdened educators across the country – and indeed globally – affected them, too: school administrators who were ambivalent about how to respond to the pandemic; off-and-on decisions about whether schools would be remote or in-person; coping with COVID-19 illnesses themselves or among colleagues; having

to learn the tools of remote teaching on the spot.

In Tulsa, teachers from Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) backgrounds faced some unique burdens. Their ability to be effective teachers was hampered, in part, by the passage of House Bill 1775, a Republican-driven statute passed in 2021 legislation that restricts Oklahoma’s public-school educators from teaching on the topics of ethnicity and gender issues that “one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex.”

The increased assaults by police against Blacks nationwide during the past years also added to the pressures.

“Taken together, these issues, added to the historical trauma facing North Tulsa, made teaching especially difficult for our Black teachers,” said Shawna Mott-Wright, president of the Tulsa Teacher’s Association, in an interview with the Eagle.

Many Tulsa teachers could not cope.

Throughout the pandemic, many resigned or retired at record rates resulting in chronic teacher shortages. The Tulsa World reported that summertime teacher retirements statewide have increased by nearly 38 percent year-over-year. Many newly retired educators from Tulsa have said that the pressures of the pandemic pushed them to leave teaching years sooner than they might otherwise have gone.

And yet, some Black Tulsa teachers found ways to navigate the hurdles. Both Dixon and Manuel were foremost among them.

They deftly moved their schools and classrooms through sicknesses and the other dire circumstances wrought by the pandemic. In this article, we focus on their decisions and actions to combat the woes posed by the Pandemic and fulfill their missions as educators.

An Eagle probe into the effects of COVID-19

This article is part of an ongoing series in the Oklahoma Eagle about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted public education in Oklahoma. Our first installment focused on how the problems of COVID-19 followed Black students from high school to their early years at Langston University, Oklahoma’s only historically Black college or university. This story examines how two educational leaders with roots in the North Tulsa community handled the taxing circumstances.

In mid-March of 2020, the leadership of Tulsa Public Schools admitted it was uncertain about how to respond to the pandemic. Their first directive to school principals, administrators, students and the general public was to close

schools until early April. The administrators of Dallas Independent School District, for example, had already announced it would indefinitely close Texas’ second largest school district. To provide clarity and insights, Dixon called a colleague in Dallas for advice.

Taking control of a school community

Dixon devised a tailor-made plan to meet the McKinley school community based on her leadership instincts and her colleague’s advice. With roughly 440 school kids, the school is located at 6703 E. King St. McKinley, is situated in a racially-mixed Tulsa neighborhood, and the school’s hallmark is its racial diversity: 61 percent Latin American, 13 percent Black, 13 percent white and 6 percent Native American. The majority of the students come from low-income families.

The student body was small enough that Dixon was familiar with most other the children and their home circumstances.

She started with the resources provided by TPS. That included computers and other technology and guidelines to maintain public health safety, from masking to social distancing.

Dixon then applied some rules of her own.

Above all, the school should be open and staffed, even if the school is officially closed. While the principals and teachers at most other schools chose to work from home, Dixon decided to report daily to work in her office at McKinley. She and other staff were available to meet to parents at any time through online video conferencing programs.

“We had the autonomy to plan, act and do what was best for our school community,” Dixon told the Eagle. “We knew our students and families needed to see and hear from us. We were available more than any other school.

“The district was supportive. I just did not appreciate outside coaching. They were outsiders not walking a mile in my shoes.”

Keenly aware that many of the parents in the McKinley community were low wage earners who lacked the time or facility to manage the crisis easily, Dixon knew that she and other McKinley staff had to fill the gaps. She ensured that the meals provided by TPS were easily accessible to the students. When some students were unresponsive, she or other staff frequently called the parents. When that failed, they made house calls.

“We did home visits, took technology, and made contact daily,” Dixon said. “Students were also able to come into my conference room with masks to get support.”

She also encouraged other McKinley staff to engage with parents and students. Recognizing that in a community with a significant Latin American population where many parents were more comfortable with Spanish than English, she leaned heavily on their bilingual parent coordinator and other bilingual faculty and staff.

It took teamwork

Two staff members crucial fulfilling school’s pandemic plan were fourth-grade teacher Donna Ross and counselor Niana Christian-Ware. “We worked as a team,” recalled Ross, the 2021 Tulsa Teacher of the Year. “But it was Lynn’s leadership that made the difference.”

She was keeping school going at a steady pace but doing so in a community where food and job insecurities were rampant posed particular challenges. “We led all of our conversations with safety first and support for students and families,” Ross said.

Dixon and her staff moved quickly make sure that the computers supplied by TPS got into the hands of McKinley school kids. “However, we knew parents didn’t sign up for teaching,” she noted. “And so we asked: how do we hold students and families accountable for their learning?”

There were many issues. Families with multiple students in the house became an issue. Some daycares were not equipped to support learning during the day, so students and families had the opportunity to watch recorded lessons.

But then, recorded lessons did not allow students to ask questions or interact with staff.”

Dixon collaborated with her staff and teachers to seek solutions to every problem. “We provided ideas, structures, and many supports for families,” she said. “We were all in learning mode.”

She acknowledges that even as a veteran teacher and administrator, she had to learn a few things to fulfill the role of pandemic school leader. “I had to quickly become familiar with various types of scenarios, contact tracing, safety protocols, and the impact that COVID would have on my ability to interact with people in person,” she said.

“I was not very technologically savvy. But I put in a lot of time trying to understand processes and procedures.”

Dixon maintained her persistent leadership at McKinley throughout the first year and a half of the pandemic until her retirement at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. “Her tirelessness was an inspiration for everyone, not just the students but also the staff,” said Christian-Ware, the former McKinley counselor.

Although McKinley students still grapple with some academic and social issues, Dixon takes solace in their achievements. She feels that she left the school’s community on more solid ground.

In the 2021-2022 school year, the school placed higher in academic achievement than the average TPS school ranking. And one McKinley student received the top test scores for her age group in Oklahoma.

A pandemic tale of two school kids

At the peak of the pandemic, Traci Manuel noted that one of her Carver Middle School students was not regularly attending Zoom classes. Concerned, the veteran English teacher scheduled a conference to ask why. The student came from a “European” background and an affluent Tulsa family.

COVID-19: EDUCATORS *continued on A5*

Tulsa educators featured in this series

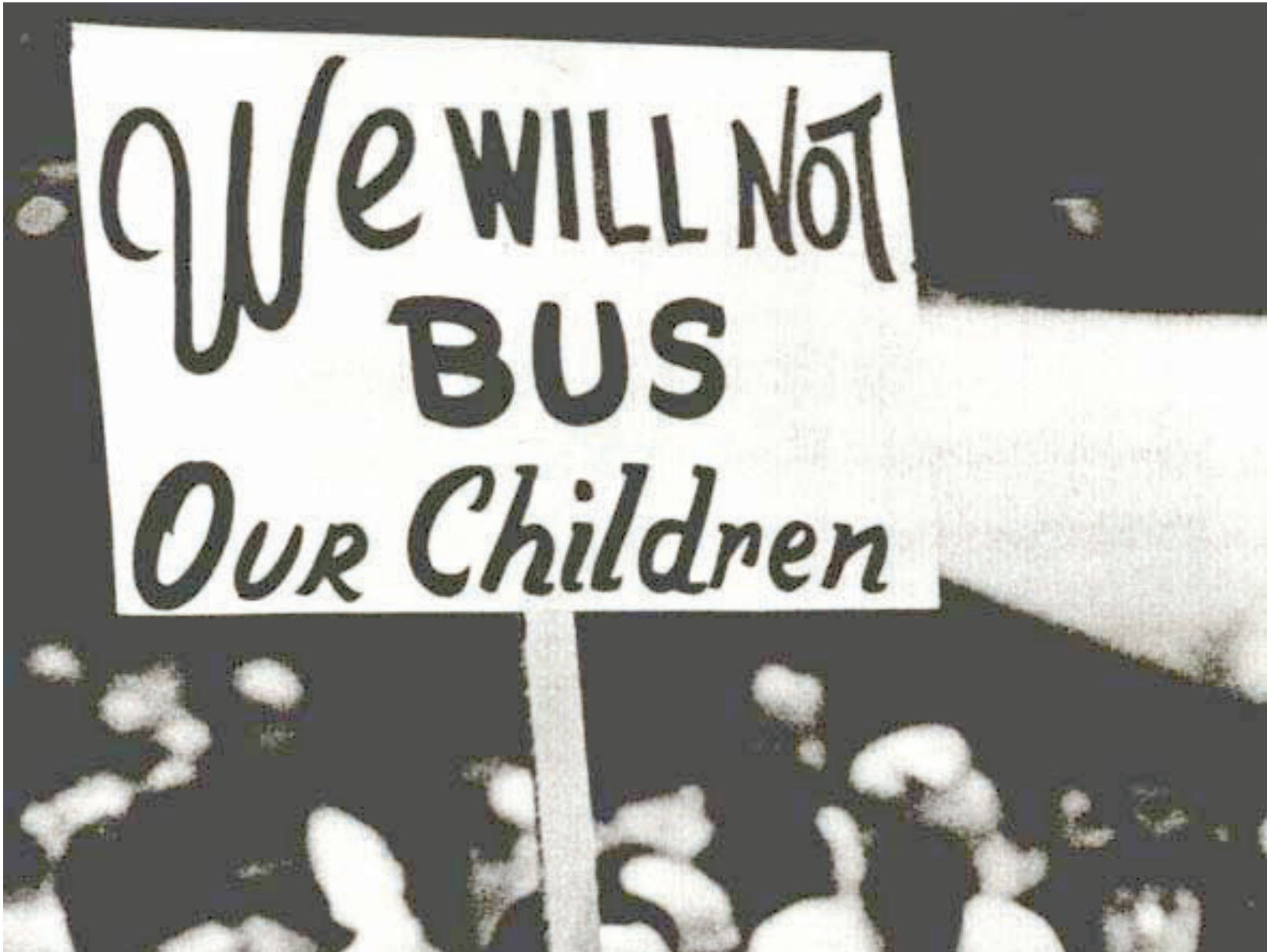
(TOP) **TRACI MANUEL**, Booker T. Washington English Teacher, 2022 Tulsa Teacher of the Year and 2023 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. Manuel employed creative methods to educate her students in spite of the challenges posed by the the COVID-19 Pandemic. **PHOTO OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

(A5, TOP) **LYNETTE DIXON**, Clinton West Elementary School Principal. In her former role as Principal at McKinley Elementary, Dixon led the school’s students and staff through the travails of the COVID-19 Pandemic. **PHOTO PROVIDED**

Busing & Public School Education

By JERRY E. STEPHENS, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND CULTURE

In OK, court-ordered school busing for public school integration purposes was adopted only in Oklahoma City



For many years, particularly in southern states and rural areas, children have used public transportation in order to attend schools. However, the use of bus transportation to achieve school integration arose principally after the 1971 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*. In that case, the Supreme Court held that large, metropolitan public-school districts had an affirmative duty to dismantle desegregated schools that had been racially segregated by the command of law or by the school board’s deliberate actions. This affirmative obligation moved beyond the voluntary integration of the public schools that had been the focal point of the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. In *Swann*, the Supreme Court approved cross-district busing for public school integration, a plan devised by a

North Carolina U.S. District Court, which had first heard the case. In Oklahoma, court-ordered school busing for public school integration purposes was adopted only in Oklahoma City. Through a series of federal court cases known as *Dowell v. Oklahoma City* (originally filed on October 9, 1961), the Oklahoma City Public School District was ordered to adopt a plan of public-school integration. This was based on a finding made by U.S. District Judge Luther L. Bohanon on July 11, 1963, that the Oklahoma City School District was operating a dual school system in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In 1972 the Oklahoma City Public Schools were ordered to develop desegregation plans so that individual school student populations would be reflective of the overall minority student population in the district.

The school district and its majority white patrons actively resisted the district court’s initial desegregation orders. Therefore, Judge Bohanon ordered the school district to develop a plan for cross-district busing of students. The Oklahoma City Public School District remained under court order until 1991. In that year the federal courts determined that the school district was now a unitary district and one in which the original segregated conditions were no longer the prevailing conditions. Bohanon then released the Oklahoma City Public School District from further direct federal court supervision. As a result of the lengthy litigation in *Dowell*, the Oklahoma City School District became one of the first in the nation to return to neighborhood schools after years of court-ordered cross-district school busing.

THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY is an agency of the government of Oklahoma dedicated to promotion and preservation of Oklahoma’s history and its people by collecting, interpreting, and disseminating knowledge and artifacts of Oklahoma.

PROTESTERS against busing, 1970s
(2012.201.B1154.0225, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS).

Featured Last Week



An Historic Discovery Made in 1921 Graves Investigation



OK Board Reconsiders: Nation’s First Public Religious School



How One Museum Honors Members of the Negro Leagues

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Diverse Curriculums

Tulsa educators embraced the opportunity to create a new balance between traditional and contemporary learning models

COVID-19: EDUCATORS *from A4*

“I have a real teacher,” the student said. He explained that his parents had hired a teacher to work with him individually and in person at home.

“Your class is great,” the student explained to her. “But what I’m getting on Zoom is limited. It’s more like reviewing material, not necessarily giving me the critical thinking skills that I need to move to the next level of advanced classes. So, the Zoom class is supplementary to what my real teacher is offering.”

Another of Manuel’s students had a very different profile. He was African American who came from a home with two parents with jobs. They were working class family and did not have the resources to hire private tutors. As high school graduates, they also lacked the skills to help fill the gaps that were an outcome of remote learning.

“Did they want the best for their child? Of course, they did,” Manuel said. “Everyone does. However, they weren’t sure how to tap into the available resources or how to guide their child.”

Like the Dixon at McKinley, Manuel’s overriding goal was to secure the best education for all her students, including white, Black, and Brown and students of all socio-economic backgrounds. She pursued this goal while leading classrooms at Carver and has continued to pursue it since joining the staff as an English Teacher at Booker T. Washington High School last year.

Leaning in to teaching

One critical decision she made was to provide a curriculum that resonated with a diverse classroom. For example, Manuel offered Harper Lee’s classic 1960 novel “To Kill a Mockingbird.” While wildly popular among some readers, many people are not fond of it for various reasons, she said.

She paired it with Angie Thomas’s top-rated 2017 novel, “The Hate U Give.”

“They’re dealing with very similar themes that you can talk to students about, and they can relate to,” Manuel said. “I think when you begin to pull out the historical references and



MCKINLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, serves Pre-K through 5th grade students at its E. King Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma location.
PHOTO **TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

allusions that the text makes, we can show how certain themes have evolved. That side-by-side look allows all students to see and analyze that.”

Manuel said that she also has had to adapt her teaching methods.

“Our approach to teaching has to move forward,” she said. “We must ensure we have kinesthetic learning, especially with our Black and Brown kids. We shouldn’t just do traditional classes.”

As an example, she compared two age-old popular television shows, “Mr. Rogers” and “Sesame Street.” “Many of our white kids related Mr. Rogers,” she said. “And many of our Black and Brown students preferred Sesame Street. It was very animated and hands-on.”

In her classroom, Manuel draws from both approaches.

“If we’re only teaching through one lens, then we’re going to continue to get the same results,” she said. “So, I think that we need to make sure that our curriculum reflects an all-inclusive attitude and that it addresses our need to move our students up on the learning chart.”

The pandemic also inspired Manuel to lean into mentoring some students. A group she

sponsored called, “Women of Power” addressed issues of confidence, culture, and career and college preparation for female students. It was a self-styled leadership class.

Even in the depths of the COVID-19 crisis, Manuel felt it was essential to interact with the group members face-to-face. With parental permission, she met with them twice weekly to ensure we were still doing community service, building confidence, and moving forward.

“I still keep in contact with those students,” Manuel said. “And they have all learned to work through tough times with coping skills.”

Manuel’s selection as 2022 Tulsa Teacher of the Year and 2023 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year are potent affirmations of her approaches to educating Tulsa students before and through the pandemic. The schools where she has led English classrooms continue to earn high rankings. Carver, where she taught until last year, and Booker T., where Manuel teaches English, have ranked 95 percent in academic achievement and 68 percent in English proficiency according to TPS’s statistics for the 2021-2022 school year.

Learning gaps persist

And yet, Manuel continues to see the learning gaps between students of different races. At Booker T., she teaches some of the same students who were in her classes at Carver. She has monitored their progress during the pandemic.

The student Manuel described earlier, who came from a “European” background and told her that her Zoom classes were supplementary to his “real teacher,” has made leaps and bounds in improvement, Manuel said. Three years later, he has moved from Carver to Booker T., and he’s on track for advanced classes. He will probably receive the international baccalaureate diploma at Booker T.

“At the same time, many of my Black and Brown students, who I have also followed from Carver to Booker T, are still a year or so behind their white counterparts,” Manuel said. “When we look at their writing, again, their critical thinking, dedication, and willingness to work through tough texts, and things of that nature, they may not have the same stamina to do some of those fields. So, they’re still affected by the fallout of the pandemic.”

“I think TPS is making some progress in addressing the gap, but we still have a lot of work to do.”

Both Dixon and Manuel are busy pushing forward with their missions.

Her 2021 retirement didn’t last long. This spring Dixon returned to TPS as principal at Clinton West Elementary School. And Manuel has stepped lively into her Oklahoma Teacher of the Year role. She plans to press the need for equity, better resources, and the need for cultural competency in all of the state’s schools.

“We must believe these students can overcome their hurdles,” Manuel said. “We’re in the recovery process. All the teachers are putting the recovery process at the forefront of their mindset. The challenges are still tough. But I think we can still get through this.”

House Bill 1629 - Clarifies when someone convicted of a felony has their voting rights restored.



Sweeping Changes Aren't Likely

ELECTION MEASURE *from AI*

Several of the voting and election-related bills I've reported on in recent months passed either the House or Senate didn't make it past the cutoff point, including:

House Bill 1415 by Denise Crosswhite Hader, R-Piedmont: Establishes a framework for Oklahoma officials to split state and federal elections.

House Bill 1629 by Regina Goodwin, D-Tulsa: Clarifies when someone convicted of a felony has their voting rights restored.

Senate Bill 518 by Julie Daniels, R-Bartlesville: Sets new requirements for voter-led initiative petitions, including implementing a \$750 filing fee and raising the number of data points necessary to verify a signature.

It often isn't immediately clear why some bills make progress and others stall. The House and Senate commonly have ideological differences, meaning a bill that passes one chamber with broad support may struggle to get a hearing in the other. Sometimes, there simply isn't enough time to hear every bill.

In my latest story, I reported on the bills that cleared this deadline and what voting access and administration changes could take effect ahead of the 2024 presidential election cycle.

Sweeping changes aren't likely to be implemented this year. Republican lawmakers have zeroed in mostly on incremental bills aimed at keeping ineligible voters off rolls and thwarting possible fraud.

While voting access advocates I spoke with are pleased that measures targeting voting access and the initiative petition process are dormant, they're also frustrated that lawmakers aren't doing more to encourage civic engagement. Just over 50% of registered voters cast a ballot in the November midterm election, a 6% decline from 2018.

In the coming weeks, expect more bills to reach the governor's desk and attention to shift to the fiscal year 2024 budget. Have thoughts, comments or story ideas as we head towards the home stretch of the legislative session? Let me know at Kross@Oklahomawatch.org.

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VOTERS casting ballots, in support of local initiatives. ILLUSTRATION ADOBE STOCK

Bills to eliminate No-Excuse Absentee Voting on the table

PRES. ELECTIONS *from AI*

initiative question on the ballot and allow Oklahoma to separate state and federal elections have stalled and will likely remain dormant until next year.

Prompted in part by false allegations of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election, election security has been a hot-button issue at the State Capitol in recent years. Though post-election audits and a review from the Legislative Office of Fiscal Transparency affirmed fraud within Oklahoma's election system is extremely rare, some Republican lawmakers have continued to push bills adding additional requirements on voters and election officials.

The most restrictive proposals, including bills to eliminate no-excuse absentee voting and forbid the state election board from joining voter list maintenance organizations, did not receive committee hearings. Other bills of concern to voting rights activists cleared the House



PHOTO ADOBE STOCK

or Senate but failed to advance past committee in the opposing chamber by an April 13 deadline.

Election bills passed this year will likely impact the 2024 presidential election cycle, which kicks off next March with the presidential preference primary. Bills without an emergency clause typically take effect on Nov. 1 of the year they are signed into law.

Here are some questions and answers about where election bills stand and how Oklahomans' voting rights could be impacted:

What Election and Voting Issues Are Lawmakers Prioritizing?

Most of the remaining bills, which have cleared the House or Senate and committees in both chambers, are aimed at maintaining accurate voter rolls or preventing fraudulent activity.

Among them is House Bill 1950, which would require the State Election Board to compare death records from the Social Security Administration

against state voter rolls, and House Bill 2682, which elaborates on a law passed last year forbidding the private funding of elections.

Also moving forward is House Bill 2056, which would require voters who cancel their registration to wait at least 60 days before re-registering within the same county. State election officials say the change prevents voters from switching parties during the summer primary election cycle. In recent election cycles, the Democratic Party has allowed unaffiliated voters to participate in their primaries while the Republican and Libertarian officials have closed their races to non-members.

While state law bars voters from changing their party affiliation from April 1 through August 31 in even-numbered years, some have canceled their registration and re-registered with a different party soon after as a workaround, said Rusty Clark, assistant election board secretary.

PRES. ELECTIONS *cont. on A7*



Statewide Participation Declines

Statewide voter participation in the November 2022 midterm election declined about 6% compared to 2018, with just over 50% of eligible voters casting a ballot.

THURSDAY, APR. 29 is the cut-off date for bills to be considered by the full chamber.

PRES. ELECTIONS *from A6*

It's a significant number depending on the race," said Clark, who was unable to provide specific data on recent party switches.

"There are people who understand that's a loophole."

Voters may also notice a slight change to next year's primary election date. Senate Bill 375 by Sen. Brent Howard, R-Altus and Rep. Carl Newton, R-Cherokee, would push the June primary election date from the fourth to the third Tuesday in June. State election officials say the change is needed to allow sufficient time to send August runoff ballots to military personnel stationed overseas.

How are Lawmakers Addressing Poll Worker Shortages?

Responding to reported precinct official shortages and incidents of harassment, most notably in Tulsa County, lawmakers have pushed forward bills to incentivize volunteering as a precinct official.

Senate Bill 481 by Dave Rader, R-Tulsa, would classify harassment of an election official as a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in the county jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Senate Bill 290 by Warren McCurtain, doubles the daily compensation for judges and clerks to \$200. Inspectors, who act as the lead precinct official and currently receive \$110, receive \$225 daily under the proposal.

Mike Sulyzcki, an Oklahoma City resident who has volunteered as a poll worker for the past 20 years, believes a pay bump would be a good starting point to generate more interest in becoming a precinct official. The position requires a minimum 12-hour shift, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with preparation time often necessary before and after.



NORMAN RESIDENTS voted on State Question 820 regarding recreational marijuana on March 7, 2023.
PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

Mike Sulyzcki, 77, said lawmakers also may need to consider authorizing split shifts or incentivizing businesses to offer paid time off to their employees on election days.

"Somebody has to figure out a way for people who are working to take a full 14-hour day out of their lives and make it worth their while," he said. "The civic duty part of it and current reimbursement only goes so far."

What Notable Bills Have Stalled?

Several measures that cleared the House or Senate failed to advance past committee in the opposing body, including:

- House Bill 1415 by Denise Crosswhite Hader, R-Piedmont. Establishes a process for Oklahoma to separate state and federal elections if certain federal reforms pass.
- House Bill 1629 by Regina Goodwin, D-Oklahoma City. Clarifies when a person convicted of a felony has their voting rights restored.
- Senate Bill 518 by Julie Daniels, R-Bartlesville. Places some restrictions on groups seeking to place an initiative question

on the ballot.

- House Bill 2024 by Max Wolfley, R-Oklahoma City: Requires notary publics who notarize more than 20 absentee ballots to submit a detailed log to their county election board.

Unless revived by legislative leadership, lawmakers will have to wait until next year to reintroduce these measures.

Lynn Thompson, communications and development director for the Oklahoma Academy, a nonprofit and nonpartisan group that studies public policy, said the organization heard from several people concerned that Senate Bill 518 would strip power from voters. Daniels has defended the proposed changes, including requiring petition filers to pay a \$750 fee and increasing the number of data points required to verify a signature, saying that they're necessary to boost public confidence in the process.

Thompson said it's encouraging that Daniels' bill and other measures aimed at adding new requirements to the initiative petition process have failed to gain traction.

"Anytime you try to limit the voice of the people, that's problematic," Thompson said.

Do Any of the Remaining Bills Propose Expanding Voting Access?

One proposal, Senate Bill 1040 by Darcy Jech, R-Kingfisher, would authorize the state to offer electronic voter registration services to U.S. citizens who are seeking a driver's license.

Otherwise, measures to expand voting access died early in the legislative session.

These include bills authored by Democrats seeking to expand early voting hours on the Saturday preceding a general election, allow the curing of rejected mail-in ballots and establish an automatic voter registration system, none of which received a committee hearing.

Margaret Kobos, the founder of Oklahoma United for Progress, a nonpartisan organization that aims to increase voter participation, said none of the measures still alive seem particularly harmful or threatening to voters. But lawmakers have missed an opportunity to make voting easier ahead of the next major election cycle, she said.

Statewide voter participation in the November 2022 midterm election declined about 6% compared to 2018, with just over 50% of eligible voters casting a ballot.

"The big problem is the [low] turnout and the disconnection that people are feeling," Kobos said. "We need to solve that, making voting easier and more accessible for people who work all day."

How Long Do Lawmakers Have to Consider the Remaining Bills?

Thursday, April 29 is the cut-off date for bills to be considered by the full opposing chamber. After this date, final details of bills that have passed out of the House and Senate may continue to be fleshed out in conference committees.

By statute, lawmakers must wrap up business by 5 p.m. May 26.

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REP. SCOTT FETGATTER (R-OKMULGEE) stands in a State Capitol hallways with. members of his rock band Tuesday, March 1, 2022. PHOTO MICHAEL DUNCAN

OKLAHOMA MEDICAL MARIJUANA AUTHORITY

ABOUT
The Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority (OMMA) is the regulatory agency for Oklahoma's medical marijuana program.

OMMA is responsible for processing commercial and patient license applications, providing customer service to licensees and applicants, facilitating the rulemaking process based on state statutes, enforcing our rules, investigating possible violations of medical marijuana laws and more.

SQ 820 DEFEAT *from AI*

industry operations and law enforcement during the final weeks of the 2023 legislative session.

Those who want to rein in the program, now entering its fifth year, have plenty of political cover after voters overwhelmingly rejected SQ 820. Gov. Kevin Stitt weighed in days after the vote, suggesting the current medical marijuana program is too easily accessible and maybe that should change.

“Oklahomans have a big heart that if it’s going to help someone medically, we want that to happen,” Stitt said March 10. “But we don’t believe everyone with a hangnail should be able to get a medical card.”

Medical cannabis bills moving forward in 2023 session

Stitt’s March remarks came as SB 440 by Sen. Jessica Garvin (R-Duncan) was facing its full Senate hearing. At the time, the bill proposed potency caps on marijuana products, but Garvin amended the bill March 23 to drop the potency cap component in favor of purchasing limits on some products.

“I think we’ve really had recreational marijuana since the inception of the program,” Garvin said. “Because I’m in the health industry, I have a little bit different perspective. I see how

“We have a responsibility to everyone in the state to make sure that we have a program that is safe for everyone”

- SEN. JESSICA GARVIN, (R-Duncan)

HB 1350 would create temporary licensing programs for marijuana dispensaries.

patients have benefitted from it, but I think we also have a problem when it comes to children and their ability to access it and the black market. My idea with the bill wasn’t to hurt the patient experience, it was to make it safer for everyone by finding a happy compromise. I think that’s something as legislators we will continue to work on.”

SB 440 advanced from the House Alcohol, Tobacco and Controlled Substances Committee last week and is eligible to be heard on the House floor. However, the bill’s title has been struck, which is a procedural move lawmakers use on controversial proposals to make sure a bill’s final language is heard second time in its chamber of origin.

Garvin has also introduced SB 439 which would require that all Oklahomans who receive patient licenses do so with the recommendation of a doctor who is located within Oklahoma. The bill also proposed modifying rules governing patient licenses for those under age 18.

Garvin said her primary aim with any legislation is to protect minors and those operating legally within the system.

“We have a responsibility to everyone in the state to make sure that we have a program that is safe for everyone,” Garvin said. “I think it’s been sort of a free rein. There’s no difference between what a minor with a patient license has access to and what an adult with a patient license has access to. I think that’s a problem.”

Garvin’s SB 439, however, did not receive a House committee hearing by last week’s deadline. The bill remains property of the House and could be considered further next legislative session.

‘Honk if you’re high’

Rep. Scott Fetgatter (R-Okmulgee) has been one of the leading legislators in the Oklahoma House focused on marijuana matters. He saw SQ 820’s failure as an example of voters being asked to approve too much too soon, and he said many of his constituents feel a lot of fatigue over marijuana right now.

“I wasn’t shocked by the vote,” he said. “I think it was a combination of things that got us where we are. Obviously, it failed miserably in rural Oklahoma, with 70 to 80 percent of those voters being against it. When you talk to them, they’re worried about organized crime. They see how marijuana has changed the face of Main Street with the flags and the signs. There’s a dispensary billboard on Highway 75 in my district that says ‘Honk if you’re high.’ I think people are tired of all of that.”

While some of Garvin’s medical cannabis bills are aimed at influencing the patient experience, Fetgatter said he does not see that as a priority.

“I’m sure there have been and will continue to be a lot of conversations about qualifying conditions for patients,” Fetgatter said. “I don’t

think that type of legislation would go far right now. I think instead of worrying about people who are buying marijuana legally through a dispensary, we should be more worried about the black market and how we can make a dent in that problem.”

To that end, none of Fetgatter’s current medical cannabis bills focus on patient experiences, and Garvin is Fetgatter’s Senate author on HB 1350, HB 1349 and HB 1347.

HB 1350 would create temporary licensing programs for marijuana dispensaries, marijuana grow operations and processors. That bill is on the Senate calendar and is available for consideration of the floor. Because its title and enacting clauses have not been stricken, passage from the Senate floor would send the bill to the governor’s desk.

Two other bills by Fetgatter are in different shape. HB 1349 would create a nine-member rule-making board for the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority. The nine members would include law enforcement, a physician and marijuana business owners. But as HB 1349 awaits Senate floor consideration, its title and enacting clause will need to be restored by amendment before it can pass into law.

Another Fetgatter bill, HB 1347 would call for the OMMA to re-open the RFP process for its seed-to-sale tracking system, which tracks marijuana plants from their seed state to finished products that can be purchased by those with patient licenses. The current system has been criticized by some in the industry since its inception, but HB 1347 did receive a Senate committee hearing prior to last week’s deadline.

“I think if the seed-to-sale bill doesn’t make it across the finish line, the state could be sued again,” Fetgatter said earlier in April. “We should be looking at an RFP. That doesn’t mean the current vendor can’t re-apply and try and get a better contract for the state and for businesses across Oklahoma.”

Other medical marijuana bills aimed at law enforcement

Asked about this session’s medical marijuana policy negotiations following the defeat of SQ 820, Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat (R-OKC) noted that his caucus has long had concerns about how the state’s existing program laws have been enforced and how organized crime syndicates have reportedly found footholds in Oklahoma’s industry.

But Treat cautioned that SQ 820 did not signal a change of heart regarding medical marijuana access in Oklahoma.

“We want to make sure we don’t misread the tea leaves. Obviously there was a rebuke of the state question, but there are still a lot of license holders, so we’ve got to strike that balance,” Treat said last week. “You don’t want

SQ 820 DEFEAT *continued on A9*



FLANKED BY SUPPORTERS, attorney and lobbyist Ryan Kiesel speaks after the failure of State Question 820 on Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

PHOTO TRES SAVAGE



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, OKLAHOMA BUREAU OF NARCOTICS AND DANGEROUS DRUGS PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER MARK WOODWARD AND OBND STAFF ATTORNEY SPEAK WITH SEN. LONNIE PAXTON (R-TUTTLE), on Monday, April 10, 2023. PHOTO TRES SAVAGE

OMMA *has implemented a moratorium on new business licenses until August 2024*

SQ 820 DEFEAT *from A8*

to overreact to a state question going down, but you do see that there is a will to make modification to make the industry safer and more responsive.”

House Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols (R-OKC) largely agreed with Treat and said he supports legislation that targets illegal grow operations.

“For me, the conversation didn’t change with the state question. The bills I’m running with the attorney general I have wanted for the longest time, and I’ve never changed,” Echols said. “I want legal entities to be successful, and I want illegal entities to be shut down. My bills are working with [the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs] and especially with our current attorney general, Gentner Drummond, who ran on putting a stop to these illegal operations, and I’m doing everything in my power to help him deliver on what he’s already been delivering on.”

To that end, Echols filed HB 2095, which involves law enforcement and marijuana businesses. It would allow OBND, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and the Attorney General’s Office to do on-site inspections and investigations in the same way only the OMMA can currently. It would also provide for permanent licensee revocation if a business does not pay its taxes, and it would make it illegal for commercial growers to hire undocumented immigrants. The bill also limits properties to one grow license.

Finally, it also expands the investigative authority into medical marijuana research facilities by allowing law enforcement to enter those facilities for investigative purposes at reasonable times.

Sen. Lonnie Paxton (R-Tuttle) is Echols’ Senate author on SB 2095, which advanced from a Senate committee last week with its title and enacting clause intact. Now, it awaits consideration by the full Senate.

Paxton and Echols have also teamed up on SB 475 to reform due process rights related to business license revocations. SB 475, which would also create a new definition for “straw” buyers or license holders, is awaiting final approval in the House.

“I’ve always supported the mom and pops — trying to help them out,” Paxton said. “But the cartel stuff is what I want to go after — the ones who are moving into rural Oklahoma (and) setting up some kind of armed compound next to our farmers out there.”

Paxton said communities are waiting too long for action on potentially illegal marijuana operations, and even after an enforcement action is taken, the former operations stand empty and deteriorate, with plastic sheeting eventually blowing through farmers’ fields and abandoned greenhouses

Oklahoma’s medical marijuana program has grown rapidly, with nearly 380,000 patient licenses issued and thousands of businesses popping up across the state.

becoming eyesores.

“So, I went to OBND this summer and said, ‘This is the problem I’m seeing. You all are going after these places, and then they are just sitting there,’” Paxton explained. “It seems like the whole process gets bogged down.”

Paxton said SQ 820’s results signaled that voters don’t want to see a wild west show when it comes to marijuana grow operations.

“You look at Kingfisher County where they had a quadruple homicide, that county voted in excess of 80 percent against that measure,” he said. “I think what they’re saying is, ‘Get a grip on this industry.’ They’re not saying, ‘Shut it down.’ I think when people voted for this, I think people said, ‘I voted for a mom and pop, a veteran to have a little grow and a little dispensary,’ not what we ended up with.

“It’s hard to put the genie back in the bottle, and we’re not really trying to, but we are trying to contain everything to where it’s a complimentary business to the state, not something that takes away everywhere they go. You do have these facilities that are nice little facilities, nice little stores. Those compliment communities, but a lot of what we’re seeing with these grows are terrifying to a lot of people.”

Echols: ‘The overall mood of the Capitol has changed’

Echols said the defeat of SQ 820 has caused the Legislature to focus on enforcement bills that target illegal operations. But he also said the overall proliferation of dispensaries and grow operations across the state has been met with disapproval by many.

“My philosophy is always going to be this: Does it help enforcement and help shut down illegal actors while not punishing good actors?” Echols said. “I will say the overall mood of the Capitol has changed. (...) The citizens are rejecting the out-of-control [nature] of the program, and I think people are starting to realize that. So you will see more and more enforcement bills moving forward.”

Owing to legislation passed last year, the OMMA has implemented a moratorium on new business licenses until August 2024, including those for dispensaries, processors and grow operations.

“My clear message is: No one is going

to shut down the program,” Echols said. “That’s not going to happen. It was voted on by the people, and it’s going to stay. But there are going to be more restrictions on the program. That is coming. It has just gotten absolutely out of control. We have just under 7,000 (business) licenses, and we probably need 1,000 total.”

Echols said he doesn’t support making it more difficult for Oklahomans to obtain patient licenses, which was something Stiitt had suggested might be a good idea.

“I don’t think that attacks the real problem,” Echols said. “Let’s talk about the real problem: people who are growing it and selling it internationally on the black market. People who are human trafficking individuals to come into the state (for labor). I don’t think qualifying conditions and things like that solve the problems I want to fix and the problems Oklahomans want to fix.”

Patient experience likely to be unaffected, for now

Attorney Ryan Kiesel served as an advisor to the SQ 820 campaign, and he lobbies on behalf of marijuana-related clients in Oklahoma, including Metrc, the current seed-to-sale system provider. Kiesel said that, despite comments from the governor and some in the Legislature, what will likely come out of the Capitol this session focuses mostly on regulating the industry.

“We are starting to see these bills shape up over the session,” he said. “They seem to be bending toward public policies that would have benefits for the medical program and would not impact the experience for patients.”

Oklahoma’s medical marijuana program has grown rapidly, with nearly 380,000 patient licenses issued and thousands of businesses popping up across the state. Last year, medical marijuana generated \$60.2 million in excise taxes from medical marijuana sales across the state. Since 2018, about \$202 million in excise taxes have been received. Those totals do not include sales tax collected by municipalities, do not go to the state.

Kiesel said protecting existing compliant business owners should be among the most important tasks of the Legislature. He worries that those operating lawfully might

be harmed by efforts to crack down on the black market.

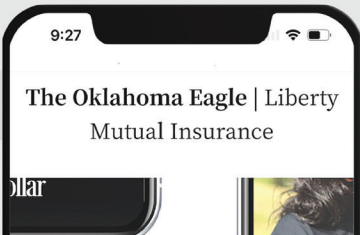
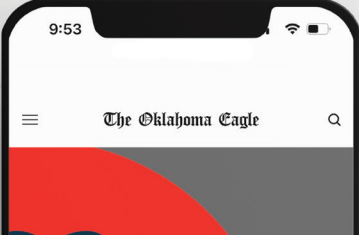
“We’ve seen Oklahoma become a leader in cannabis innovation, and we did start off with a very open system that allows pretty much anyone with cash in their pocket to start a business,” Kiesel said. “I have always felt like the free market is the best regulator. A lot of those businesses are now struggling because we do have an oversupply of products. That is the other piece of the puzzle that lawmakers need to keep front and center. Every political discussion can’t focus on reigning in the non-compliant businesses. We have to make sure we aren’t burying the businesses that are compliant-minded in regulation to the point where they can’t keep their doors open. I think legal, compliant businesses that are able to succeed are the best check against the illicit market.”

At five years old, the state’s marijuana industry is still in its infancy. Colorado has had its medical program for more than a decade now. California started its medical program in 1996. Kiesel said it takes time for medical programs to sort themselves out, and he said the OMMA continues to beef up its inspections and hire more staff.

“There is a lot going on that isn’t centered on legislative action,” Kiesel said. “(OMMA) director (Adria) Berry is ramping up every day. They have more inspectors in the field, and those inspectors are trained up and know how to identify compliance issues of all kinds, and they’re getting better at it every single day.

“We have to remember the program in Oklahoma is less than five years old at this point. For most of the time the medical program has existed, regulators haven’t had the tools or resources to ensure compliance. I obviously think SQ 820 would have exponentially helped the state’s ability to regulate marijuana, but voters showed up on Election Day and decided that the conversation about recreational will have to wait for another time.”

JENNIFER PLAMER has been a reporter with Oklahoma Watch since 2016 and covers education. Contact her at (405) 761-0093 or jpalmer@oklahomawatch.org. Follow her on Twitter @jpalmerOKC.





GENTNER DRUMMOND speaks during a Republican primary debate for Oklahoma attorney general Thursday, June 16, 2022, at Oklahoma City Community College. PHOTO MICHAEL DUNCAN

HOUSING FIRST from AI

attendees about a two-year scaled-up pilot program that aims to take 500 of the most chronically homeless people off the streets by 2025. Part of a broader “housing first” strategy, OKC’s program will involve interventions at homeless encampments with an offer of up-front housing to individuals willing to participate. Ultimately, city officials intend to close an encampment permanently after the interventions.

Farley is a part of that effort, which will cost \$12.5 million and is being paid for by a mix of public and private funds. Currently, the City of OKC spends about \$9 million each year in addressing homelessness, most of which comes from the federal government.

And it all begins with people like Farley who take those initial steps of meeting unhoused people where they are — living at encampments scattered around the city. An estimated 1,339 homeless people live on OKC’s streets on any given day, according to a recent count.

For six years, Farley has been working to get people off the streets and into permanent housing. The process is long and arduous, and it usually starts by building trust.

“When you think about someone that has lost everything, along the line there was trust that was lost,” Farley said. “So now you’re on the street. You have people bringing you a sandwich or some water. They make you promises they can’t actually keep, but you hold onto that promise they’re going to come back and get me into housing. They’re going to help me. And it never happens. So, when that continually happens over time, you no longer trust the community.”

Farley told OKC City Council members about “Joe,” a man whom she had helped find a home during her time working on street outreach. Joe didn’t trust Farley and those who had tried to help him previously. They engaged with him for months, until Joe finally relented and agreed to make a plan for change.

“He finally said, ‘If you’re willing to put in the work, so am I,’” Farley said. Joe was connected with services, and he was using them while still living on the streets. One day, while using those services Joe returned to find his tent and all his belongings were gone.

“This was Joe’s worst fear come true,” Farley said. “Joe experienced this a couple of times — his home being thrown away. Each time, street outreach had to start over. Joe is housed now, but it took over six months to house Joe.”

When Farley and others go into encampments to start building that trust and connecting people with resources, it starts with gathering IDs and other documents like birth certificates — anything that can help establish a person’s identification.

“We build those relationships while getting vital documents, and while that is going on the

“When you think about someone that has lost everything, along the line there was trust that was lost... So now you’re on the street”

- SHELAH FARLEY, Member, Mental Health Association of Oklahoma’s street outreach team

housing navigation team will visit them at their encampment, and while that is going on the unit acquisition team is looking for housing,” she said.

Farley said that, under OKC’s current pilot program, she’s seen homeless encampments emptied and all of the residents housed in as little as three or four weeks.

Stitt ends state council, says ‘building housing’ not the answer

Less than two weeks after OKC’s homelessness workshop, Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt made headlines on the same topic but for different reasons: choosing to end the state’s Interagency Council on Homelessness and telling media that “building housing and giving people free stuff is not the answer.”

Formed in 2004 under former Gov. Brad Henry, the 26-member council had been tasked with coordinating agencies across the state to improve efforts to address homelessness. At the time of its dissolution, the council had been formulating a five-year plan to address homelessness in the state, according to The Frontier.

Stitt cited the need for local municipalities to grapple with homelessness as a reason for ending the council.

“We need a fresh set of eyes on there,” Stitt said Friday following the council’s dissolution. “So some 20-year-old commission I didn’t think could move the needle on homelessness.”

Asked about the need to increase housing to address homelessness, Stitt was less than enthusiastic about efforts like those OKC is embarking on, which include finding housing for people living on the streets and building additional housing for future needs.

“Here’s the deal. Building housing and giving people free stuff is not the answer,” Stitt said in the video above. “You can go look at what other big cities have done to try to house people and build housing or put them up in hotels.”

After listing recent efforts by the Oklahoma Legislature to improve mental health care access, Stitt said some of those who are homeless remain in that situation because they don’t want help.

“People need jobs. People need jobs. They need mental health (care) that they need,” he said. “There’s the drug addiction, and there’s people out there who, for whatever reason, are refusing to get the help that they need.”

Stitt said churches and other organizations are well-equipped to handle the state’s homeless problem. He does not favor building additional housing, nor does he approve of encampments.

“We have a lot of nonprofits, we have a lot of churches around this issue, we have investments in mental health,” he said. “We need to force these folks to get into mental health facilities. But we’re not going to allow tents, as long as I’m governor in Oklahoma. We’re not going to build housing. We’re going to try to get them the help and get them the job that they need.”

Oklahoma City Homeless Alliance executive director Dan Straughan was serving on the statewide council at the time of its dissolution. Straughan said the Homeless Alliance adopted a housing-first approach for those with a high barrier to housing about a decade ago. He said the one-year retention rate is about 90 percent for those placed in housing-first scenarios when the housing is paired with other services.

“When the governor said people who are homeless need mental health services and a job, he’s not wrong,” Straughan said. “But they also need education, rehabilitation services, access to health care, and on and on you go. It’s different for everyone, but the one thing all homeless people have in common is that they need a home. It’s not all they need, but it is proven that when they have a stable home they are more likely to have a job, complete their education, and live a more stable and productive life. So for the governor to ignore the home part of homelessness is a mistake.”

Straughan said the council typically met six times a year and cost the state virtually nothing. He said one of its biggest benefits was the ability to get leaders of major state agencies together to communicate.

“It was worth it just to have that time to communicate so when there was an issue you knew who might be able to help,” Straughan said.

Collaboration is important to max out resources

Back at the April 4 City of OKC workshop, strategy implementation manager Lindsay Cates told attendees that collaboration is the most important factor when it comes to addressing homelessness on a broad scale. She said OKC’s current pilot program brings together a variety of organizations with expertise in caring for homeless people. **HOUSING FIRST continued on A11**

The Oklahoma Eagle

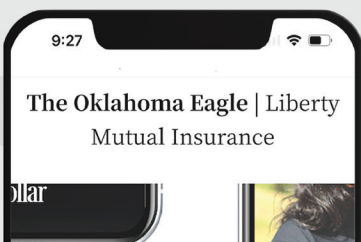
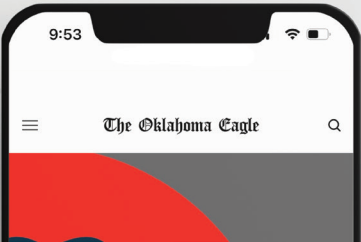
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HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS come and go near downtown Oklahoma City. A 2022 proposed OKC ordinance would have allowed police to cite, and later arrest, homeless people camped on private or public property. But the ordinance failed to advance on the City Council. PHOTO **MATT PATTERSON**

LAST YEAR’S Oklahoma City, OK *Unhoused Count Stood At 1,339*

HOUSING FIRST *from AIO*

Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt created a task force to examine the city’s homeless problem four years ago, and this pilot program is the product of that effort.

“We’ve been working on this planning for implementation for about the last year or year and a half,” Cates said. “The providers have been working this way since the mayor’s task force started with the aim of seeing how we can collaborate and work better together. The more collaboration, the more effective we can be. And I think with this encampment rehousing approach, I think it will be more effective for providers to get people housed more quickly.”

Dallas and Houston have had burgeoning homeless problems that the cities have worked to address. In 2021, Dallas City Council members approved a \$72 million plan to put 2,700 people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing. Houston has decreased its unhoused population by more than 60 percent since 2011 with a similar funding push.

OKC’s pilot program spending breakdown includes \$6.9 million for rental subsidies, \$2 million for stabilization services including case managers, \$1 million for moving kits and landlord incentives, and \$1.3 million for management and administration.

The cost to house someone in the program is about \$24,000, which includes the salaries of employees doing outreach, rental payments and the move-in kits that can include basic household supplies and furniture.

While Oklahoma City’s \$12.5 million over two years might seem paltry compared to the commitments in Dallas and Houston, Cates believes other cities’ successes can be leveraged into more money down the road.

“Dallas put \$70 million on the

table, and then over a couple of years the HUD awarded them another \$23 million,” Cates said. “So to me, the hope is we can leverage those public and private dollars and we can get more federal funds. We know that federal funds always come with limitations, and so that’s where the community itself can step up and say these dollars can help in a different way. That’s the blend of public and private that we’re going to need.”

Council members are cautious but optimistic

OKC Ward 2 Councilman James Cooper, who also served on the mayor’s task force that developed the current pilot program, said this is the beginning of a long-term effort.

“I think \$12.5 million over a two-year period is encouraging,” he said. “My hope is at the end of those two years we then understand how that \$12.5 million investment strengthened this system that we are creating so that we can scale up capacity to better meet people the moment they first encounter homelessness so they’re never in a position where they find themselves in an encampment and a tent.”

Cooper said it’s unlikely the problem will be solved in two years no matter how successful the current program is. He said while there is a fairly accurate accounting of actual numbers of people on the street on any given day, hundreds of others, including students in Oklahoma City Public Schools, are on the cusp of homelessness every day. He said the program needs to show a strong measurable outcome.

“I’m a pragmatic person so, of course, I’m going to cite data and outcomes,” Cooper said. “I’m a compassionate person but I’m also surgical. Hopefully, when we come back in two years after this scaled-out pilot program we

“My hope is at the end of those two years we then understand how that \$12.5 million investment strengthened this system that we are creating so that we can scale up capacity to better meet people the moment they first encounter homelessness.”

- COUNCILMAN JAMES COOPER, OKC Ward 2

will be able to see what lessons we learned and we can scale it up even more. I can assure everybody we’re not done. We won’t be done in two years. OKCPS has 1,900 kids who are experiencing housing insecurity. There are a whole lot of issues still out there.”

While last year’s official unhoused count in Oklahoma City stood at 1,339, Ward 6 Councilwoman JoBeth Hamon said numbers expand and contract, and understanding why that happens is among the most important parts of the process of reducing homelessness. The city’s current pilot program has the goal of reducing the chronic homeless population on the streets by 75 percent by 2025, but even more people could be living on the streets by then.

“It really is difficult to get an accurate count,” Hamon said. “There are so many different situations people find themselves in. The root of it is we have a lot of poverty in the city and Oklahoma and a lot of our safety nets have holes. What we’re seeing is that people want the city to do something about it when people have fallen through every single one of those holes in the nets and ended up on the street. I think we have a number of people who are on that edge.”

Hamon said addressing housing costs is another way to help strategically reduce the unhoused population. That’s easier said than done, however, as OKC’s housing market has seen an upswing in housing prices in recent years.

“I think programs like this are great as far as reducing the chaos in people’s lives and getting them the assistance they need, but the reality is the longer-term picture is also important,” she said. “We need to be implementing the housing affordability plan to really keep that number down long-term.”

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A Win-Win for The State of OK

“We think the taxpayers of the state of Oklahoma need to be a part of that discussion and everybody can have a win here.... We don’t need to forget about the businesses and the people that are already here as well.”

CHARLES MCCALL (R-ATOKE),
House Speaker, Oklahoma Legislature

PANASONIC DEAL from AI

But the agreement between Panasonic and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (embedded below) stipulates a contingency that, by June 1, the governor must sign “into law an appropriation in the amount of at least \$245 million providing funds for the benefit of the company all upon such terms and conditions that are acceptable to the company.”

Six weeks out from the Oklahoma Legislature’s constitutionally-required date of adjournment, that provision of the Panasonic agreement appears to be the current sticking point in a session where all major items of negotiation — education proposals, tax cuts, economic development projects and the overall state budget — are clogged up like a horse that ate two hands of green bananas.

“Well, we’ve got a lot of things that need to start moving, you know? A lot of different log jams,” said House Speaker Pro Tempore Kyle Hilbert (R-Bristow). “We’ve got another deadline next Thursday, so stay tuned.”

During his weekly media availability Friday, Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt outlined the additional request from Panasonic for state investments in the area of the MidAmerica Industrial Park. Stitt said the facility would span about 5 million square feet, making it “one of the largest in the country.”

“(It is) just an amazing project when you see it,” Stitt said of the proposed battery plant. “But you need infrastructure, you need roads. So there’s a few little Ts to cross and Is to dot to get the correct egress, ingress in those facilities. A few maybe day care centers, a few more fire stations. There are some community investments that the Legislature will probably make to put that on the finish line.”

Stitt said it is common for businesses to negotiate additional “development

agreements” beyond simply accessing whatever economic development incentives a state offers.

“It’s about a \$5 billion investment, and when they’re doing those kinds of things, there’s development agreements, there is site work, there is infrastructure,” Stitt said. “There are commitments they have to have from the state. So yes, there’s going to be a commitment from the Legislature to have to figure out a way to spend this \$245 million either through [the Oklahoma Department of Transportation] or through the MidAmerica site to get that site ready.”

Although Stitt said the requested \$245 million would involve “community investments,” the April 11 agreement for the potential Panasonic deal only specifies that the Legislature would be “providing funds for the benefit of the company.”

Senate, House debating ‘ancillary issues’

Asked Monday about the additional \$245 million requested by Panasonic, House Speaker Charles McCall (R-Atoka) said the items listed by Stitt on Friday were part of discussions last year between state leaders and Panasonic.

“It wasn’t necessarily \$245 million last year,” he said. “That park is a state-owned asset, so spending money there is understandable, but we want to know what the details of that spend look like.”

McCall said the number is likely larger this year because a proposed tax increment finance (TIF) district proposed in support of infrastructure near the MidAmerica Industrial Park was roundly defeated by Mayes County voters. During the Nov. 8 general election, the TIF proposal received only 36.1 percent support among 12,320 total voters.

Now, with Panasonic making its proposed Pryor battery plant contingent upon an additional \$245 million appropriation from the Legislature, leaders of the Republican House and the Senate find themselves in disagreement over whether this proposal should be contingent upon other major policy and budget negotiations between chambers.

“We have told the governor we will go along with what he wants to do to land that company, and the Senate leadership is completely on board as long as there are not any ancillary issues that he wants us to agree to or they want us to agree to,” Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat (R-OKC)

WILLIAM W. SAVAGE III (TRES) has served as the editor in chief of NonDoc since the publication launched in September 2015. He holds a journalism degree from the University of Oklahoma and covered two sessions of the Oklahoma Legislature for eCapitol.net before working in health care for six years. He is a nationally certified Mental Health First Aid instructor.

said Thursday. “We’re not going to agree to any other unrelated bill to get this through. We are agreeing to getting economic development landed and doing what that takes, but no ancillary tied to it.”

McCall, meanwhile, said his House Republican Caucus wants an agreement with the Senate on tax reductions if the state is going to dedicate even more resources to the Panasonic project.

“I think it’s a win for the state of Oklahoma, yes I do,” McCall said Monday. “We can’t be myopic where this is the only thing that gets done this session. I think we’ve got to have tax cuts for the people of the state of Oklahoma. We’ve got to leave more money in their pockets to deal with this inflation. So the House is taking a very holistic view of things for the state.”

McCall has previously pushed for reductions or eliminations of the state individual income tax and the corporate income tax. The Legislature reduced both of those rates as part of its budget deal in 2021.

“We think the taxpayers of the state of Oklahoma need to be a part of that discussion and everybody can have a win here,” McCall said. “We don’t need to forget about the businesses and the people that are already here as well.”

House Minority Leader Cyndi Munson (D-OKC) said it was “fascinating” to hear Stitt and legislative Republicans discuss “another \$245 million to put toward Panasonic.”

“My understanding from what I’ve heard [the governor] say and what I’ve read is that Panasonic is asking the state to invest in itself — infrastructure, I think he talked about fire stations, day care centers,” Munson said Monday. “So again, a large corporation, Panasonic, who has turned us down before is saying, ‘Please invest in yourself before we invest in you.’”

Munson said workforce development is a key issue for any major employer, which she said underscores the need for better investments in Oklahoma’s public education system.

“What we’ve continued to ask is to invest in public education, to provide a teacher pay raise separate from any type of (school choice) voucher scheme and find ways (...) to encourage improving our public education, affordable housing infrastructure,” Munson said. “These are things we should be doing regardless of whether or not a company is asking for it.”

‘Commerce is continuing discussions with the company’

As legislative leaders debate how much money should be dedicated to economic development this session, Panasonic is not the only international company looking for financial incentives to build a manufacturing facility in Oklahoma.

First reported by Reese Gorman of The Frontier, the North American branch of the Italian energy company Enel is considering construction of a solar panel manufacturing plant at the Port of Inola, which sits about 30 minutes southwest of the MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor. Like Panasonic, Enel North America could take advantage of Oklahoma incentives, such as the Quality Jobs Act and the Investment Tax Credit Act.

Last year, the Legislature created the Large-Scale Economic Activity and Development Act, which could front-load those incentives to an investment project as large as the one proposed by Panasonic. Lawmakers placed \$698 million into the LEAD Fund, and this year they set an April 15 deadline for a project to encumber that money before it reverted back to the General Revenue Fund.

Panasonic signed its agreement with the Department of Commerce on April 11 and told Reuters over the weekend that it had done so, although “there are no other specific decisions that have been made by the company.”

“Commerce is continuing discussions with the company and following their timeline closely,” said Becky Samples, director of marketing and communications for the Department of Commerce.

McCall said Monday that the LEAD Act deadline of April 15 will not end up being a sticking point.

“The only thing that makes this LEAD Act different is that last year, because of surplus, we were going to pay for it up front. But the LEAD Act is really just the Quality Jobs Act and the Investment Tax Credit Act,” McCall said. “Because of the number of jobs Panasonic brings, there is a little bit of a sweetener in it because of the 3,500-plus (jobs) and the multi-billion-dollar investment. If they do it is the only way they could receive it. But these are things we already have on the books.”

McCall said Panasonic could still qualify for the \$698 million in the LEAD Fund at any time “whether the money stays in Commerce or whether it moves back to the state treasury.”

“They’re going to qualify for it,” McCall said. “The only question is how we’re going to pay for it: Up front or over time.”

Stitt, Treat, McCall and other legislators had two days worth of meetings together last week. For weeks, Treat and McCall have feuded over the details of a major education package that would simultaneously pump hundreds of millions of dollars into the state’s public school system and create new refundable tax credits for the parents of private school and homeschooled children. Among other disagreements, the Senate believes eligibility for the new tax credits should be capped based on family income. Additionally, House and Senate leaders have staked out competing positions over the details of teacher pay raises and the state’s education funding formula.

Asked how last week’s conversations unfolded, Treat said Thursday that “there are still issues.”

“We’ve had ongoing discussions with a group of senators, a group of House members and the governor’s team. I have enunciated that I want to have those meetings in the open,” Treat said. “I shared that with the governor, and he indicated some support of that, so I hope that we can actually have you all (in the media) and the public in those negotiations at some point.”

Asked if he believed tax cuts were possible this year in addition to economic development projects like Panasonic and the Inola effort, Treat said the rest of the state budget picture needs to be painted first.

“If you’re going to tie a tax cut or anything else to any ancillary policy, we’re not going to go for that. We’re not going to be leveraged on something like that,” Treat said. “If at the end of the day, we set our priorities on spending on medical needs, on infrastructure needs, on education — which is the biggest boulder — and we still have the financial wherewithal, we’re open to those. But we’re not going to know that until we get an agreement, especially on the education package.”

Stitt, who flew to Washington on Monday, said Friday that he would sign any tax cut that lawmakers sent his way, and he expressed confidence that deals could get done on education funding, school choice reforms, tax cuts and economic development.

Background on potential Panasonic deal

Panasonic’s proposed project would become the second U.S. battery plant for electric vehicles announced by the company in 12 months. The agreement signed with the Department of Commerce states that, if the \$245 million additional state investment is approved by June 1, Panasonic would need to announce its Pryor project by Dec. 31, 2024.

Last year, the company took advantage of an enormous \$1.1 billion incentive package offered by the state of Kansas to begin building a facility on the site of a former U.S. military munitions plant outside of Kansas City.

At the time, the Stitt administration privately reassured state leaders that Panasonic was considering a second battery plant at Pryor’s MidAmerica Industrial Park, a former U.S. military munitions plant itself. One of the industrial park’s greatest draws is that it can access relatively low-cost electricity produced by the Grand River Dam Authority, which is Oklahoma’s state-owned power utility.

However, Pryor sits about 45 minutes and 45 miles east of Tulsa in a historically rural area, and questions have lingered about the area’s appeal when a business is looking to hire thousands of employees. Earlier this year, Oklahoma lost out to Canada for a similar battery plant being built by Volkswagen.

On Monday, McCall said that the nature of economic development in the United States means that Oklahoma leaders must work with companies as they choose locations for their significant projects.

“Until every state quits offering incentives, we have to offer them to land these quality companies. We don’t make the rules, but those are the rules by which we have to play,” McCall said. “But it’s very important that we don’t forget who has already made investments in this state and that we don’t forget them or the people who elect us to come up here and work on their behalf.”

THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE CHURCH DIRECTORY



The Oklahoma Eagle publishes news and announcements for churches currently listed in *The Oklahoma Eagle's* Church Directory. For information, please call our office at (918) 582-7124

Church Of The Living God

1559 E Reading St. Tulsa OK
(918) 584-3206

Minister RJ Smith

Sunday school - 9:30am
Sunday Worship - 10:45am
Monday Worship - 6:00pm
Wednesday Bible Study - 5:00pm

CAPERNAUM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
1962 N. Sheridan Rd.
(918) 834-4747

Pastor Ruthie I. Howard

Sunday School
10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship
11:00 a.m.

Bible Study & Prayer Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
For Transportation (918) 402-6027

Words of Wisdom Ministries FC

Temporarily meeting at the Courtyard Marriott 3340 S 79th E Ave Tulsa OK
(918) 230-3022

Pastors Wesley & Alfie Gray would like to invite you to come and experience the Word of God in action this Sunday! God has a word for you, He Guarantee's it! You'll be glad you did!!!

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GTOMi

Gospel Tabernacle Outreach Ministries, Inc.
Traveling Outreach Ministries

609 E. Zion Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Elder Julius W. Bland
Sr., Pastor
918-810-3882

ALL ARE WELCOME



MOHAWK FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

3329 E. 30th St. North • 834-0391

Sunday School
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning
Worship 11 a.m.

Bible Study
Wednesday
7 p.m.



Rev. Emanuel L. Collier, Sr.
Pastor

Gethsemane Baptist Church

727 East 56th St. North
(918) 425-6613

Dr. W. T. Lauderdale

Sunday School
9:00 a.m.

Church Services
11:00 a.m.

Zoe' Life Church of Tulsa

Rudisill Regional Library
1520 N Hartford Ave.
Tulsa OK 74106
(918) 409-4899

Pastor Richard and Cher Lyons

Sunday Worship: 1pm
Wed- Healing School: 6:30p - 8p

"The Righteous Are As Bold As A Lion." - Prov.28:1a

SOLID ROCK 7th DAY BAPTIST CHURCH

123 E. 59th St. North
Ph: (918) 425-2077

Pastor Rick Bruner

Sabbath School (Saturday)
9:30-10:45 a.m.
Praise & Worship 11:00 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

"The Seventh Day Is Still God's Sabbath"

Northside Christ Gospel Church

3101 N. M.L King Jr. Blvd.
Tulsa OK
(918) 625-2374

Sunday School - 10 am

Sunday Morning
Worship - 10:45

Sunday Evening Prayer - 7 pm
Sunday Worship - 7:30 pm
Wednesday Prayer - 7:30 pm
Wednesday worship - 8pm

Rev. John W. Anderson

VERNON AME CHURCH

307-311 N. Greenwood Ave.

P: 918-587-1428
F: 918-587-0642

vernonamechurch@sbcglobal.net

Sunday
Church School
8:30 am

Worship Service
10:00 am

Wednesday
Bible Study
6:00 pm



Rev. Dr. Robert R. Allen Turner

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH NORTH TULSA

THE CHURCH WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS US



Pastor Anthony L. & Mrs. Kelly Scott

Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship - 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
Bible Study - Noon & 7:00 p.m.

1414 N. Greenwood Ave.

Tulsa, OK 74103
918-582-5129

www.fbcnt.org

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Changing Hearts

Touching the World"

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BOSTON AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1301 S. Boston
(918) 583-5181
Rev. David Wiggs
Senior Minister

Sunday Worship
8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School
9:40 a.m.

Sunday TV
Worship
11:00 a.m.

KTUL Channel 8



TIMOTHY BAPTIST CHURCH

821 E. 46th St. N. • 425-8021

REV. TWAN T. JONES

Sunday School
9:45 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship
11:00 a.m.

"We've come this far by faith"

NORTH PEORIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

2247 N. Peoria
Tulsa, Okla. 74106
(918) 425-1071

Warren Blakney, Minister

Sunday Bible School.....9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

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Pettie Chapel CME



19364 S. S. Mingo Road.
Bixby, 74008
Phone: (918) 366-8870

Rev. Robert Givens

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

"Where Peaceful Waters Flow"

Church In Power

732 E. 31st North
Tulsa, OK 74106 - (918) 835-1525

Service times: 9am Sundays, 7pm Wed, and Special Supernatural Breakthrough Services every last Friday and Saturday of every month at 7pm and Sunday at 9am

Wednesday Bible Study - 6:30 p.m.

Church Ministries:
Children's Church, CIP Praise Dancers, and CIP Praise Tem.

For Further Information call (918) 835-1525.

"Have Faith In God." Mark 11:22



Pastor Bukky and Wunmi Alabi

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Every Sunday at 11:30 a.m.
Livestream | allsoulschurch.org

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2952 S. Peoria Ave. | Tulsa, OK 74114



Mount Zion Baptist Church
419 N Elgin Tulsa, Oklahoma

Office:

918-584-0510

Fax:

918-584-1958

Prayer Line:

918-584-PRAY

Sunday School

9:30 a.m.

Morning

Worship 10:45

Wednesday

Bible Study

Noon and 7:00



In The Spirit Christian Church

"Come And Experience The Spirit"

1020 South Garnett
Tulsa, Okla., 74128
Phone: (918) 836-6823
Fax: (918) 836-6833

Eclectic Praise, Extraordinary
Worship, And Spirited Preaching.

Wednesday Services
10:00 a.m. Spirit Seniors
5:30 p.m. Support Groups
6:30 p.m. Community Dinner
7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Sunday Worship
Church School
9:45 a.m.
Worship
11:00 a.m.

Ministries: Administration, Children's Church, Children's Choir, Spirited Kids, Guest Services, Intercessors, Men's Fellowship, Outreach and much more...



Rev. Sharyn
Cosby-Willis,

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NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle: April 14 and 21, 2023.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR PROJECT
NO. SP 21-01

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order by the Mayor of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, sealed bids will be received in Room 260 of the Office of the City Clerk, City of Tulsa, 175 E. 2nd Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103 until 8:30 a.m. the 12th day of May, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. SP 21-01 TULSA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER RENOVATIONS – PHASE 2

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 145330.ArchEngr.5451101.4054322-541101 145330.Bldgs31.5452101.6014.4053122-541104 1 4 5 3 4 0 . B l d gs31.5452101.6014.4053122-541104 1 4 5 3 5 0 . B l d gs31.5452101.6014.4053122-541104

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. and will be held through video conferencing with Microsoft Teams, invitation presented on the City of Tulsa's website at this link: <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/engineering-services/construction-bids/>

Attendance at the Pre-Bid Conference is MANDATORY. Bids will not be received from contractors who did not attend the Pre-Bid Conference.

Bids will be accepted by the City Clerk from the holders of valid pre-qualifications certificates from the City of Tulsa in one or more of the following classifications: A, B or S.

Drawings, specifications and contract documents for construction of said public improvements of the said project have been adopted by the Mayor of said City. Copies of same may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Engineering Services at the City of Tulsa Engineering Services, 2317 South Jackson, Room 103, North Building, for a non-refundable fee in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to the City of Tulsa by check or money order.

Contract requirements shall include compliance as required by law pertaining to the practice of non-discrimination in employment.

The overall aspirational Small Business Enterprise utilization goal for this project is ten (10) percent. Attention is called to Resolution No. 18145 of August 23, 1988, requiring bidders to commit to the goal of employing on the project at least fifty percent bona fide residents of the City of Tulsa and/or MSA in each employment classification.

Attention is called to Resolution 7404 of November 8, 2006, requiring bidders, their subcontractors and their lower-tier subcontractors to hire only citizens of the United States.

The City of Tulsa itself is exempt from the payment of any sales or use taxes, and pursuant to Title 68 O.S. Section 1356(10), direct vendors to the City are also exempt from those taxes. A bidder may exclude from his bid appropriate sales taxes, which he will not have to pay while acting for and on behalf of the City of Tulsa.

A Certified or Cashier's Check or Bidders Surety Bond, in the sum of 5% of the amount of the bid will be required from each bidder to be retained as liquidated damages in the event the successful bidder fails, neglects or refuses to enter into said contract for the construction of said public improvements for said project and furnish the necessary bonds within thirty days from and after the date the award is made.

The bidder to whom a contract is awarded will be required to furnish public liability and workmen's compensation insurance; Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds acceptable to the City of Tulsa, in conformity with the requirements of the proposed contract documents. The Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds shall be for one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price.

All bids will be opened and considered by the Bid Committee of said City at a meeting of said Committee to be held in the City Council Room of City Hall in said City at 9:00 a.m. on the 12th day of May 2023.

Dated at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 14th day of April 2023.

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle: April 14 and 21, 2023.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. 2036N7060Z,
TMUA-W 20-20

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order by the Mayor of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, sealed bids will be received in Room 260 of the Office of the City Clerk, City of Tulsa, 175 E. 2nd Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103 until 8:30 a.m. the 12th day of May, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. 2036N7060Z, TMUA-W 20-20 NON-ARTERIAL STREET REHABILITATION MAINTENANCE ZONE 7060

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 2036N7060Z. Streets.NArRh.b.4281.42813122-541106 2 0 3 6 N 7 0 6 0 Z . S t r e e t s . N A r t R h b . 4 2 8 2 . 4 2 8 2 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 6 2 3 3 1 W 0 0 0 1 4 . W a t e r D i s t . W a t e r . 7 4 0 0 . 7 4 0 0 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 1

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Tuesday April 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. and will be held through video conferencing with Microsoft Teams, invitation presented on the City of Tulsa's website at this link: <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/engineering-services/construction-bids/>

Attendance at the Pre-Bid Conference is MANDATORY. Bids will not be received from contractors who did not attend the Pre-Bid Conference.

Bids will be accepted by the City Clerk from the holders of valid pre-qualifications certificates from the City of Tulsa in one or more of the following classifications: A or C.

Drawings, specifications and contract documents for construction of said public improvements of the said project have been adopted by the Mayor of said City. Copies of same may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Engineering Services at the City of Tulsa Engineering Services, 2317 South Jackson, Room 103, North Building, for a non-refundable fee in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to the City of Tulsa by check or money order.

Contract requirements shall include compliance as required by law pertaining to the practice of non-discrimination in employment.

The overall aspirational Small Business Enterprise utilization goal for this project is ten (10) percent.

Attention is called to Resolution No. 18145 of August 23, 1988, requiring bidders to commit to the goal of employing on the project at least fifty percent bona fide residents of the City of Tulsa and/or MSA in each employment classification.

Attention is called to Resolution 7404 of November 8, 2006, requiring bidders, their subcontractors and their lower-tier subcontractors to hire only citizens of the United States.

The City of Tulsa itself is exempt from the payment of any sales or use taxes, and pursuant to Title 68 O.S. Section 1356(10), direct vendors to the City are also exempt from those taxes. A bidder may exclude from his bid appropriate sales taxes, which he will not have to pay while acting for and on behalf of the City of Tulsa.

A Certified or Cashier's Check or Bidders Surety Bond, in the sum of 5% of the amount of the bid will be required from each bidder to be retained as liquidated damages in the event the successful bidder fails, neglects or refuses to enter into said contract for the construction of said public improvements for said project and furnish the necessary bonds within thirty days from and after the date the award is made.

The bidder to whom a contract is awarded will be required to furnish public liability and workmen's compensation insurance; Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds acceptable to the City of Tulsa, in conformity with the requirements of the proposed contract documents. The Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds shall be for one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price.

All bids will be opened and considered by the Bid Committee of said City at a meeting of said Committee to be held in the City Council Room of City Hall in said City at 9:00 a.m. on the 12th day of May 2023.

Dated at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 14th day of April 2023.

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle: April 21 and 28, 2023

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
TULSA METROPOLITAN UTILITY
AUTHORITY
PROJECT NO. ES 2015-15, C4

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order by the Tulsa Metropolitan Utility Authority, a Public Trust, sealed bids will be received in Room 260 of the Office of the City Clerk, City of Tulsa, 175 E. 2nd Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103 until 8:30 a.m., 19th day of May 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. ES 2015-15, C4 CROW CREEK SRP, CONTRACT 4

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 2331500008. SewerLines. Sewer.7500.75003122-541101

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Tuesday May 2, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. and will be held through video conferencing with Microsoft Teams, invitation presented on the City of Tulsa's website at this link: <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/engineering-services/construction-bids/>

Attendance at the Pre-Bid Conference is MANDATORY. Bids will not be received from contractors who did not attend the Pre-Bid Conference.

Bids will be accepted by the City Clerk from the holder of valid pre-qualification certificates from the City of Tulsa in one or more of the following classifications: A or D

Drawings, specifications and contract documents for construction of said public improvements of the said project have been adopted by the Mayor of said City. Copies of same may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Engineering Services for the City of Tulsa, 2317 South Jackson, Room 103, North Building, for a non-refundable fee in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to the Tulsa Metropolitan Utility Authority by check or money order.

Contract requirements shall include compliance as required by law pertaining to the practice of non-discrimination in employment.

Attention is called to Resolution No. 18145 of August 23, 1988, requiring bidders to commit to the goal of employing on the project at least fifty percent bona fide residents of the City of Tulsa and/or MSA in each employment classification.

Attention is called to Resolution 7404 of November 8, 2006, requiring bidders, their subcontractors and their lower-tier subcontractors to hire only citizens of the United States.

The Authority, acting on behalf of the City of Tulsa, is exempt from the payment of any sales or use taxes, and pursuant to Title 68 O.S. Section 1356(10), direct vendors to the Authority are also exempt from those taxes. A bidder may exclude from his bid appropriate sales taxes which he will not have to pay while acting for and on behalf of the Tulsa Metropolitan Utility Authority. See Contract Article IIB.

A Certified or Cashier's Check or Bidder's Surety Bond, in the sum of 5% of the amount of the bid will be required from each bidder to be retained as liquidated damages in the event the successful bidder fails, neglects or refuses to enter into said contract for the construction of said public improvements for said project and furnish the necessary bonds within thirty days from and after the date the award is made.

The bidder to whom a contract is awarded will be required to furnish public liability and workmen's compensation insurance; Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds acceptable to the Authority, in conformity with the requirements of the proposed contract documents. The Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds shall be for one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price.

All bids will be opened and considered by the Bid Committee of said City at a meeting of said Committee to be held in the City Council Room of City Hall, 175 E. 2nd Street, in said City at 9:00 a.m. on the 19th day of May 2023.

Dated at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 21st day of May 2023.

(SEAL)
Rick Hudson, Chairperson
Tulsa Metropolitan Utility Authority

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PROTESTERS demonstrate their support for indigenous rights. PHOTO ZINN EDUCATION PROJECT

“Black Students Deserve to Learn About Climate Justice

- SCOT SCHRAUFNAGEL, a political science professor at Northern Illinois University

By AZIAH SLID, WORD IN BLACK

Some social movements ignite, burn bright, then die down with no actual change. But whether it’s the fight for women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, gun reform, climate justice, or equal education, one thing stays the same in every movement in United States history: the presence of Black folks.

Climate change isn’t just a white fight — or an issue affecting white America. It’s a global issue. So as glaciers continue to melt and tornadoes decimate towns, the need to teach and inform students, especially Black students, about the climate crisis is a pressing issue among educators, climate justice leaders, and environmental groups.

“There are many manifestations of environmental racism, and climate change is definitely part of that,” says Jesse Hagopian, a teacher and an organizer of the Teaching for Black Lives Campaign. “Our Black students deserve to learn about that.”

Thanks to organizations like the Zinn Education Project, a national organization that has, since 2008, offered free, historically accurate, and factual downloadable lessons and articles to teachers, educators are including climate topic awareness in their lessons, regardless of what subject they teach.

“Zinn Education Project seeks to make children understand history from the perspective of those marginalized and oppressed,” Hagopian says.

Hagopian has seen first-hand that teaching students true climate justice is essential because Black people and other people of color are often the first ones to feel the impact of the climate crisis.

“Too many corporate textbooks tell the story of America through the lens of the rich and powerful, government officials, and generals, but not through the eyes of enslaved people, women fighting for their right to vote, immigrants fighting for their rights, indigenous people fighting to get their land back, these are the stories we want to tell,” he says.

Changing the Narrative

Once a teacher decides climate literacy should be included in student learning, it can be difficult to know where to begin. Do you start with the science behind greenhouse gasses, fossil fuels, and all that? Or do you start by showing the horrible effects of climate change, like snow in Texas?

Some would argue it starts with American history.

“For far too long, the fossil fuel industry has dominated the discussions of the climate crisis in American curriculum,” Hagopian

says. “You can’t understand climate without understanding the history of the industrial revolution — the way that corporations in this country formed, and their impact on the environment. So I think all teachers should be teaching about climate change, not just science teachers.”

Attempts by powerful corporations to buy the silence of students and teachers, along with powering climate denialism, are part of why the Zinn Education Project and educators like Hagopian and countless others push for climate literacy.

“Statements like why scientists disagree about global warming were distributed free to tens of thousands of teachers to spread climate crisis doubt, and it’s even made its way into mainstream textbooks,” Hagopian says. “There is a huge chasm between the severity of the climate crisis and what students are learning about it.”

The Intersection of Race, Class, and Climate

Effectively teaching about climate means also includes acknowledging its intersections with race, class, socioeconomic status, and more.

Bill Bigelow, co-director of the Zinn Education Project and curriculum editor of Rethinking Schools, says understanding the connection between the climate crisis, structural racism, and the disproportionate impact it has on Black people all over the world, is crucial to providing students with a well-rounded picture of what’s happening.

“Educators who are really serious about tackling climate justice have to be open to embracing things that may not seem like climate change, like reparations,” Bigelow says.

To break that down, Bigelow explains when we look into generational wealth, and see the disparity between white and Black communities, then we can begin to ask ourselves why some families are equipped naturally to withstand environmental hardships while others cannot.

Generational wealth indicates “how well you’re armed to deal with a crisis that you had nothing to do with creating,” Bigelow says.

And part of the climate justice movement is understanding how to fix a problem that we, the citizens, didn’t create.

Hagopian says we need only look at the many African and Caribbean countries that are extremely vulnerable to the climate crisis— but those countries aren’t the primary emitters of carbon dioxide, the gas that warms the planet and contributes to climate change.

In addition, although countries on the continent aren’t the main

The modern-day division between Democrats and Republicans is at its highest level since immediately after the Civil War

culprits speeding the pace of climate change, Africa is warming faster than the rest of the world. Again, that’s without even being the primary emitter of carbon dioxide. Students need to know that this pattern is common in the U.S., too.

“When the tropical storm Harvey slammed into the huge ExxonMobil refinery in Baytown, Texas, those first exposed to the spill toxic chemicals were the adjoining communities that were overwhelming BIPOC,” Hagopian says.

Climate Literacy Isn’t Enough

Both Hagopian and Bigelow say that although climate literacy an understanding of your influence on climate and climate’s influence on you and society — is crucial for Black students across the country

Educators should go beyond just making students understand. Teachers also need to encourage students to take action.

“We talk about climate justice rather than climate literacy,” Bigelow says. “When we talk about climate literacy, the powers that be kind of stick it in the science box.”

Instead, Bigelow says engaging students — by asking them why climate change is happening and who it’s happening to — makes it “a social issue. Not just science.”

In addition, Bigelow says that teachers often see that “when they bring the climate justice movement in their classroom,” they discover “students are very interested in how

to combat structural racism in all its forms, including the climate crisis.”

When students learn the truth about the climate crisis, “they are horrified by what they find out and spurred to action quickly,” Bigelow says. “There are many examples of Black activists who are interested in the survival of Black people and all of humanity, which requires organizing against climate change. Imagine the solutions students can be a part of. That’s a big part of education. Not

just teaching.”

“It’s incredible to see Black youth actually taking up this struggle all over the world,” Hagopian says. “BIPOC climate activists are really helping to lead the struggle.”

This story is part of “Earth Day Every Day,” Word In Black’s series exploring the environmental issues facing Black Americans and the solutions we’re creating in the fight for climate justice.

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AN ASPIRING LOOK AT THE BLACK WOMEN WHO HAVE COME BEFORE US

BLACK WOMEN EDUCATORS *from AI*

But the unsung part of this story is that America also has a long history of Black women who have worked tirelessly to ensure Black children and youth have the education and opportunities that are rightfully theirs.

These past and present mavericks — influential Black women who have blazed trails in education — have ensured that Black children learn and thrive.

According to the most recent federal data, 76% of Black teachers are women. And in my work at The Center for Black Educator Development, I am proud to build upon the legacy of the countless Black women who’ve worked — and work — in this nation’s schools.

As we seek to bring liberation and learning to Black children — whether it’s by building an educational ecosystem by creating teaching pathways or identifying, cultivating, and supporting the next generation of activists who become teacher leaders — I look to the Black women who have come before me.

When I talk to my colleagues about pushing for meaningful policy reform and creating solutions for achieving educational equity and racial justice in America, I’m reminded that we walk in the steps of our ancestors, and we have the shining example of Black women in education to guide us.

Here are 12 women, both past and present, who provide an enduring blueprint for what works to uplift and liberate Black youth.

Lucy Craft Laney

Lucy Craft Laney (Apr. 13, 1854–Oct. 23, 1933) was a civil rights activist and pioneering educator. In 1869, she was one of the first to join the class at Atlanta University (later Clark-Atlanta University) where she studied under Dr. W.E.B. DuBois. Craft Laney established the first school for Black children in Augusta, Georgia, the Haines Institute for Industrial and Normal Education, and served as its principal for a half-century. She joined the Niagara Movement, the National

Association of Colored Women, and helped to establish a local chapter of the NAACP in Augusta (1918), where she also worked to integrate the YMCA and YWCA. Craft Laney became one of the first African Americans to have a portrait hung in the Georgia State Capitol, an honor bestowed by then-Governor Jimmy Carter in 1974. She was a lifelong mentor to Mary McLeod Bethune. The Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History and Conference Center in Augusta bears her name.

Mary McLeod Bethune

Mary McLeod Bethune (July 10, 1875–May 18, 1955) In 1904, Dr. Bethune founded the Daytona Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls, which would become Bethune-Cookman (College) University in Daytona Beach, Florida. She was a skilled convenor who grew in influence as a stateswoman and became a trusted advisor to four sitting U.S. presidents.

A global citizen, Bethune was the only Black woman to help draft the United Nations charter in 1945 and “focused her efforts on the rights of people living in colonized countries around the world.”

She founded the National Council of Negro Women, co-founded the United Negro College Fund, and was instrumental in getting the Tuskegee Airmen airborne. She is the recipient of and the first woman to receive the Medal of Honor and Merit, Haiti’s highest honor (1949). A monumental woman, in 1974, the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park became the first memorial to honor an African-American built on public land in Washington, D.C.; and in 2022, Bethune became the first African-American to be represented by a state in National Statuary Hall, having replaced a confederate general. Her Last Will and Testament provides instruction that remains evergreen for Black people of the diaspora. Listen to Dr. Bethune in What Does American Democracy Mean to Me?

Septima Poinsette Clark

Septima Poinsette Clark (May 3, 1898–Dec. 15, 1987) was a civil rights leader and educator who studied under W.E.B.

DuBois at Clark-Atlanta University. She worked with the NAACP in South Carolina and Attorney Thurgood Marshall, prior to his Supreme Court Justice appointment, to achieve equal pay for Black and white teachers in 1945.

Clark directed Tennessee’s Highlander Folk School Citizenship School Program, which was later taken over by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). She would go on to join SCLC and create more than 800 citizenship schools. Clark is the author of the 1962 autobiography “Echo in My Soul” and the 1987 memoir “Ready from Within: Septima Clark and Civil Rights,” which earned her an American Book award. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter honored her with a Living Legacy Award. Clark is also a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina’s highest civilian honor.

Marva Collins

Marva Collins (Aug. 31, 1936–June 24, 2015) saw that “far too many children were being created for failure” in Chicago Public Schools and knew they deserved better. She set out to create just that in 1975 from her home and established the Westside Preparatory School.

Her one-year results, which showed students excelled — sometimes advancing up to five grade levels — captured the attention of national news outlets, including CBS’ 60 Minutes. Her success became dramatized in “The Marva Collins Story.”

President Ronald Reagan offered her the U.S. Secretary of Education post, which she declined in order to continue teaching the children she was devoted to. Collins would go on to found the Marva Collins Preparatory School of Wisconsin to prepare teachers, which attracted financial support from Prince Rogers Nelson. She is also featured in the artist’s video “The Most Beautiful Girl in the World.” Her book “Marva Collins Way: Returning to Excellence in Education,” with a foreword written by Alex Haley and is dubbed “a prescription for effective teaching,” is still in print.

BLACK WOMEN EDUCATORS *cont. A17*

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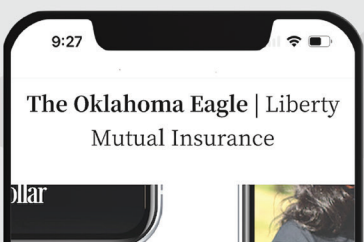
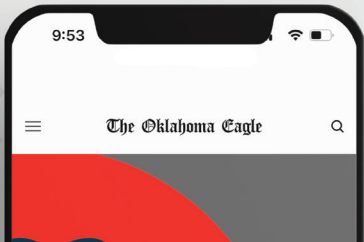
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12 Women, Both Past And Present, Who Provide An Enduring Blueprint For What Works To Uplift And Liberate Black Youth



BLACKWOMEN EDUCATORS *from* A16

Attorney Marian Wright Edelman

Attorney Marian Wright Edelman (June 6, 1939) is a civil rights activist and child advocate who fought to end child poverty by founding the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF).

Edelman says that every issue and policy priority of the CDF came out of her childhood experiences. She successfully defined the needs of children and translated them into humane, well-crafted policies and practices that are funded and are of high quality for all children. She worked to ensure that the nation’s children were healthy by making immunizations available, securing Medicaid expansions, and lobbying for the Child Health Insurance Program.

Edelman expanded children’s access to Head Start and sought to improve unequal schools. CDF Freedom Schools are part of her enduring legacy. Edelman’s autobiography, “The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours,” was a New York Times bestseller. Among many awards, she is the recipient of the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize, the Heinz Award, the Ella J. Baker Prize, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award.

Dr. Gloria Ladson Billings

Dr. Gloria Ladson Billings (Nov. 3, 1947) is Professor Emerita and formerly the Kellner Family Distinguished Professor of Urban Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Known for her work in culturally-relevant pedagogy, Dr. Ladson Billings says there are three components to culturally-relevant teaching: student learning, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.

Dr. Ladson Billings is a member of the National Academy of Education, a past president of the American Educational Research Association, and recipient of numerous awards and recognition. Her 2006 AERA presidential address “From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools” explains the racial achievement gap as an education debt comprised of “foregone schooling resources that we could have (should have) been investing in (primarily) low income kids, which deficit leads to a variety of social problems (e.g. crime, low productivity, low wages, low labor force participation) that require on-going public investment.” Dr. Ladson Billings is also the author of “The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children.”

Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker

Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker is the Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of African American Educational Studies at Emory University and a past president of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

For four decades, Dr. Siddle Walker has documented the effects of school desegregation and educational inequities in the U.S. She is the author of “Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South,” which received the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for Education in 2000, and “The Lost Education of Horace Tate: Uncovering the Hidden Heroes Who Fought for Justice in Schools.”

bell hooks

bell hooks (Sep. 25, 1952–Dec. 15, 2021) was an academician, theorist, and author who served as a Distinguished Professor in Residence at Berea College. hooks authored more than 40 books at the intersection of race, feminism, and class. Her classic essay “Homeplace (A Site of Resistance)” centered the importance of the Black home.

She wrote, “One’s homeplace was the one site where one could freely construct the issue of humanization, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship, and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world.” The bell hooks Center at Berea College bears her name.

Dr. Donna Y. Ford

Dr. Donna Y. Ford (Nov. 24, 1961) is a Distinguished Professor of Education and Human Ecology and Kirwan Institute Faculty Affiliate at The Ohio State University’s College of Education and Human Ecology. Dr. Ford is a leading researcher in Black children’s giftedness and multicultural/urban education, has authored more than 300 articles on Black students, gifted education under-representation, and closing achievement gaps; and is the author/co-author/co-editor of 14 books.

Her work has been recognized by countless organizations, including the 2019 RHSU Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings (#57); The International Colloquium on Black Males in Education; Summer Institute for the Gifted; the American Education Research Association, Research on Women and Education SIG; the Early Career Award, and the Career Award from The American Educational Research Association; the National Association for Gifted Children; The National Association of Black Psychologists; and Council for Exceptional Children; The Association for the Gifted, among many others.

Dr. Cheryl Fields-Smith

Dr. Cheryl Fields-Smith (Aug. 17, 1964) is a professor and graduate coordinator in the Department of Educational Theory and Practice at the University of Georgia Mary Frances Early College of Education. She has researched the motivations for Black parents to homeschool their children and has charted the rise of Black homeschooling as a means of resistance since 2006.

Dr. Fields-Smith says more African-American families are homeschooling their children for two reasons: the lack of Black history in public school curricula and the disproportionate disciplining of Black students. In addition to publishing many research articles, she is also the author of the book “Exploring Single Black Mothers’ Resistance Through Homeschooling” and co-editor of “Homeschooling Black Children in the U.S.: Contemporary Perspectives on Black Homeschooling.”

Kaya Henderson

Kaya Henderson (July 1, 1970) is the CEO of Reconstruction, an ed tech enterprise that delivers K-12 supplemental education that “situates Black people, culture, and contributions in an authentic, identity-affirming way so that students of all backgrounds benefit from a more complete understanding of our shared history and society.”

Henderson is a Teach for America alumna and former Executive Director of TFA in Washington, D.C. She also served as D.C. Public Schools Deputy Chancellor. Her board memberships include The Aspen Institute, Curriculum Associates, Robin Hood NYC, and Teach For America. Henderson is the co-founder of Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC).

Dr. Gholnecsar “Gholdy” Muhammad

Dr. Gholnecsar “Gholdy” Muhammad (Aug. 15, 1990) has given us a roadmap to cultivate genius and joy in classrooms and at home. Dr. Muhammad authored “Black Girls’ Literacies: An Edited Volume.” Her Culturally and Historically Responsive Education Model has been adopted across thousands of school districts both in the U.S. and Canada. In 2022, she was named among the top 1% of RHSU Edu-Scholars due to her impact on policy and practice. Muhammad is also the author of “Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework” and its sequel “Unearthing Joy: A Guide to Culturally and Historically Responsive Teaching and Learning.”

Joy S. Jones currently serves as communications manager for The Center for Black Educator Development. She has contributed to brightbeam network’s Citizen Ed, The Center for Reinventing Public Education, Albany State University Center for Educational Opportunity, and Bethune Cookman University. Joy is an alumna of the University of Pittsburgh, Baruch School of Public Affairs and National Urban Fellows.

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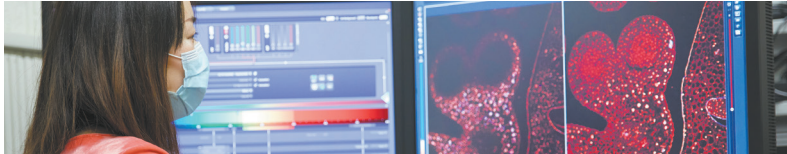
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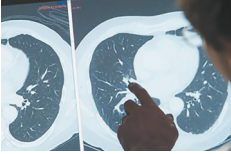
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