



**NOVEMBER
FINAL
ELECTIONS**

OKLAHOMA EDUCATION VOTER GUIDE



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

- This voter guide includes profiles on all Oklahoma state level elections that influence public education.
- Only races that will be on the **November 8th ballot** will be highlighted in this guide.
- Due to redistricting, many voters will be in new voting districts and many will have new polling places. Please verify your House and Senate districts AND check for a new polling place at this link:
<https://okvoterportal.okelections.us/>
- We have included links in each profile to candidate websites and social media accounts to provide you with public resources to help with your independent research on your candidates.
- We encourage you to reach out to candidates directly if you have questions not answered by this voter guide.



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

- This guide is not intended to offer any endorsement or anti-endorsement. The goal is to provide you with as much information as possible to allow you to make up your own mind. All candidates were emailed twice with invitation to participate in our questionnaire. Questions are based on a membership legislative focus poll we conducted prior to 2022 legislative session as priority issues for rural voters.
- There are color-coded classifications for each candidate – here is what they mean:
 - **GREEN** – candidate is verified via responses or public info as against vouchers
 - **ORANGE** – candidate has information in responses or public realm that is of concern OR they did not respond to our questionnaire and do not have education listed as a platform
 - **RED** – candidate is verified via responses or public info as pro-voucher OR candidate has zero public information available via social media or a website.



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition



GOVERNOR



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Joy Hofmeister – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://joyforok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/joyforoklahoma>
- **Email** – joy@joyforok.com
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio – Joy has been an Oklahoman since the age of 12. She and husband Jerry have four grown children who all live in Oklahoma. In 2012, she appointed to serve on the Oklahoma State Board of Education. Joy Hofmeister was sworn in as Oklahoma's 14th State Superintendent on January 12, 2015, after defeating the incumbent Republican candidate, Janet Barresi, in the primary election and is currently serving in this role.

Joy Hofmeister – Democrat Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I cannot support diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuition in the form of a tax credit because it erodes the tax base for the state—and Oklahoma has a constitutional obligation to establish and maintain a free system of public education for all children. Already our state is among the lowest in the nation for per pupil expenditure in public education and our children cannot afford this investment to be diverted away.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I stand firmly opposed to vouchers and educational savings accounts. Make no mistake, Governor Stitt's voucher scheme is a rural school killer and will dismantle rural communities. It will decimate education funding and negatively impact every public school student across the state because of the equity of our state's school funding formula.

Vouchers are just wrong for Oklahoma kids. We are already among the lowest in funding for education and we cannot afford to divide those resources even further and take away opportunities for students.

When we look at what it takes to make our economy thrive, it starts with a foundation of a world-class education. Continued investment in our public schools is in the best interests of our kids and our businesses.

Joy Hofmeister – Democrat Challenger

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

The teacher crisis is real and growing. It's a national problem that Oklahoma can be a leader in solving. One of my greatest priorities as State Superintendent has been to reverse the state's teacher shortage.

While we fought for and won teacher pay raises in 2018 and 2019, Oklahoma now faces an onslaught of expected retirements in addition to increased burnout and stress fueled by the pandemic.

At the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), we have championed partnerships and strategies to strengthen the teacher pipeline. This is a heavy lift and one that will require significant funding increases in education to attract and retain caring, committed teaching professionals. One small example: OSDE is deploying almost \$13 million in federal relief funds for paid student teaching for those in their final semester of colleges of education. Too many preservice teachers failed to complete their teaching degree because they couldn't afford to stop work and complete their final full-time teaching internships. Under this initiative, preservice teachers can focus on their student teaching experience without the worry of loss of income. In addition, to retain our educators, we must show respect and trust within the teaching profession. We must pay a competitive wage. And, we must create school environments where students are supported by staff outside the classroom so that mental health, behavioral issues and other challenges are not shouldered more and more by one person—the classroom teacher.

Joy Hofmeister – Democrat Challenger

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

School counselors and school-based mental health professionals are vital in helping students build academic, college and career, and emotional skills. In fact, counselors are critical on a number of fronts in our state, saddled as we are with some of the most alarming child trauma rates in the nation.

These factors and more are why I utilized \$35 million in federal relief money for the Oklahoma School Counselor Corps as State Superintendent. Through a funding-match process, we awarded grants to 181 school districts statewide to hire hundreds of school counselors and school-based mental health professionals.

With the School Counselor Corps in place this school year, the student-to-counselor ratio is 374-to-1, a significant improvement from last year, when the ratio sat at 411-to-1. Lower student-to-counselor ratios contribute to a host of improved student outcomes, including higher graduation rates, fewer disciplinary incidents, higher SAT scores and graduation rates.

We must maintain our commitment to mental health, both for students and for families. As governor, I would seek continued expansion of the School Counselor Corps.

Joy Hofmeister – Democrat Challenger

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Local school boards should have flexibility to arrange their school calendars while also meeting baseline minimum standards for instruction and equity for students. In most all states, including Oklahoma, it is the responsibility of the state legislature to set minimum requirements to receive public school state aid, accreditation and thus qualify for federal education funding. Currently, local school boards may develop their own school calendar with a minimum of 1,080 hours in no fewer than 165 days each year. There is an exception for schools to attend less than 165 days of school if they demonstrate academic success for students at or above the state average. Before the current law, the state legislature required 180 days minimum, but later permitted districts to convert from days to hours with a minimum of 1,080 hours.

Joy Hofmeister – Democrat Challenger

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

The last couple of years have brought Oklahoma's digital divide into stark reality. During the pandemic, the Oklahoma State Department of Education delivered more than 50,000 emergency hot spots so that kids could access virtual school from home. That was a quick-fix, but it's time for a long-term solution.

Quality broadband access should be as commonplace as water and electric utility services. My infrastructure plan as governor includes expanding broadband to every zip code in the state. It's a challenge we are capable of overcoming. This is a longstanding problem and I'm determined to lead Oklahoma with a robust infrastructure plan for a modern future impacting education, telemedicine and our economy.

Joy Hofmeister – Democrat Challenger

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

The world outside the classroom impacts the world inside the classroom. We see it every day in Oklahoma. Our kids won't reach their full potential in learning or academic outcomes without addressing the problems in our communities – like hunger, quality healthcare, and the stability of good jobs. Our families must have access to quality, affordable healthcare. Too many rural hospitals have closed or are at risk of closure. Oklahoma's shortage of healthcare providers is worsening. We must invest in people. Healthy citizens make reliable employees, and strong hospitals and healthcare systems create great jobs.

I'll stand by our farmers and ranchers, small business owners, and our teachers as the foundation of our economy. I'm proud of the support I've received and partnerships I've established with tribal leaders as State Superintendent. In addition, I will not betray the trust established with our sovereign tribal nations whose economic impact exceeds \$15 billion to our state's economy annually. We must end the chaos and division and stop pitting neighbor against neighbor. Investing in our people, our infrastructure and our schools will attract businesses to our state. When families have opportunities for meaningful work, we create a pathway for more people to rise out of poverty.

Finally, we must fully fund our public schools. We are 47th lowest in the nation for our per pupil expenditure. Combine that low investment with the fact that Oklahoma's kids face more challenges than most others and it's not a recipe for success. Additional funding will allow us to increase teacher salaries and support staff wages, and enhance our school counselor corps and all those within our schools who serve to support our students learning and success in life. Not to mention that great schools are an economic driver, attracting business to our communities. My focus is to make kids winners in a rapidly changing economy.

Our Governor recently found a way to raise \$700 million dollars in about 24 hours to benefit a single company. I'm supportive of incentives that multiply opportunities and develop our economy, but I like to harness the same, if not more, determination and political will to support our youngest generation and their education. I am ready to lead as governor with those Oklahoma values: common sense, respect for one another and working together to get things done.

Governor Kevin Stitt – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://stittforgovernor.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/StittForGovernor>
- **Email** – <https://oklahoma.gov/governor/contact.html>
- **Hometown** – Oklahoma City

Candidate Bio – Kevin Stitt is the current Governor of Oklahoma.

 **WARNING ALERT**  –

Supports “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs

Governor Kevin Stitt – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - In 2021, Gov Stitt signed legislation to divert public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - Gov Stitt has been very public about his desire to divert public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers and educational savings accounts.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - As communicated by Gov Stitt, his plan to recruit and retain teachers is an unspecified plan around merit pay bonuses. This plan is flawed in many ways, particularly requiring districts to match the incentive pay without additional funding in place.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - there have been no tangible actions from the Stitt administration to directly address this challenge.

Governor Kevin Stitt – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Gov Stitt initiated and signed legislation that removed local control from elected school boards to choose their calendar structure. ORSC put a call out for an executive order to remedy the situation. This call was unanswered.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Gov Stitt has supported legislation for rural broadband expansion, however the state has not yet addressed reliability and affordability for rural voters.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Natalie Bruno – Libertarian Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.electnataliebruno.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/nataliebrunolibertarian>
- **Email** – natalie.bruno@electnataliebruno.com
- **Hometown** – Edmond

Candidate Bio – Natalie and her husband have a blended family of 6, as well as three dogs. She has been coaching soccer and basketball at the Y and Edmond Soccer Club for the past several years. Her children receive a combination of public school, private school, and homeschool. She was a CASA volunteer in Carter county for several years, and is currently on the associate board for Oklahoma Lawyers for Children. She was recently awarded the Judge Nan Patton award for service to children.

Natalie Bruno – Libertarian Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Yes if it is chosen to do that instead of vouchers.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I support them, but I do think that we would be able to do so in a manner that doesn't negatively affect rural schools. It is no secret that rural schools don't have the options for private and charter schools like the rural schools do. My solution to that would be for the "vouchers" for students in rural schools to be quite a bit higher than in metro schools since essentially they only have their local option. This would actually give the rural schools more funding than they are currently getting so they can meet the needs of their community while still giving additional options to city students.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

To address ALL of the issues. A big portion is pay but there are also policy issues that are driving teachers out of their professions. I would put together focus groups with rural teacher and with urban teachers to see what kind of changes need to be done to attract teachers to those areas.

Natalie Bruno – Libertarian Challenger

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Mental health doesn't get anywhere close to the focus that it needs. Just like with teachers, we need to address what is keeping therapists and counselors from relocating to these towns. I have also looked into tax breaks for satellite offices wherein those who practice in the city could work 1-2 days a week in a rural town and get tax credits. I am still working through this but I am passionate about addressing it.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Absolutely. I would love to dissolve the state department of education and do away with our participation in the federal. We need to bring decisions back to local schools, teachers, and parents because education isn't one size fits all and the issues one school faces it completely different from another.

Natalie Bruno – Libertarian Challenger

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

This doesn't only affect students, but bringing in more jobs as well. I would put together a panel of professionals in this field to come up with the best way to bring quality internet access to all rural towns whether its tax credits for running fiber from companies like cox or Att or even trying to get Starlink.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

This is going to have to be an active and constant conversation. There will never be one answer that solves everything. I can tell you that as a parent that DID live in a rural area with my children and now in the city, I have seen both sides. I also have children with developmental disabilities so I got that side as well. Either way, education is priority for me and I will always be open to listen to concerns and ideas on how to make educational changes positive for all Oklahomans.

Ervin Yen – Independent Challenger

- Campaign Website – None
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064209752521>
- Email – ervinsy@att.net
- Hometown – OKC

Candidate Bio – Yen was born in Taipei in 1954. His parents moved to the United States soon afterward and settled in the Oklahoma City area in 1959. Yen graduated from Putnam City High School in Warr Acres. Yen earned a Bachelor of Science degree in zoology from the University of Oklahoma and then a medical degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine. Outside of politics, Yen works as an anesthesiologist. He served one 4 year term in the Oklahoma Senate.

Ervin Yen – Independent Challenger

- Ervin Yen did not respond to our questionnaire – no website to obtain information from



LT. GOVERNOR



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Melinda Alizadeh-Fard – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – www.melinda4ltgovernor.com
- **Facebook** – www.facebook.com/melinda4ltgovernorok
- **Email** – Melinda4LtGovernor@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Edmond

Candidate Bio – Melinda Alizadeh-Fard has been many things through the years from a student, a waitress, a social worker, an immigration attorney, an administrative law judge, and most importantly a mother. She was born in Virginia where her father was serving in the U.S. Navy, but she has lived in Oklahoma for almost 50 years. In her spare time, Melinda likes spending time with her family, volunteering with Arts organizations in her community, and training her Poodle for Upland hunting.

Melinda Alizadeh-Fard – Democrat Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I am in opposition of the siphoning of tax dollars for private schools - and therefore also opposed to school vouchers, as that loss of financial support further erodes our public schools. "School choice" is not even an option in the majority of our rural areas in Oklahoma. I do support educational savings accounts, which are more of an income tax offset program to help families save and pay for (typically higher) education for their children.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I am in opposition of the siphoning of tax dollars for private schools - and therefore also opposed to school vouchers, as that loss of financial support further erodes our public schools. "School choice" is not even an option in the majority of our rural areas in Oklahoma. I do support educational savings accounts, which are more of an income tax offset program to help families save and pay for (typically higher) education for their children.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

I have a few - first off, quit putting our teachers in fear for their jobs for teaching real history and for trying to help our young people grow into better informed adults. Teachers need to feel they have job security and are not under attack, such as we have seen recently. Teachers and children need to feel safe when they are at school. The pay bands are going to need to shift up. There is a saying, "Money is a powerful aphrodisiac, but flowers work almost as well." Teachers need both. "Flowers" for our teachers would be recognition as professionals and support from the Capitol and communities.

Melinda Alizadeh-Fard – Democrat Challenger

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Isolation during COVID did a number on many, especially children. Our schools have always been a safety net for the most vulnerable children and that was not available with distance learning. Many students do not have a voice or even understand how important friends are to mental well being. Any programs that we can implement to show children they are not alone, and to get them outside more and interacting with others are going to be beneficial. It might be possible to bring in more student teachers, and those working on degrees in counseling to participate in school wide or class events, not so much to provide one on one counseling, but to help with teacher /student ratios and provide opportunities for students to be heard. Although, i am a mom of folks who went through our public schools, and myself attended the South Rock Creek ISD, I will rely on our Educational professionals for their experience and expertise to determine what they feel will work best within their communities.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

This is one of those areas to be careful what you wish for. If the local School Boards are truly representative of the community and are responsible to the needs of the schools and communities, is good, but if you have mean-spirited people controlling the elections and are promoting repressive agendas, it is a bad situation. More people need to participate in the school boards. As far as setting school calendars - I am of the school of thought that summer vacations are necessary, and having some consistency, allows families across Oklahoma to plan events together and provide a window for exploring a bigger world.

Melinda Alizadeh-Fard – Democrat Challenger

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

A lot of that COVID relief money given to our state could have focused on this essential infrastructure item, which would also create jobs. This is an area that the Commerce Department should be footing the bill for.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

The current Secretary of Education's crazy talk about rejecting Federal funding needs to stop. Those are Oklahoma tax dollars and go towards so many programs, such as Title one, reduced and free meals, and the American Native Educational programs, to name a few.

Chris Powell – Libertarian Challenger

- Campaign Website – wedontneedaltgov.com
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/WeDontNeedAltGov>
- Email – okcspowell@gmail.com
- Hometown – OKC

Candidate Bio – no bio information available

Chris Powell – Libertarian Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I oppose vouchers, ESAs, and other programs that would use taxpayer dollars to fund private schools and/or homeschooling. Any such program would have the inevitable result of putting private and homeschooling under the control of state government through the power of the purse. Additionally, because of how we fund K-12 education in Oklahoma these programs would disproportionately reduce funding in rural areas without increasing access for students to alternatives to public schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I oppose vouchers, ESAs, and other programs that would use taxpayer dollars to fund private schools and/or homeschooling. Any such program would have the inevitable result of putting private and homeschooling under the control of state government through the power of the purse. Additionally, because of how we fund K-12 education in Oklahoma these programs would disproportionately reduce funding in rural areas without increasing access for students to alternatives to public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

I have long advocated for reducing the power of the Legislature and the state and federal Departments of Education in favor of increasing the autonomy of individual districts and ultimately placing as much authority and responsibility at the classroom level. A common refrain among teachers is the feeling that they are not respected or appreciated. I believe that the biggest part of this has been the accretion of decision-making power at the state and federal level, undermining the professionals who spend every day in the classroom. In my view the people most qualified to make decisions about the education of any individual child in our public schools are the student themselves, their parents, and the teachers that have them in class every day.

Chris Powell – Libertarian Challenger

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Our public schools are hamstrung in various ways as to how they allocate resources. Eliminating federal and state mandates as much as possible will free individual districts to be better able to respond to the needs of their students. Over the past several decades we have seen tremendous increases in the number of non-teaching staff. It's not entirely clear how much of that increase is due to top-down solutions imposed from on high but it shouldn't be controversial to state that the education professionals actually on the scene in a public school, and the elected board to which they answer, are going to be in the best position to judge the needs of students in that school.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes.

Chris Powell – Libertarian Challenger

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

In my view because technology and competition are constantly creating more and better access options the best thing that government and particularly state government can do is ensure that regulatory and tax burdens are reduced as much as possible so that providers are not hindered to be able to increase the reliability of economically viable internet services.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

My view is that people who have never met a particular child should not have much of a voice in deciding how that child is educated. We had a public education system that, despite some glaring flaws such as segregation, served Oklahomans well for generations. In the past several decades we have seen authority and responsibility migrate farther and farther away from our communities. The results make it seem very clear to me that we need to reverse that trend. Our children are not mandated to attend school so that they may be indoctrinated, or used in grand social experiments, but to be afforded the opportunity to obtain basic knowledge and skills to become successful in life. We would be well served to redirect our schools to this fundamental mission and empower our teachers, students, and parents to carry it out.

Matt Pinnell – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.mattpinnell.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064209752521>
- **Email** – campaign@mattpinnell.com
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio – Matt Pinnell was elected as the 17th Lieutenant Governor of the State of Oklahoma on November 6th, 2018. In that role, he serves as President of the Oklahoma State Senate, and is a member of multiple constitutional boards and commissions. Lt. Governor Pinnell also serves as Secretary of Tourism and Branding on Governor Kevin Stitt's cabinet. Matt Pinnell also runs a small business with his wife, Lisa, an entrepreneur and inventor, and attends Redeemer Covenant Church in Tulsa.

Lt. Governor Pinnell also runs a small business with his wife, Lisa, an entrepreneur and inventor, and attends Redeemer Covenant Church in Tulsa. He is a graduate of Oral Roberts University and lives in Tulsa with his wife, Lisa, and 4 children who attend Jenks Public Schools.

Matt Pinnell – Republican Incumbent

- **Lt. Governor Pinnell did not respond to our questionnaire. His website does not address education policy. As President of the Senate, the Lt. Governor is the tie-breaking vote for any key education issues (such as continued pushes for private school vouchers) and his role can greatly impact what public education policy makes it through the legislature.**



STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Jena Nelson – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.nelsonforoklahoma.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/Jena4OK>
- **Email** – jena@nelsonforoklahoma.com
- **Hometown** – Edmond

Candidate Bio – Jena Nelson is the student support coordinator and academic enhancement instructor at Deer Creek Middle School. Her classroom excellence was recognized when she won 2020 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. In addition to being an educator, Mrs. Nelson is mom to 17-year-old son, Rafe, and 12-year-old daughter, Linnea. Her husband, Karl, is a professor and director of choral studies at the University of Central Oklahoma. Mrs. Nelson has been an educator for more than 16 years and has helped her students earn over \$4 million in scholarships. She has been selected to direct at the prestigious Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland and was chosen as a presenter at the International Music Festival in Campina Grande Brazil. She recently spoke at the National Academy for Science, Engineering, and Medicine, Oklahoma Music Educators Association Conference, and was presented the Award for Teaching Excellence from the OEA. This year Jena is one of 45 national educators to receive the California Casualty and The NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. Recently, she was awarded the Lauren Choate Resilience Award from the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and was inducted into the Kappa Delta Pi Gamma Omega Chapter. She is also featured in the upcoming “Teacher Hero Project.”

Jena Nelson – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I strongly oppose diverting public school tax dollars to fund private school tuitions. Simply put, public funds should stay in public schools. It is time that we fully fund our Oklahoma public schools that are the heart of our communities. As someone who attended rural schools growing up, I care about our rural communities where schools are central to day-to-day life. I care about learning outcomes and I care about our kids. The 700,000 public school children deserve to be supported and the schools they attend deserve to be fully funded. Everyone talks about how essential public schools are to our rural communities, but no one talks about how our public schools can actually help revitalize these communities. Our kids deserve 21st century schools, where they can get the skills they need to thrive in our ever-changing 21st century world, and that will only happen when we invest in our public schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I believe wholeheartedly that our public dollars should remain in our public schools and that all Oklahomans are entitled to a quality education. Taking more money out of our already chronically underfunded public schools will do tremendous harm. Our kids are not for sale and our schools are not for sale. No matter what name it goes by, vouchers are simply a way to defund public education. I am against any measure that would harm our schools, and let's be honest, that is the point of these education Ponzi schemes. The political elite might want to shut down the rural schools like I grew up in, but I will always fight to keep public funds in public schools. I grew up in Lukfata and Broken Bow Public Schools, and our town revolved around the Friday night lights, music programs, FFA shows, theatre performances, and harvest carnivals that our schools provided. Vouchers would gut our schools and shut down our communities. Vouchers do not provide choice, and open the door for graft, corruption and mismanagement. I have taught in other states where they have tried implementing these "voucher" programs, and they now realize the same thing. They do not work, they do not improve education, and they do not help Oklahoma families.

Jena Nelson – Democrat

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Teacher flight is real. Oklahoma is experiencing an unprecedented loss of educators, not just to better paying states, but also to other professions. Over the last three years, I've been asked to write dozens of recommendation letters for teachers leaving their jobs. To reverse this teacher flight, we need to reduce class sizes, pay these professionals like professionals, and let them do their jobs. Teachers feel overwhelmed with meetings, unfunded mandates and constant new initiatives foisted upon them. It's time to reduce the clutter and let these pros focus on what they do best: teaching our kids. We also need "grow your own" programs within our high schools, so that the next generation of teachers will not only be inspired by the teachers in their communities but will come back and teach the next generation. Public schools are essential to our rural communities and they can actually help revitalize these communities. These hubs of innovation will bring good-paying jobs back to our rural communities and will incentivize educators to come home, too. I have been working on committees both at the state and national level dealing with teacher retention, and I am ready to fight for the profession I love and the educators that keep it going. Teachers will have a State Superintendent that listens to them because they are professionals that are saving and changing lives every single day.

Jena Nelson – Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

The need for mental health support is critical and I have seen this issue firsthand when touring the state as Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. Every day, I see how essential mental health support is in my classroom working with Tier 3 kids as a Student Support Coordinator. The mental health issues of our students is one of the top issues that I will address as State Superintendent. Our kids are hurting, and I will make this a priority so that we have a healthy generation of kids, and healthy communities. We must collaborate with health agencies to offer access to services on all of our campuses. Oklahoma has the fifth highest number of students who have experienced traumatic adverse childhood experiences in the nation. That's why I'll make sure all schools have a counselor with mental health training and we will continue to strengthen our School Counselor Corp within our public schools. I'll also make sure our schools are infused with trauma response cultures and programming developed by teachers in Oklahoma, so that our kids can move from trauma to a pathway of success. I'll make sure that all of Oklahoma's kids know that their State Superintendent has their back. We want our kids to feel welcome, we want them to feel safe and we want them to feel loved.

Jena Nelson – Democrat

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

I believe that a one size fits all education system does not work. Oklahoma's public schools have always worked in collaboration with community leaders, parents and our great professional educators. While we must collaborate with legislators to fully fund our public schools, it's important that we allow our rural schools the autonomy to make the decisions for their communities in order to keep their schools open and thriving. We must make sure our students are receiving the best education possible, and that our public schools are able to recruit, sustain and retain teachers. That means we need innovative solutions that lift up our rural schools, not limit them.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Every student should have affordable, quality internet service. This issue is as important as rural electrification was 80 years ago. During my last visit to Washington D.C., I met with several of our members of Congress and we talked about universal broadband and how the pandemic highlighted the urgent need for our students to have access in order for them to have success. At the state level, we need to work with our legislature to make sure that we have the infrastructure in place to help our families, or provide hotspots so that Oklahoma kids can have the best education possible.

Jena Nelson – Democrat

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

I love our rural communities and I want to see them thrive. It is time for the public to come back to public schools. I want to build strong ties between our schools, families, and community members so that we can reimagine what public education might be. We need to let teachers get back to teaching and allow them the freedom to incorporate more life skills into their classrooms so that our students are prepared for the world outside of the school building. We do need innovation and creativity but not while sacrificing transparency and accountability. If we can encourage more mentorship, and apprenticeships from members of our business communities we can not only see economic growth, but personal growth in our students as well. Our academic standards must reflect the needs of our students and the 21st century world that they will be leading. Our teachers need support and to be treated as the professionals that they are in order to sustain this profession. With my education and business experience we can make positive changes to the education system in Oklahoma that will benefit generations to come.

Ryan Walters – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://ryanwaltersforoklahoma.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/RyanWalters40K>
- **Email** – ryanwalters37@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Edmond

Candidate Bio – Ryan Walters taught eight years as a high school history teacher in his hometown at McAlester High School. During his time at MHS, Walters taught Advanced Placement courses in World History, U.S. History and U.S. Government. He also taught on-level history classes, special education classes and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) classes. The Oklahoma State Department of Education named Walters as an Oklahoma Teacher of the Year Finalist in 2016. Walters was appointed by Gov Stitt as Secretary of Public Education for the State of Oklahoma

 **WARNING ALERT**  -

Supports “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs. Has also pledged to remove federal funding from Oklahoma Department of Education, which would result in a nearly \$1 BILLION loss to Oklahoma’s classrooms with no plan given to replace these lost programs like Title 1 reading and math, free/reduced lunches, and special education.

Ryan Walters – Republican

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Secretary Walters has been very public about his desire to divert public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions and championed tax credits in 2021.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - Sec Walters has been very public about his desire to divert public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers and educational savings accounts.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do YOU have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - his plan to recruit and retain teachers is an unspecified plan around merit pay bonuses. This plan is flawed in many way, particularly requiring districts to match the incentive pay without additional funding in place.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE

Ryan Walters – Republican

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE



SENATE DISTRICT 2



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Senate District 2 serves the following communities:
Catoosa, Claremore, Collinsville, Valley Park, Verdigris



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Jennifer Esau – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.jenniferesau.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/EsauforOKSenate>
- **Email** – jenarra24@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Claremore

Candidate Bio – A proven advocate for Oklahoma students and teachers, Jennifer Esau has been an educator at Claremore Public Schools for more than 20 years. She is currently a special education teacher at Will Rogers Junior High, and was previously at Claremont Elementary, and Westside Elementary. Jennifer serves on the board of directors for Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) representing Northeast Oklahoma. She is currently President of Claremore Classroom Teachers Association (CCTA) and has served in leadership roles with the organization for the past 10 years. In this role, Esau works to negotiate teacher contracts and advocate for public education. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from The University of Tulsa, a Master's degree in Special Education from OSU-Tulsa, and is Nationally Board Certified. She was honored as the Claremont Elementary School Teacher of the Year in 2006 and 2014. Jennifer is a fourth-generation Rogers County resident and a native of Claremore where she lives today. She is married to Andrew and has two daughters, Claire and Isabelle, both in college.

Jennifer Esau – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Absolutely not...public money should fund public schools only. I will not support anything that takes money away from public schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Absolutely not...if you want to send your kids to private schools, that's great. You should pay for it. Vouchers and ESAs take away from public school funding and and educational saving accounts are not good for OK public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

College tuition assistance, loan forgiveness for teachers, financial incentives for staying in the state to teach for career and new teachers. College tuition assistance, loan forgiveness for teachers, financial incentives for staying in the state to teach for career and new teachers.

Jennifer Esau – Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Mental health issues are a serious concern in our schools. My school has increased access to Grand Lake Mental Health services which provide wrap-around services for kids. This service works with the school and families to provide the best support. We also have employed more social workers for our schools. I would make sure schools have funding designated for schools to employ such services for students. When students have attention by adults they trust, they will be more successful. Teachers need help making connections with our students, they need more attention now than ever.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Local control for schools is very important. I would support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their calendar structure.

Jennifer Esau – Democrat

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Better broadband services are one of my most important issues. Since the pandemic, our schools have faced shutdowns to mitigate Covid outbreaks. It has brought to light how inadequate our broadband services are in rural areas. Most schools have provided devices for students but the students have not had adequate internet access at home to complete their work. This has been a problem in my school. We've had students who have had to do their school work in the school parking lot so they could access school wifi. This is unacceptable. It has to be more accessible and affordable for families.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

My top priority is education funding and here's what this includes: improved funding for common education (lower class sizes, improved technology, internet services, increase pay for education employees), improved funding for higher education (lower tuition costs for students, incentives for teacher ed. programs, healthcare/mental healthcare professions).

Ally Seifried – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://allyseifried.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/voteallyseifried>
- **Email** – <https://allyseifried.com/contact/>
- **Hometown** – Claremore

Candidate Bio – Ally Seifried is a 9th-generation Oklahoman with family roots dating back to the 1850s. She grew up playing with her siblings and cousins on her family's land on the west side of Claremore. Ally played basketball on the Rogers State University women's basketball team and earned a degree in political science.

 **WARNING ALERT**  –

Endorsed by Oklahoma Federation for Children, an organization linked to Betsy Devos that focuses on supporting candidates that will support universal school vouchers – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs.

Ally Seifried – Republican

- **Ally Seifried did not respond to our questionnaire**

- **Additional information:**

Seifried is endorsed by Oklahoma Federation for Children, an organization linked to Betsy Devos that focuses on supporting candidates that will support universal school vouchers - diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs. The direct link to this pro-voucher organization PLUS her non-response to our invitation to participate resulted in a RED "DANGER" CANDIDATE classification.



SENATE DISTRICT 22



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Senate District 22 serves the following communities:
Edmond, Piedmont, Richland



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Blake Aguirre – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.aguirre4sd22.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/aguirre4SD22>
- **Email** – Blake@aguirre4sd22.com
- **Hometown** – Edmond

Candidate Bio - Born in Ardmore, Blake has deep roots in rural communities. He graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in Political Science with minors in Pre-Law and Spanish.

Blake Aguirre – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I oppose diverting public tax dollars for private schools because public tax dollars were appropriated for public schools. We pay taxes for public institutions and that's where our dollars should go.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private schools because our tax dollars are meant to fund public school institutions. Private schools funding should come from private funders who have the same mission as these institutions.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

If elected, I would support legislation that would increase teachers' pay. This is one main reason that our teachers are leaving our state and heading to places like Texas and Missouri. They do not feel appreciated and have to work multiple side jobs in order to make ends meet because the current teacher's salary is severely below average. I would also support legislation that would create special provisions to provide additional funding for rural community schools that are lacking in funding from the state.

Blake Aguirre – Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

If elected, I would support protecting Medicaid expansion. This would benefit the students in our rural schools tremendously. State Question 802 not only brought Medicaid Expansion to our state but it also included funding that would reopen many rural hospitals which would give these students access to healthcare.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

If elected, I would definitely support local control to elected school boards because community members in these rural districts know what is needed uniquely for these students.

Blake Aguirre – Democrat

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

If elected, I would support legislature to provide broadband access in these districts. This has been an on-going issue for decades for these districts and I would happily co-author legislation for this.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Public education needs more support. While teachers received a pay raise in 2018, it was not enough. Our educators need to be paid a living wage. They need to be compensated for their work. They need to be treated with respect. Rural communities are being ignored by this current state legislature. We need to treat them with respect and dignity. As a legislator, I will do my best to support legislation that will compliment all of these solutions.

Kristen Thompson – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.kristenforoklahoma.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/KristenForOklahoma>
- **Email** – kristen@kristenforoklahoma.com
- **Hometown** – Edmond

Candidate Bio – Kristen graduated from the University of Oklahoma and has since created several businesses in the commercial construction and hospitality industry with her husband Bryce. She enjoys serving on the Visit Edmond Tourism Advisory Board as the Mayor appointed Member-At-Large, representing the restaurant industry. She also volunteers on the youth sports subcommittee for Visit Edmond, helping to identify opportunities to grow and attract youth sports to Edmond.

WARNING ALERT –

Campaign independently supported by School Freedom Fund, key organization pushing “school choice” – aka diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs. School Freedom Fund has spent nearly \$200,000 on Thompson’s campaign on mailers, door literature, and paid door knockers.

Kristen Thompson – Republican

- **Kristen Thompson did not respond to our questionnaire.**

- **Additional information:**

Per website, mental health platform is as follows: Kristen has seen directly the need for Oklahomans to have access to quality healthcare, including mental health, to improve their lives and the lives of those around them. She believes that addressing and treating mental health concerns, particularly in juveniles, will lead to a lower rate of incarceration and an increase in our available workforce.

Per website, education platform is as follows: As a mom of three children, two of which are school aged and attend Oklahoma public schools, ensuring our children receive the best education possible is personal to Kristen. She knows we must continue to support our students, educators, and classrooms to see our state succeed. We must also empower parents with any and all resources that ensure their child's educational needs are met.

 **WARNING ALERT**  -

Campaign independently supported by School Freedom Fund, key organization pushing “school choice” – aka diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs. School Freedom Fund has spent nearly \$200,000 on Thompson’s campaign on mailers, door literature, and paid door knockers.



SENATE DISTRICT 28



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Senate District 28 serves the following communities:

**Agra, Arcadia, Bowlegs, Carney, Chandler, Cromwell, Davenport,
Earlsboro, Konawa, Luther, Maud, Meeker, Prague, Sasakwa,
Seminole, Sparks, Stroud, Tryon, Wellston, Wewoka**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Karen Rackley – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – None found
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/KarenRackley4SenateDistrict28>
- **Email** – rackrn@aol.com
- **Hometown** – Chandler

Candidate Bio – Karen studied Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) at University of Central Oklahoma

Karen Rackley – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I support it if the tax dollars are in the form of scholarships that benefit not only urban students but rural students as well. For rural tax dollars to be pooled into a program that does not benefit rural students would be travesty. I am okay with this option if the tax credits are in the form of a scholarships and if those options are available to rural students.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I would not support vouchers as their usefulness for rural students would be limiting or not useful at all. If a policy excludes constituents by virtue of their zip code then I cannot support it. I do not support vouchers that would likely not be usable to rural students. Rural parents would be paying taxes and rural students would have little to no benefit.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Educators often have bachelors or even masters degrees and should be compensated appropriately for their contributions to the future of our state. Children deserve a quality education, and educators should be paid better than they are. There also should be a school supply allotment to educators. Students do not always have the supplies they needs, and educators often end up spending out of their own pockets to provide needed classroom supplies. Increase their salaries. Educators are often Master's prepared and their compensation should reflect that. If no change in salaries is obtainable then allow educators, grades Pre-K through 12 th grade, be income tax exempt in Oklahoma. This is done for the Oklahoma National Guard. This would allow educators to keep more of their earnings. Grants for school supplies that are often paid for out the teachers own pockets.

Karen Rackley – Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Lack of mental health resources has been evident long before COVID; the pandemic has just brought it to light. Outpatient and inpatient services has been dwindling for years/decades. A look at Oklahoma's correctional department will illustrate a large number of inmates have underlying (Untreated or self medicated) mental health issues. As far as our children are concerned limited resources may lead to substance abuse as a form of coping. Mental health services need to be implemented in our communities, more inpatient services made available. Basic health, drug and sex education classes need to be reimplemented in schools. (I am not talking about gender studies). Mental health providers available in our local health departments. Lack of mental health resources has been an issue for decades in Oklahoma with less and less available outpatient and inpatient mental health services. Health education, sex education, drug education could be re-instituted in schools to help better prepare our students for healthy habits and disease prevention. Are there mental health counselors available in the local health departments? if not, maybe there should be to increase access to care.

Karen Rackley – Democrat

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

To an extent...Required number of days in school and out of school to be used as the school board sees fit for the calendar year.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Well the US government just passed a huge infrastructure bill; are any of those resources allocated to the states? High speed internet services need to be brought into these communities. Internet companies do not like to invest in areas they feel are not going to benefit them financially, but I feel these companies have a duty to do so; especially if their services are in use by any government office. If Oklahoma tax dollars are spent for government internet services then those internet services should make access available to all Oklahomans.

I have a neighbor, who for their work needs high speed internet, which is not available in our rural area. The out of pocket cost for the installment is very prohibitive. Additionally they were informed by the internet company in addition to several thousands of dollars from the consumer the company wants up front to pay for the expansion, the company would expect a certain amount of revenue to be generated from the expansion before it would consider doing it. The internet company seeks to limit the cost to the company while reaping the benefits. With the federal infrastructure bill, are there funds earmarked for Oklahoma that can be used to update and expand internet access? How about requiring company input and development if that company does business with the State of Oklahoma to help expand services to ALL of Oklahoma. What about Oklahoma's discretionary funds? Can this be used to update services? Currently only satellite services are available in our area; on a good day the internet is constantly buffering; and clouds or storms you lose all internet access.

Karen Rackley – Democrat

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Bring back adequate Recess time, home economics (Teach household basic finances, cooking etc..) and health education classes to our schools. Help our students to be able to adjust and cope with the adult world they will soon be facing. Encourage students strengths to be nurtured; access to both technical and trade schools/skills as well as a college path for students. Trade school pathways to help grow a workforce that reflects the opportunities available in our state. Yes, health, drug, sex education needs to be brought back to the table; often school is the only place where accurate information may be had. Home economics with cooking basics, check writing and financial basics are taught to help prepare students for real life.

Grant Green – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://votegrantgreen.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/Grant-Green-106957885321987>
- **Email** – No
- **Hometown** – Wellston

Candidate Bio - Grant is the former owner of Green's Propane, a family business started by his dad. Grant and his brother bought it in 2004. In 2016, Grant became the sole owner. Grant is a rancher, farmer and hunter who loves the land. With family roots in the district going back at least six generations. Grant served on the Wellston School Board.

Grant Green

- Grant Green did not respond to our questionnaire.
- Education not on platform.



SENATE DISTRICT 30



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Senate District 30 serves the following communities:
Oklahoma City



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Julia Kirt – Incumbent Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – www.juliakirt.com
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/kirt4ok>
- **Email** – julia@juliakirt.com
- **Hometown** – Oklahoma City

Candidate Bio - A fifth generation Oklahoman, Julia is the daughter of an Air Force veteran and a minister. For the 20 years before she was elected, Julia worked to build up Oklahoma's creative potential as the director of two different statewide nonprofit arts organizations. She most recently served as the Executive Director of Oklahomans for the Arts, which works to improve the economy, education and communities through the arts. Previously, she led the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition, working with thousands of artists across the state to develop strong small businesses and connect with audiences. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a Masters in Art History and earned an undergraduate degree from Macalester College in Communications. She received further training through the Stanford Graduate School Business Center for Social Innovation. Julia lives in Oklahoma City with her husband of 17 years, Nathan Guilford, and their two children, Roger and Lila. Nathan owns a small business in northwest Oklahoma City.

Julia Kirt – Incumbent Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Oppose. Tax credits reduce the funds available for the per pupil funding of public education and reduce funds available all other state services that could assist students and families, from health care to infrastructure.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Oppose. Public money should go to public schools– schools that are available to every Oklahoma child, led by locally-elected leaders and held to transparency and accountability standards.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

1. More funding for the classroom and for wrap around services, consistent pay and benefit increases and more steps for experienced teachers. 2. Reduced testing, redundant professional development and unnecessary paperwork. 3. Trust, listen to and celebrate our teachers consistently!

Julia Kirt – Incumbent Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

We have a big opportunity to increase mental health services for all kids as the federal government has increased funding to Community Behavioral Health Centers that serve every county in the state. We need to help link schools and these centers to make sure referrals are straightforward for students to receive treatment. We need to invest more in our behavioral health workforce, making sure we have more well-trained professionals to serve kids without waiting periods. The state has to continue to improve resources to fill the gaps. I'd like to see a long-term commitment to the increased school counselors across the state too.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes, I support local leaders deciding what works best for their community that still meets our shared outcomes for student preparation.

Julia Kirt – Incumbent Democrat

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Several sources of federal funding should allow us to rapidly improve internet access in rural areas. We have been working on the plan for American Rescue Plan funds now. We have some catching up to do as a state because we did not already have plans in place for the funding. I am optimistic that public-private partnership will move us forward quite a bit over the next few years.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Thanks for working together to make sure your voices are heard. Your advocacy matters for kids across the state! Thank you!

Lori Callahan – Republican Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – www.loricallahan.com
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081151064437>
- **Email** – callahan.lori@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Oklahoma City

Candidate Bio - served on MAPS 4 Community Subcommittee. Volunteered for numerous PTA, neighborhood association, ministry and community groups. Married to David for 27 years with two children. Served as foster parents to a teenage child. An active member of Frontline Church. Co-owns a video production company with her husband. Founder of Women Now, a group that supports women in small business. Holds a master's degree in business management from Southern Nazarene University

Lori Callahan – Republican Challenger

- **Callahan did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Education not on platform.**



SENATE DISTRICT 32



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Senate District 32 serves the following communities:

**Apache, Broxton, Boone, Cache, Central High, Chattanooga,
Cooperton, Elgin, Empire City, Ft. Still, Indianahoma, Lawton, Letitia,
Meers, Medicine Park, Mountain Park, Pumpkin Center, Roosevelt,
Stecker**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

John Montgomery – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – none
- **Facebook** – www.facebook.com/MontgomeryForOklahoma
- **Email** – john.montgomery@oksenate.gov
- **Hometown** – Lawton

Candidate Bio – John Michael Montgomery was born and raised in Lawton and graduated from Eisenhower High School. He began college at Cameron University before transferring to the University of Oklahoma and completed a B.A. in International Studies. Montgomery finished work at OU for his M.A. in Global Affairs in summer 2019. Montgomery works in the financial services industry and founded his own investment advisory firm, Invictus Investment Advisors, in 2019. Prior to election to the Senate in 2018, Montgomery served four years in the House beginning in 2014. Montgomery currently serves in the Senate as Vice Chair for the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government and Transportation. Montgomery continues to live in Lawton with his wife, Kylee, their daughter, and two dogs. Kylee teaches in Lawton Public Schools

 **WARNING ALERT**  -

Supports “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs

John Montgomery – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Senator Montgomery voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - Senator Montgomery voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via vouchers/esa in 2022 (SB1647)

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

John Montgomery – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Senator Montgomery voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Senator Montgomery voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE.

Johnny Jernigan – Democrat Challenger

- Campaign Website – none

Candidate Bio – no bio available

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/johnny.jernigan.568>

- Email – johnnymjernigan@gmail.com

- Hometown – Lawton

Johnny Jernigan – Democrat Challenger

- Jernigan did not respond to our questionnaire.



SENATE DISTRICT 34



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Senate District 34 serves the following communities:

Owasso, Sperry, Tulsa



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

JJ Dossett – Incumbent Democrat

- **Campaign Website – No**
- **Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/dossett4senate>**
- **Email – dossett.district34@gmail.com**
- **Hometown – Sperry**

Candidate Bio - Senator Dossett is a lifelong resident of Oklahoma Senate District 34. He is a 2002 graduate of Owasso High School and a 2006 graduate of Oklahoma State University, where he majored in History Education. Senator Dossett was a high school teacher and coach at Owasso High School from 2006 to 2016 prior to joining the Oklahoma State Senate. He currently serves as a Senior Master Sergeant in the Oklahoma Air National Guard and has completed two active duty deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Senator Dossett resides in Owasso with his wife Ashley, a psychologist at Owasso Public Schools, and their four sons.

JJ Dossett – Incumbent Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Oppose. Public funds belong in public schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Oppose. Public funds belong only in public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

More investment in general. Raise teacher pay and formula investment. Also, remove unnecessary mandates and burdens that are bad for educator morale in general. We have to do more to make the job more attractive.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

We must find a way to get more help to students through the systems we have in place. School councilors, psychologists, and social workers can help students if we get them in the right place and don't bog them down with other tasks that don't have to do with direct student services. So find ways to hire more mental health professionals in our public schools and find ways to make the job easier for the folks that are already in place.

JJ Dossett – Incumbent Democrat

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Absolutely. Locally elected school boards know what is best for their school and their community. The state oversteps their role far too often when it comes to letting school boards do their job.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

We have a few ideas for expanding rural broadband at the moment. We have to find a way to invest directly in this cause and motivate broadband providers to get access to more students across the state.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

We have to compete regionally in our investment first. We must do better on classroom investment and pay before we do anything else. After that there are various policy changes that can improve the education for rural students, families, and schools. I'm here to talk to educators, parents, and ed advocates to get everyone's perspective on what is best for their local public school.

Dana Prieto – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <http://danaprieto4oksenate.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/oksenate34>
- **Email** – danaprieto94@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio - While living in New York, Dana built a successful carpet and tile floor cleaning company from the ground up which he operated until moving to Oklahoma in 1991 to attend Rhema Bible College. Dana presently owns and operates Everlasting Enterprises Inc., an online marketing company for small businesses.

 **WARNING ALERT**  -

Endorsed and working directly with several organizations and individuals who supports “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs.

Dana Prieto – Republican

- **Dana Prieto did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Education not on platform.**



SENATE DISTRICT 40



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Senate District 40 serves the following communities:
Bethany, Nichols Hills, Oklahoma City, The Village, Warr Acres,
Woodlawn Park



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Carri Hicks– Incumbent Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.carrihicks.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/hicksforsenate>
- **Email** – info@carrihicks.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Senator Carri Hicks is a mother, an educator, and a lifelong Oklahoman. The daughter of a public school teacher, Hicks graduated from Oklahoma City University. She earned her bachelor's degree in mass communications and political science. Hicks furthered her education at OCU by earning a master's degree with a focus on leadership management. She went on to work for United Way of Central Oklahoma and Saint Luke's United Methodist Church. Hicks developed skills in fundraising, advertising, and publishing throughout her career in the nonprofit sector. She earned her masters in early childhood education and applied for a teaching certificate. Hicks began working as a public school teacher in the Putnam City School District in 2011. After three years teaching Kindergarten at Tulakes Elementary, Hicks moved to the Deer Creek School District, where she taught First Grade for two years and Fourth Grade Math and Science for two years at Grove Valley Elementary. Hicks has served as an adjunct professor at OCU teaching in the College of Education. In the summer of 2019, she was named a Gaylord-McCasland Education Fellow by the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, and worked to reshape the museum experience for young learners. She lives in Northwest Oklahoma City with her husband of ten years, Spencer. They are the proud parents of three children. Hicks was named CEO of Rainbow Fleet, an Oklahoma City nonprofit focused on early childhood education and quality child care. Hicks also serves on the nonprofit board for the STEAM Engine, and on the Senate Education, Health & Human Services, and Finance Committees

Carri Hicks– Incumbent Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Public tax dollars belong in public schools. I oppose the expansion of tax credits for private school tuition.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Public tax dollars belong in public schools. I oppose the expansion of vouchers and ESA's.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

First, we must pay teachers for the professionals they are. The salary schedule should be reworked so teachers can see a career in the classroom. Currently, many effective teachers leave the classroom to go into administration or pursue other careers because of pay. Additionally, the mandates on our public schools are stifling creativity and the ability for our well qualified workforce to do their jobs. We need to repeal overburdensome mandates so that teachers feel valued and respected for the professionals they are.

Carri Hicks– Incumbent Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

They are currently Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHC) within a driving distance of 20 min's anywhere in the state. By partnering with the existing facilities we can create a network of access to reach every community in the state with much needed mental health services, and prevention services as well.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes.

Carri Hicks– Incumbent Democrat

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

I support the efforts of the Rural Broadband Coalition and expansion. No student should be left offline.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

As a former teacher, I firmly believe in restoring respect to the profession. It is demeaning to professional educators when policies are passed that question their experience, and are counter to what we know children need in order to thrive. Most educators know what their students need in order to be academically successful, and unfortunately decisions made by administrators, or non-educators often place unnecessary barriers in the path for teachers to be able to accomplish this task. Reducing administrative burdens for educators is a top priority. This empowers more time for class preparation, and therefore yields a better working environment for students to thrive.

Mariam Daly – Republican Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – dalyforsenate.com
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/dalyforsenate2022>
- **Email** – info@dalyforsenate.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Daly and her husband have lived in the district for 26 years. We raised our three children here. She is a wife, mother, REALTOR®, and church volunteer.

 **WARNING ALERT**  –

Endorsed by OCPA (Oklahoma Council for Public Affairs), an organization that has been highly focused on supporting candidates that will support universal school vouchers – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs.

Mariam Daly – Republican Challenger

- **Daly did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Education not on platform.**



HOUSE DISTRICT 4



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 1 serves the following communities:

**Briggs, Dry Creek, Eldon, Gideon, Grandview, Hulbert, Keys, Lost City,
Park Hill, Peggs, Pettit, Shady Grove, Talequah, Tenkiller, Welling,
Woodall, Zeb**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Bob Ed Culver – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://bobedculver.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/bobed.culver.5>
- **Email** – bobedculver@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Talequah

Candidate Bio – President of Arrington CJM, Inc, an independent oil and gas exploration company. Duties included researching surface and mineral ownership and negotiating leases and contracts that benefitted both parties. Worked with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission on regulatory requirements for drilling and producing wells. Prepared budgets and negotiated sales contracts.

Bob Ed Culver – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Culver voted AGAINST diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not addressed directly on social media or website but conversations with Rep Culver lead us to believe he opposes vouchers and fully supports rural public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not addressed directly on social media or website

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not addressed directly on social media or website

Bob Ed Culver – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - conversations with Rep Culver have informed us that he is in support of local control of school calendars.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Culver voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Rep. Culver earned one of our highest ratings for supporting rural public schools in the entire Republican Caucus of the Oklahoma House of Representatives via his excellent voting record. His votes in 2021 and 2022 legislative session were right in line with our member focus goals. OF NOTE - Rep Culver voted AGAINST HB2078 which made major alterations to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula. This legislation was opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.

Charles Arnall – Democrat Challenger

- Campaign Website – none

Candidate Bio – 40 year veteran teacher.

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/Arnall4StateRep>

- Email – charlesarnall@gmail.com

- Hometown – Talequah

Charles Arnall – Democrat Challenger

- Arnall did not respond to our questionnaire.



HOUSE DISTRICT 7



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 5 serves the following communities:

**Afton, Cardin, Cayuga, Commerce, Copeland, Dodge, Dotyville,
Fairland, Grove, Miami, Narcissa, North Miami, Peoria, Picher,
Quapaw, Wyandotte**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Steve Bashore – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – www.stevebashore.com
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057630027308>
- **Email** – steve.bashore@okhouse.gov
- **Hometown** – Miami

Candidate Bio – Representative Bashore is married to Kristi and they have 4 children. Former general manager of one of NE Oklahoma's largest employers, Buffalo Run Casino, where he managed hundreds of employees and oversaw numerous high-profile sporting events and concerts, also leading employee efforts to give back to the community. Bashore also stepped in as administrator for the Oklahoma Boxing Commission to rebuild the organization. Steve holds an MBA and Masters of Science in Sport Administration.

Steve Bashore – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Bashore voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Steve Bashore – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Bashore voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Jason Spence – Democrat Challenger

- Campaign Website – None

Candidate Bio – no bio information available

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100080697661250>

- Email – None

- Hometown – unknown

Jason Spence – Democrat Challenger

- Spence did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No website. No information directly related to public education on social media.



HOUSE DISTRICT 9



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 11 serves the following communities:
**Claremore, Collinsville, Justice, Limestone, Owasso, Sequoyah, Valley
Park, Verdigris**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Mark Lepak – Republican Incumbent

- Campaign Website – none found

Candidate Bio – none found

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/Lepak4House>

- Email – mark.lepak@okhouse.gov

- Hometown – Claremore

Mark Lepak – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Lepak voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Mark Lepak – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Lepak voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Lepak voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Ann Marie Kennedy – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – none found

Candidate Bio – none found

- **Facebook** – none found

- **Email** – none found

- **Hometown** – none found

Ann Marie Kennedy – Democrat Challenger

- **Kennedy did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **No website or social media**



HOUSE DISTRICT 13



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 13 serves the following communities:

**Checotah, Crekola, Gibson Haskell, Jamesville, Muskogee, Okay,
Oktaha, Rentiesville, Summit, Taft, Wainwright, Yahola**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Neil Hayes – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.hays4district13.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/neilhaysokstatehouse13>
- **Email** – neil@hays4district13.com
- **Hometown** – Checotah

Candidate Bio – Born in Muskogee, Neil is the son of a High School coach and principal and went to college on a baseball scholarship. Eventually returning to Muskogee to coach and teach history. Neil left teaching to start his own insurance agency. Together, Neil and his wife Nicole have six children.

Neil Hayes – Republican

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Oppose - I can not support diverting funds intended for public schools to private schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Oppose - Again, these programs hide behind different euphemisms but they all function the same way. They divert funds intended for public schools to private schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Pay is the easy one but I would start with HealthCare. Health care for a teacher and their families is way to expensive compared to other State employees not to mention once they retire it's almost unaffordable. I'd also like to see fewer requirements on teachers, to work outside of their contract and contract hours. One of the biggest draws would be to go back to the Rule of 80.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

State action to incentivize Health Care providers to expand remote or traveling mental health therapists, through grant programs that fund a portion of the cost of deployment in these rural communities.

Neil Hayes – Republican

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

I support local control as education is not a ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL. Local control allows those rural schools to make decisions to be suit there Districts needs.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

1) Support allowing rural electric cooperatives to offer high-speed internet to their customers.2) State action to incentivize internet providers to expand high-speed internet through grant programs that fund a portion of the cost of deployment in these rural communities.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

No response.

Jimmy Haley – Democrat

- Campaign Website – no
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/jimmy.haley.35>
- Email – j52haley@gmail.com
- Hometown – Muskogee

Candidate Bio – No information available.

Jimmy Haley – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Oppose. Simply put, public tax dollars should remain with public schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Oppose. Simply put, public tax dollars should remain with public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Pay them as professionals; allow them to use those professional skills to educate our youth. We must stop the petty distractions that are frustrating our staff and our classrooms. Let's get back to learning.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Adequately Staff State-wide coverage of mental health professionals to cover our urban and rural areas.

Jimmy Haley – Democrat

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

My short answer is - Yes.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

First of all, support more Democratic candidates and we'll fight for expanded broadband internet access. Utilize Infrastructure monies to expand current coverage across our State.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

What would benefit Oklahoma public schools is to elect Representatives who will listen to the wants and needs of our Professional Teachers and Administrators and act upon those needs. I don't claim to have all the answers to this question; however, I am capable of working closely with educators across my district to build our district into a quality district of advanced learning.



HOUSE DISTRICT 23



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 23 serves the following communities:
Catoosa, Fair Oaks, Owasso, Tulsa, Verdigris



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Susan Carle Young – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.susancarleyoung.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/susanforok>
- **Email** – info@susancarleyoung.com
- **Hometown** – Claremore

Candidate Bio – Susan attended Claremore Public Schools and Holland Hall School in Tulsa, graduating from Claremore High School. She attended the University of Oklahoma and earned her bachelor of science in nursing and later, a master's degree in social work. Susan has dedicated her life to promoting children's health and mental health awareness, as a social worker and a pediatric nurse. She has served on the boards of many community organizations and is currently an emeritus board member and past president of CASA of Northeast Oklahoma. She has volunteered for the Parent Child Center of Tulsa, Children's Day Nursery, and the Hispanic Resource Association.

Susan Carle Young – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

No, I do not. I believe that public money should go to public education.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

No, I do not believe that public tax dollars should be used to support private schools that can pick and choose their students and have no mandate to provide services for all children.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Oklahoma needs to increase teacher salaries, increase per-pupil funding throughout the state, and stop diverting funds to private schools (which are mostly urban); but a big part of improving teacher recruitment and retention is changing the culture in state government to one of trust and respect toward educators. I believe this can only be done by electing state officials and legislators who have, and will promote, this attitude.

Susan Carle Young – Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Having been an in-home rural mental health provider for children, I know that one of the biggest hurdles to mental health support for students and their families is inadequate Medicaid funding. The agencies I worked for were mostly funded by Medicaid, and were chronically underfunded and understaffed, which had a devastating effect on morale and ability to provide services. The Medicaid expansion has helped, and the recent push to build more treatment facilities is a step in the right direction, but much, much more needs to be done in these areas.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes, I would.

Susan Carle Young – Democrat

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

I think that the USDA's ReConnect Pilot Program is a good start as far as improving rural high-speed internet capability, and I'm sure that more funding will be needed. Oklahoma House Bill 3363, the Rural Broadband Expansion Act, which was passed this year, is a great first step. Rural cell phone service also needs improvement, and the state legislature needs to support and work with the Rural Wireless Association to continue advocating for rural providers at the Federal level. Cellular coverage has been hampered, in part, by the fact that the FCC bases its coverage maps on data from the cell providers themselves, which overstates their effective coverage area. Since the coverage maps drawn from this data determine what areas' rural carriers are granted federal assistance from the Mobility Fund to improve coverage, getting better information to the FCC has been a crucial first step in improving the situation, but there is much work still to be done.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Oklahoma's public schools are in the worst shape they've been in since the early 20th century. It is imperative to elect legislators and state officials who aren't trying to tear up the state system and turn it into a personal profit center. If elected, I will do my best to make things better for students and teachers in my area and throughout Oklahoma.

Terry O'Donnell – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – odonnellforhouse.com
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/RepresentativeODonnell>
- **Email** – tso@savagelaw.cc
- **Hometown** – Catoosa

Candidate Bio – Terry O'Donnell and his wife, Teresa, have two daughters, Tyler and Treagan. Terry grew up in Tulsa and was a 1982 graduate of Memorial High School. Today, the O'Donnell family lives in Teresa's hometown of Catoosa. During the last two decades, Terry served on Catoosa's Zoning Board and Planning Commission. Teresa volunteers for the Catoosa Historical Society and the Catoosa Annual Reunion. The family attends Life Church.

Terry O'Donnell – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep O'Donnell voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Terry O'Donnell – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep O'Donnell voted AGAINST local control for rural schools in 2019. (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep O'Donnell voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE



HOUSE DISTRICT 26



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District serves the following communities:
Bethel Acres, Earlsboro, Johnson, McLoud, Shawnee, Tecumseh



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Gregory Hardin – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – gregoryforhd26.com
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/GregoryForHD26>
- **Email** – info@GregoryForHD26.com
- **Hometown** – Shawnee

Candidate Bio – Gregory Hardin is a Journalist, Substitute Teacher, and College student who has lived in Shawnee his entire life. He currently attends college at the University of Central Oklahoma as a History Education major. Is is also a substitute teacher at North Rock Creek, Bethel, Pleasant Grove, and Shawnee Public Schools; and he hosts a show on YouTube called “The Green Corn Rebellion Show” where he interviews politicians, political candidates, and musicians.

Gregory Hardin – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I oppose this because this will further defund our public schools and we need to be funding them more. This will only make problems worse.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I strongly oppose this because we need to be sending more funding to our public schools. This will only cause more problems for our public schools and won't make education in this state any better.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

We need to raise the starting pay for teachers (as well as the pay for teachers who are already here). We need to let people know that if they decide to go into education that they will have a living income that's worth staying here and not moving to another state in order to get paid more. \$60,000 would be great starting pay.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

We've seen a huge closure in rural hospitals & healthcare facilities in rural Oklahoma over the last decade or so. I believe the state government needs to step in and start building hospitals & healthcare facilities for people to use. And we'll probably have an easier time keeping them open because we have enacted Medicaid expansion in Oklahoma.

Gregory Hardin – Democrat

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Of course. Especially in reference to school districts wanting to have 4 day school weeks.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

I'm aware that some electric companies such as CVEC are trying to start their own broadband internet service so I'd like to see what the state can do to help them do that so therefore the people can have some say in what happens with their internet bills & connection and we won't be relying on a huge company like AT&T.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

I'd like to raise substitute teacher pay. I believe this would help alleviate any issues we have in the future when it comes to a substitute teacher shortage like we had in some parts of the state earlier this year.

Dell Kerbs – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <http://dellkerbs.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/votedell>
- **Email** – dellkerbshouse26@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Shawnee

Candidate Bio – Rep. Kerbs was selected by Speaker Charles McCall to serve as Chair of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. He also serves as a member of Children, Youth and Family Services, and Higher Education committees in the House. Dell owns and operates Coney Island. He serves as president of Safe Events for Families (SEFF), which provides festivals and entertainment for the community, including Shawnee Trail Days in June, Boo on Bell in October, the Christmas Parade in December, and a monthly block party downtown. He is a member of the Emergency Operation Centers. He is also on the South Central Industries Concept Work Team Committee. Dell has served as a Board member of both the Historic Shawnee Alliance Board and the Visit Shawnee, Inc. Board, as well as the Downtown Task Force, the Downtown Merchant Group, and the Shawnee Planning Commission. Dell and his wife, Linda, recently celebrated their 20th anniversary. They have two daughters: Kensington is a freshman in college and Kerrigan is in middle school. They are active members at LifeChurch.

Dell Kerbs – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Kerbs voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Dell Kerbs – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Kerbs voted AGAINST local control for rural schools in 2019. (SB441)

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Kerbs voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE



HOUSE DISTRICT 34



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 34 serves the following communities:
Stillwater



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Trish Ranson – Democrat Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.ransonhouse34.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/RansonHouse34>
- **Email** – teamtrish@ransonhouse34.com
- **Hometown** – Stillwater

Candidate Bio – Trish Ranson is currently serving in her second term at the Oklahoma House of Representatives. Prior to running for office in 2018, Representative Ranson taught elementary music for 15 years at Westwood Elementary in Stillwater and served as a conductor with the OSU Youth Choir. In 2018, former teacher Ranson walked out to demand a change in how our state funds educators and public education. She has represented the people of District 34 for two terms. Representative Ranson serves on multiple committees in the House. For the 58th session, these include Education Appropriations, Health Services and Long-Term Care, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Higher Education and Career Tech.

Trish Ranson – Democrat Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I oppose diverting public dollars away from public schools to offset private school tuition in the form of tax credits. Public education is a common good for our society and should be supported by appropriate funding.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I oppose for the same reasons I oppose tax credits. Public funds should be for public education.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

I believe in local control. Rural districts have already been thinking outside the box about teacher recruitment through four-day weeks, virtual instruction, salary incentives, etc. But rural (and urban) districts need the appropriate funding from the state level to make a difference. I am a supporter of collaborative ideas from the local level to help with recruitment and retention.

Trish Ranson – Democrat Incumbent

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

The lack of accessible mental health care is not just a rural, or even an Oklahoma problem. It is spreading across the nation. Since it's at all levels, we can work together to find solutions. Recently the suicide hotline number has changed to 988. This helps folks who are in full crisis easily get the connection they need. The OK State Dept of Mental Health and Substance Abuse has recently unveiled a mapping of available caregivers statewide. Identifying the deficit areas of coverage will help with recruiting of new providers. This network will also function as a tele-health professional development group for providers to learn about new best practices for a variety of issues. Local officials can be part of the solution by communicating their needs with the state. There are also several ARPA requests that are targeting the mental health care access deficits across our state.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes, I'm a believer in local control as well. Note: Rep Ranson voted FOR local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

Trish Ranson – Democrat Incumbent

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

I have attended many of the broadband expansion coalition meetings this past session. They are working to gather ground-level data to more accurately map where we have broadband deficiencies, as well as catalog the many ways Oklahomans receive internet. Since broadband expansion is also a national issue, the recently passed infrastructure law provides money to our state to jumpstart expansion plans. We should be seeing movement on this issue this coming year. There is also a federal subsidy program where citizens can greatly reduce their monthly costs on internet. I am hoping more information on this program will be communicated in the next year as well.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Although Stillwater isn't necessarily rural, OSU educates and graduates many of our rural neighbors. Issues such as education, health, and economic development are important to all Oklahomans. Solutions, however, will look different than in urban areas. I strive to create and support legislation that provides a framework for growth but has plenty of room for local entities to craft lasting change for their communities. It should never be an either/or proposal that pits urban against rural. But instead, ideas that reflect common concerns and foster collaboration. OF NOTE: ***Rep Ranson achieved our highest possible rating for supporting public schools based off her voting record in the Oklahoma House.*** She also voted AGAINST major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.

Michael Baughman – Republican Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.baughmanforhouse.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/Baughman4HD34>
- **Email** – michael@baughmanforhouse.com
- **Hometown** – Stillwater

Candidate Bio – Michael Baughman was born and raised in Oklahoma and worked at Boys & Girls Club of America. He recently graduated from OSU.

Michael Baughman – Republican Challenger

- Michael Baughman did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No mention of education as a platform on website.



HOUSE DISTRICT 35



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 35 serves the following communities:

**Blackburn, Cleveland, Drumright, Glencoe, Hallett, Hominy, Jennings,
Meramec, Morrison, Oilton, Olive, Osage, Pawnee, Perry, Prue, Ralston,
Red Rock, Silver City, Skedee, Sumner, Terlton Westport**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Ty Burns – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website – No**
- **Facebook – No**
- **Email – ty.burns@okhouse.gov**
- **Hometown – Morrison**

Candidate Bio – Ty Burns is currently the Representative for House District 35. Ty lives in the Watchorn area with his wife, Staci and their five children. Ty has a background in Law Enforcement, Teaching/Coaching, Military, and Ranching. Ty retired from the 45th Infantry Brigade with 20 years of service in 2018. Sgt 1st Class Burns has been deployed to Iraq in 2007-2008 and Afghanistan in 2011-2012. He is the recipient of many awards including Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart.

Ty Burns – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Burns voted AGAINST diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Ty Burns – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Burns voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Rep Burns voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

OF NOTE: Rep Burns voted FOR major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.

Sam Jennings – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.samjenningsforok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/samjenningsforok>
- **Email** – No
- **Hometown** – Hominy

Candidate Bio – Sam Jennings lives on a small farm outside Cleveland, Oklahoma with his wife Angela, and their five children. His four older children all attend Cleveland Public Schools and are active in the Cross Country team, soccer, and band. Growing up in Weatherford, Oklahoma, Sam graduated from Weatherford High School and earned his B.A. at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Sam now teaches history at Oklahoma State University, where he also researches religion in Colonial America. With a family that attends the local public school, Sam is eager to ensure that the future of education in the state reflects the needs of rural and underserved communities.

Sam Jennings – Democrat Challenger

- **Sam Jennings did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Website does state the following:** “Our issues are our own. Instead of wasting time trying to fight the national culture war here at home, good leadership in the capitol should look to fix the real life issues facing everyday Oklahomans. Fixing bad roads, funding local schools, and scaling back preemption laws should matter more than issues not relevant to Oklahoma.”



HOUSE DISTRICT 40



OK RSC

Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 40 serves the following communities:
Enid



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Chad Caldwell – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <http://chad4ok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/votechad4ok>
- **Email** – chad@chad4ok.com
- **Hometown** – Enid

Candidate Bio – Incumbent Rep Caldwell Chad has served as the Executive Director of Hospice Circle of Love since 2009. Prior to Circle of Love, Chad worked with the University of Oklahoma Athletic Department, Garth Brooks Teammates for Kids Foundation, and Frantz Insurance Agency. Caldwell serves on the Board of Directors for several non-profit agencies.

 **WARNING ALERT**  –

Supports “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs

Chad Caldwell – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell has been a vocal supporter of school voucher programs.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Chad Caldwell – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

OF NOTE: Rep Caldwell voted FOR major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.

Nicholas Payne – Democrat Challenger

- Campaign Website – No
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/votenicholaspayne>
- Email – No
- Hometown – Enid

Candidate Bio – Payne is a singer/songwriter from Enid, OK. No other personal information available at this time.

Nicholas Payne – Democrat Challenger

- Nicholas Payne did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No website – no information on education as a platform issue.



HOUSE DISTRICT 41



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 41 serves the following communities:
**Bison, Carrier, Cashion, Drummond, Enid, Hillsdale, Lahoma, OKC,
Piedmont, Waukomis**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Denise Crosswhite Hader – Republican Incumbent

- Campaign Website – none found

Candidate Bio – none found

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/DeniseCrosswhiteHaderOK41>
- Email – DCH410K@gmail.com
- Hometown – Piedmont

Denise Crosswhite Hader – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Crosswhite Hader voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Denise Crosswhite Hader – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Crosswhite Hader voted against local control for rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Crosswhite Hader voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Mike Bockus – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.mikeisok.com/>
- **Facebook** – none found
- **Email** – mike@mikeisok.com
- **Hometown** – Edmond

Candidate Bio – A native Oklahoman, Mike was born and raised in the small southeastern town of Wilburton. Both of his parents taught at Wilburton Public Schools, and instilled in him their closely held beliefs of the value and importance of public education and personal investment in the community. After graduating from Wilburton High School, Mike sought higher education at the University of Oklahoma. There he quickly became involved in campus life and was an active member of the OU RUF/NEKS as he worked to earn his degree. As a RUF/NEK, Mike was thrilled to be afforded the opportunity to participate in one of his favorite pastimes, cheering on the Oklahoma Sooners.

Upon earning his Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering from the University of Oklahoma, Mike began his career as a software engineer for IBM in Austin, Texas. While working for IBM he also earned his Master's Degree in Software engineering from the University of Texas. In 2006, Mike married his longtime best friend, Charlene. Shortly after relocating to Austin, the couple decided to start a family. While living in Austin, working, and going to school, Mike realized the truth to the adage, "It takes a village to raise a child." In order to foster close family relationships and establish roots in a community in which their three children could flourish, Mike and Charlene made the decision to return to Oklahoma. Mike and his family have enjoyed living in northwest Oklahoma City since 2011. Mike is fortunate to have a fulfilling career as a software engineer with a local consulting group as well as an adjunct professor at the University of Central Oklahoma. He finds making a positive impact in his community by coaching his childrens' sports teams, robotics teams and supporting their local schools particularly rewarding pursuits. Mike strives to create within his community a place of belonging, opportunity, safety, and growth.

Mike Bockus – Democrat Challenger

- **Bockus did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **No website or social media – here is what website says about education platform:**

Education is the building block of a flourishing society. Oklahoma's youth are entitled to an accessible and appropriate education through our public school system. Historically, state legislators routinely pass legislation regarding budget and operations for our schools that neglect or harm our children, educators, and threaten our schools. It is critical for the future of Oklahoma that we provide adequate funding to our public schools, and do not engage in legislating teachers out of the classroom.

Mike pledges to fight for Oklahomans' rights to accessible and appropriate education in the following ways:

- Invest in the future of Oklahoma by addressing the dismally inadequate and consistently reduced funding budgeted for our schools.
- Respect educators and seek to honor their opinions regarding proposed education legislation and how the consequences of such legislation would affect our children and school systems when put into action.



HOUSE DISTRICT 42



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 42 serves the following communities:

**Criner, Dibble, Lindsay, Maysville, Paoli, Pauls Valley, Purcell, Purdy,
Rosedale, Stratford, Wayne, Wallville, Washington, Wynnewood**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Steve Jarman – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.jarmanforhouse.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/stevejarmanforoklahoma>
- **Email** – sgjarman7@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Pauls Valley

Candidate Bio – Steve Jarman is a fourth-generation Oklahoman, born and raised in Garvin County where he has served as a teacher, small business owner and community advocate. He taught math and English at Pauls Valley Public Schools for more than 30 years while also operating a local pest control business. During his career, Steve held leadership positions advocating for his fellow educators at local, state, and national levels. He is also a Master Scuba Diver Trainer and continues teaching scuba students each summer.

Steve Jarman – Democrat Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I oppose it. Absolutely oppose it. See the explanation under your question on vouchers below.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I oppose it. Absolutely oppose it. Funding is the life-blood that keeps our public schools alive. Vouchers or any other thinly disguised efforts to divert public money from our public schools literally shuts our schools' doors. I've compared it to taking our schools to the slaughter house and cutting their throats. I know that sounds graphic but that's basically what vouchers do to our schools. I have heard that in the 1990's New Orleans passed a school voucher program and it got to a point where they couldn't even afford toilet paper to put in their restrooms. When it reaches a point where toilet paper is a major budget item then it's time for everyone in the community, teachers and administrators, too, to rise up and put a stop to the greed that caused that situation. Speaking of toilet paper, when I ran for state senate in 2016 I was invited to introduce myself to the superintendents of the Mid-America Technology region. After I spoke the superintendents took turns telling the others what they had been doing to save money in their district. The first person to speak was a beginning superintendent from Lexington. This is what she said. "I have just cut back on buying paper towels and toilet paper all that I can cut." Two years later we had to have another teacher walk-out.

Steve Jarman – Democrat Challenger

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Make teachers salaries competitive with the salaries of surrounding states. Personally, I am not opposed to offering sign up bonuses to get teachers to commit to signing contracts. I will say that I am opposed to offering more money in salaries to those who teach math and science. After teaching for thirty-one years I consider that to be a slap in the face. This is not a new concept. My response when I was teaching is still the same as it is today. Pay someone fresh out of college or someone from the private sector more than a district would be willing to pay me or more fellow math and science teachers is demeaning. Here's what would happen. The new hires would eventually run up against a problem they wouldn't know how to handle and would have to come to one of us to get advice on what they should do.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Let me begin by saying that in Oklahoma mental health issues have been ignored for far too long. Griffin hospital was closed under Mary Fallin's administration along with the Southern Oklahoma Resource Center and numerous rural hospitals. I know. We lost S.O.R.C. and our hospital. Those two closures cost numerous, helpless people their lives. Back to the question at hand. Like so many other issues, the mental health issue requires funding. The current legislature has turned their back on mental health issues. A retired judge once told me that he confronted two legislators representing this area about mental health issues and was told that they had taken care of mental health issues. Outreach centers would be a tremendous help, more so that scheduling appointments over Zoom. Having counselors make house calls would be a tremendous improvement. I knew counselors who made house calls. They were a tremendous help. Of course, now anyone making house calls would have to take major steps to make sure that they don't spread Covid to other households. Garnering support amongst fellow legislators would be a major step in the right direction. We are social beings, especially children. They need interaction with their friends and classmates, interaction that Zoom or phone calls don't always provide. Offering counselling, funding those professionals who counsel. Garnering support amongst fellow legislators is crucial.

Steve Jarman – Democrat Challenger

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Absolutely. I am opposed to open transfer.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Pass it and Fund it. Pure and simple. I would be cautious about accepting services from the lowest bidder. I would rather accept the bid from the company that offers the best service at a comparable price.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

My name is Steve Jarman. I am the only person in the race for district 42 who is pro-public education and against vouchers.

Cynthia Roe – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – cindyroeforhouse.com
- **Facebook** – No
- **Email** – CJOROE@GMAIL.COM
- **Hometown** – Lindsay

Candidate Bio – Cindy Roe is a nurse practitioner and local business owner. She previously co-owned the Valley Family Clinic in Pauls Valley with two physicians. Cindy lives in Lindsay with her husband, Vern, who works in the oil field and raises cattle. Cindy has nine grandkids and five children, one of whom was a combat Marine in Afghanistan.

Cynthia Roe – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Roe voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website. No social media

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website. No social media

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website. No social media

Cynthia Roe – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Roel voted FOR local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Roe voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

OF NOTE: Rep Roe voted FOR major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.



HOUSE DISTRICT 43



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 43 serves the following communities:
Yukon, OKC



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Jay Steagall – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.jaysteagall.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/VoteSteagall>
- **Email** – jay.steagall@okhouse.gov
- **Hometown** – Yukon

Candidate Bio – Jay Steagall and his wife Kimberly are long-time Oklahomans with a passion for service to their family, community, and country. In 2004, Jay and Kimberly moved to Yukon, and in 2012 expanded their family by adopting their son and daughter. Jay enlisted in the Oklahoma Army National Guard 1996, beginning his service with the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. In 2005, he became a commissioned officer in the Oklahoma Air National Guard, eventually ascending the ladder to the rank of Major. Steagall owns and operates multiple small businesses in his community, and holding a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from Oklahoma State University

Jay Steagall – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Steagall voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Jay Steagall – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Steagall voted AGAINST local control for rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441)

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Bashore voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Cassie Kinet – Independent Challenger

- Campaign Website – none found

Candidate Bio – none found

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/ElectCassieKinet>

- Email – none found

- Hometown – Yukon

Cassie Kinet – Independent Challenger

- Kinet did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No website or social media – no information on education as a platform issue.



HOUSE DISTRICT 44



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 44 serves the following communities:
Norman



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Jared Deck – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.deckfornorman.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/DeckForNorman>
- **Email** – info@deckfornorman.com
- **Hometown** – Norman

Candidate Bio – Jared Deck is an award-winning musician, business owner, and work-at-home dad. While earning a BA in Music Performance at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Jared worked at a factory to pay the bills and pursue his passion for music. Since 2007, Jared has done grassroots organizing and political advocacy work and is an active member of his community, working to make a tangible difference for his neighbors serving in the following leadership roles: Moore Norman Technology Center Board of Education, Variety Care Health Centers Board of Directors, ACLU of Oklahoma Board of Directors, SWOSU Alumni Association Board of Directors, Member of Sooner Rotary Satellite Club, and a Member of Local 375-703 American Federation of Musicians (AFL-CIO). Deck has been self-employed for 15 years, previously owning a retail cell phone dealership and was a partner in an independent insurance agency. For the past several years, he has been a full-time professional musician, touring 11 states regionally. In 2016, Jared won the Woody Guthrie Songwriting Contest and was named to Rolling Stone's Top 10 New Artists You Need To Know. Jared's partner, Jacy, is on staff at the University of Oklahoma. They've been married eleven years and have two children, Rachel and Jude.

Jared Deck – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Oppose. I considered the idea of placing public school standards on private schools, but I think that's a no-go, so I just oppose them all.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Vehemently oppose.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Educators deserve higher pay, tangible rewards for NBCTs and other professional advancements, more affordable health insurance options, State commitment to TRS funding and retirement costs, respect from parents and administration, protection from curriculum censorship, the right to bargain collectively, a systemwide focus on joy in the workplace, and opportunities to learn and grow in their profession.

Jared Deck – Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

New funding should be introduced to provide mental health counseling, not just career counseling, for students and teachers alike. Student loan forgiveness for mental health professionals who practice in low-income and low-population communities. Utilize federal New Market Tax Credits to build more health and mental health community health centers in low-income and low-population communities.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes - but I want to hear more about this particular issue directly from ORSC. Child care for working families is still an issue that concerns me.

Jared Deck – Democrat

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

We can start by expanding participation in the Oklahoma Association of Electrical Cooperatives, which is leveraging federal infrastructure dollars to form fiber subsidiaries that provide internet to rural Oklahomans. However, this Association currently only covers 20% of rural Oklahoma. The cooperative model is based on member ownership and delivers a service that benefits all members.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

I come from a family of public educators, so this issue is not hypothetical for me.

RJ Harris – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – No
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/rjharrisforok44>
- **Email** – No
- **Hometown** – Norman

Candidate Bio – Harris studied philosophy and law at the University of Oklahoma and is now a trial attorney at Redhawk Law. He is also an Air Traffic and Airspace Management Officer at Oklahoma National Guard. He is originally from Miami, OK.

 **WARNING ALERT**  –

Supports “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs

RJ Harris – Republican

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I support freedom as much as possible. Which means I support parents and students having maximum choice about where to attend school and I support the public funds following those choices to the school selected. Why use credits when we can simply allow the funding per student to travel with the student to whichever school the student chooses?

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I support freedom as much as possible. Which means I support parents and students having maximum choice about where to attend school and I support the public funds following those choices to the school selected.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

I support a targeted pay bonus to teachers based upon hours in the classroom and I support adjusting this bonus to encourage teachers to serve at schools where teacher applications my difficult to fill. I also support student loan repayment plans that incentivize teachers to serve schools which may need assistance recruiting good teachers.

RJ Harris – Republican

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

I support ending all vaccine and mask mandates which will get to the actual issue directly. But I also support ending the unconstitutional war on drugs and the overuse of private prisons and redirecting some those funds to mental health and rehabilitation programs.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

YES. I am in full support of local control of, and parents being more involved in, the school boards.

RJ Harris – Republican

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

I support providing full funding needed to improve the physical and IT infrastructure of all Oklahoma Schools especially with internet access in all schools as well as student access to needed hardware and software.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Increase the funding level per student to meet or exceed that of other states in the Midwest. Allow those funds to follow the students to their education delivery system of choice. Provide targeted bonuses to educators who serve in the classrooms--physical or online-- and in schools needing assistance attracting enough teachers. Thank you for your interest and your time providing and reviewing these questions and my answers to them.



HOUSE DISTRICT 45



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 45 serves the following communities:
Norman



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Teresa Sterling – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – No. Only for donations.
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/SterlingOKHD45>
- **Email** – sterling4StateHouse45@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Norman

Candidate Bio – Sterling is currently an Inspector Sgt at Oklahoma City Police Department.

Teresa Sterling – Republican

- **Teresa Sterling did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **No information available on educational platform.**

Annie Menz – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://annieforhouse.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/annieforhouse>
- **Email** – annieforhouse45@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Norman

Candidate Bio – East Norman resident Annie Menz is running for State Representative of House District 45. The seat is currently held by Representative Merleyn Bell, who is not seeking re-election. Born in Oklahoma City, Annie Menz was raised by an Army veteran father and an immigrant mother. At age 17, she enlisted in the United States Navy. She holds an Associate of Arts degree from Oklahoma City Community College and currently studies part-time at the University of Oklahoma while working full-time as a nonpartisan Executive Assistant for the Oklahoma State Senate. Since concluding her service with the Navy, she has continually sought opportunities to make a difference. For the past six years at the Capitol, she has specialized in legislative research, constituent communication and casework, and developed relationships on both sides of the aisle. Menz's professional experience includes six years as a nonpartisan Legislative and Executive Assistant at the Capitol and three years with non-profit organizations that provide behavioral care, immunizations, and prescription drugs to low-income communities. Menz's platform includes protecting our natural resources from government overreach, investing in public education, expanding mental health care access, and providing tangible support for working families. Menz is a member of the American Legion and the Oklahoma Women Veterans Organization. She is the founder of the annual Hispanic Cultural Day at the State Capitol and a founding member of the Oklahoma Legislative Latino Caucus. In 2017, she received the NextGen Under-30 award and was named Veteran of The Year by the Oklahoma Democratic Veterans Committee. If elected, Menz will be the first Latina member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

Annie Menz – Democrat

- **Annie Menz did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Per website, mental health and education platform is as follows:**

Annie supports expanding access to behavioral care, substance abuse services, and working to prevent suicide in our youth and veteran communities.

Per website, educational platform is as follows: Annie believes our kids deserve the very best; that's why she fights to expand child nutrition services, early childhood education, and to fully fund public schools.



HOUSE DISTRICT 46



OK^RSC

Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 46 serves the following communities:
Norman



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Jacob Rosecrants – Democrat Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://jacobrosecrants.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/RosecrantsForHD46>
- **Email** – info@jacobrosecrants.com
- **Hometown** – Norman

Candidate Bio – Jacob was born in Oklahoma City, and has lived in Norman for the better part of 30 years. Shortly after graduation from Norman High School, he decided that being a teacher was his goal. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 2008, as a History major with a minor in Classical Cultures. He became a teacher in 2012 and has been teaching at the high school and middle school levels in Oklahoma City Public Schools ever since. Jacob has been a loud activist for public education for years, with his main concerns being the lack of funding given to schools, low pay for teachers, and the harmful high-stakes tests that are unnecessarily forced upon students, especially in lower income schools. Before becoming a Representative in 2017, Jacob taught 7th grade Geography at Roosevelt Middle School in Southwest Oklahoma City. He has a passion for public education.

Jacob Rosecrants – Democrat Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I'm opposed. Loudly.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I'm completely opposed to private school voucher programs or anything else which would harm our public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

The pay raises in '18 and '19 were only first steps. We need to make sure we are paying a wage which will draw folks to the profession. More than that, we need to stop the attacks on the teaching profession, and work to rebuild respect for our educators. I'd like to end the reliance on state testing and re-vamp the A-F school report cards. Let's fully fund our schools based on per-pupil spending average, let teachers teach, and get out of their way! We do all of this, and Oklahoma will become a destination for educators, not a place from which to run.

Jacob Rosecrants – Democrat Incumbent

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

I'm a huge believer in making sure our kids/parents have the mental/physical health supports they need, which is why I fight to protect play in the classroom (Play to Learn Act) and which is why I'm working to require 40 minutes a day for recess in pre-K-8th grade. I believe a partially state-funded community schools model is how we get there. Look to Union PS for how we build on that model. This model will work because it'll be tailored to the community, whether that's in urban, suburban, or rural communities.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Absolutely. As the state rep of Noble Public Schools, the largest 4 day school district, I know that allowing the local communities to decide what's best for them is paramount.

Jacob Rosecrants – Democrat Incumbent

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

We have been working on this at the Capitol thanks to the hard work and focus of my colleague across the aisle, Rep. Logan Philips. I'll continue to focus on this.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

We must make sure that we are listening to our teachers and then move to action, as it regards what they need to effectively teach our kiddos. I'm also a huge proponent of play as the best way for kids to learn, indoors and outdoors, and I'll continue to fight for adequate time for recess for all of our kiddos, especially in rural areas. OF NOTE: **Rep Rosecrants achieved a very high rating for supporting public schools based off his voting record in the Oklahoma House.** He also voted AGAINST major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.

Kendra Wesson – Republican Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.kendraforok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/Kendrafor46>
- **Email** – Kendra@kendraforok.com
- **Hometown** – Norman

Candidate Bio – Kendra is a native Oklahoman and Caddo Tribal Member. Kendra and her husband Shea live and raise their children in Norman, where she also owns and operates an accounting firm. Having worked in accounting and bookkeeping since she was 17 years old, Kendra has served as a consultant for businesses to help them increase profits and implement controls along with policies and procedures. She is experienced in forensic accounting.

Kendra Wesson – Republican Challenger

- Kendra Wesson did not respond to our questionnaire.
- Via website and community public realm information, we have solid reason to believe this candidate would not be public school supportive.

She is currently the Co-Chair of School Boards 4 Kids - an organization that works closely with other organizations that advocate for school vouchers in Oklahoma.



HOUSE DISTRICT 63



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 63 serves the following communities:

**Cache, Chattanooga, Davidson, Faxon, Frederick, Geronimo,
Grandfield, Hollister, Indiahoma, Lawton, Loveland, Manitou,
Medicine Park, Tipton**



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Trey Caldwell – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.treyforok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/TreyCaldwell4StateRep>
- **Email** – treycaldwell4staterep@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Lawton

Candidate Bio – Fifth generation Comanche County native Hurchel “Trey” Caldwell grew up east of Lawton in a multi-generation farm and ranch family. After graduating from MacArthur High School, he played football at Southern Nazarene University for 3 years before graduating with a business degree from Cameron University. He currently works as an Insurance Agent and Financial adviser for Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau Financial. In the House of Representatives, Trey currently serves as the Deputy Majority Leader. He also serves as the Chair of the State and Federal Redistricting Southwest Oklahoma Subcommittee and the Vice Chair of the Business and Commerce Committee. He is also a member of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, A&B Natural Resources and Regulatory Services Committee, Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the State and Federal Redistricting Committee.

Trey Caldwell – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell voted AGAINST diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell has been a vocal opponent of private school vouchers due to the negative impact on rural schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Trey Caldwell – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell voted FOR local control of rural school calendars.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Caldwell voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Shykira Smith – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://smithforhd63.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/smithforhd63>
- **Email** – shykira@smithforhd63.com
- **Hometown** – Lawton

Candidate Bio – Shykira Smith made her home in Lawton/Fort Sill in 2005. She is a successful small business owner and Army Veteran. Shykira is an active volunteer, sponsor and board member with numerous organizations to include: Lawton/Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce, American Indian Chamber of Commerce, Armed Services YMCA, Ambucs, Rotary Club, Comanche County Public Schools and Lawton Business Women. During her 12 years in the U.S. Army, Shykira participated in several field exercises and deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq; serving her country with honor and immense pride. Shykira and her husband, Mark, served a combined total of more than 38 years in the US Army.

Shykira Smith – Democrat Challenger

- **Smith did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Website education platform is as follows:**

Make education, learning and development for all Oklahoma children a priority.

- Fix the teacher shortage.
- Support the Mental Health and Wellness of all students.
- Make major investments in quality, affordable child-care.
- Get much-needed remote learning technology to low-income & rural students.
- Ensure our schools are funded & our children and educators have the resources they need (i.e., Resources concerning teacher salaries, administrative responsibilities, budgeting and planning for school supplies & materials etc).



HOUSE DISTRICT 64



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 64 serves the following communities:
Lawton



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Rande Worthen – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.randeworthen.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/VoteRandeWorthen>
- **Email** – rande.worthen@okhouse.gov
- **Hometown** – Lawton

Candidate Bio – Rande and his wife, Janet, a registered dietician, married in 1983. They have four children, Kristen and Philip, who are pursuing higher education degrees, and Jenna and Kara, who are 14 and 13, respectively. Born and raised in Lawton, Rande's roots run deep in this community. Rande and his family attend First Baptist Church of Lawton.

Rande Worthen – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Worthen voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Rande Worthen – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Worthen voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441)

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Worthen voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Kyle Meraz – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <http://www.kylemeraz.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/KyleMerazforDistrict64>
- **Email** – kylemerazforoklahoma@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Lawton

Candidate Bio – Meraz is a Registered Nurse working in the Intensive Care Unit.

Kyle Meraz – Democrat Challenger

- Meraz did not respond to our questionnaire.
- Website link broken – no information on education as a platform issue.

Zachary Walls – Independent Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – none available

Candidate Bio – none available

- **Facebook** – none available

- **Email** – none available

- **Hometown** – Lawton

Zachary Walls – Independent Challenger

- Walls did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No website or social media – no information on education as a platform issue.



HOUSE DISTRICT 66



OK^{RS}SC

Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 66 serves the following communities:
Sand Springs, Skiatook, Sperry



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

James Rankin – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.jamesdavidrankin.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100082196337224>
- **Email** – jdr21@att.net
- **Hometown** – Sand Springs

Candidate Bio – Dr. James David Rankin is a long-time veterinarian in Sand Springs. He has owned and operated Rankin Veterinary Hospital PC for 36 years. He is a native of Sand Springs and graduated from Charles Page High School in 1977. He attended Oklahoma State University, graduating in 1982 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture Education and in 1986 with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree. James served on the City Council of Sand Springs for four years. James is a committed Christian and attends Freedom Ministries Church in Sand Springs under the Pastoring of Sonny Moody. James teaches every other Wednesday night and runs the church sound system. James and his wife, Natalie, both work in their veterinary hospital along with two of their adult children. Natalie is originally from the Ukraine and has been a naturalized American citizen for some time now. Between them they have six adult children and three grandchildren and one great grandchild. They live in the heart of downtown Sand Springs, occupying the second story of the hospital. Although owning and operating a veterinary hospital is a full time job, James enjoys beekeeping and fishing in his spare time, and Natalie enjoys raising Pug dogs and Abyssinian cats in her spare time.

James Rankin – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

No.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

No. The proposed current vouchers would hurt public schools. I am not sure a system could be developed to accommodate both public and private education.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Excellent pay and benefits certainly won't hurt the recruitment of educators. But, ultimately the issue here is respect. Our educators deserve the respect of the community, the students, and the parents.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Every school should have a paid staff position for a mental health professional. That is the least we could do. However, the mental health crisis that plagues our state and our nation is rooted in the spiritual decline of our nation.

James Rankin – Democrat

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Subsidized internet infrastructure.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

No.

Clay Staires – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://okforclay.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/OKHouse2022>
- **Email** – OkforClay@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – Skiatook

Candidate Bio – Clay graduated from Skiatook High School where he was in the Student Council, on the Honor Roll, and was the Senior Class President. He graduated in 1982 and headed for Oklahoma University where he majored in Education, joined a fraternity and actually got to play football for Barry Switzer and go to the Fiesta Bowl. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Education, he got his first teaching position at Tulsa Memorial High School teaching Biology and coaching Track and Football. After a couple of years at Memorial, he moved to Kansas City and took a job teaching Science and coaching track at Hickman Mills High School. While there, he became the Science Department Chair and was awarded the Teacher of the Year in his district and the Missouri State Track Coach of the Year for three consecutive years in 1999, 2000 and 2001. In 2002, he returned to run Shepherd's Fold Ranch in Avant, Oklahoma. While living at the Ranch, he spent time on the Avant School Board, the Skiatook Chamber Board and the Greencountry Ministers Alliance. In 2012, he was honored with the Skiatook Chamber Citizen of the Year Award for the after school programs that he had designed and ran at Shepherd's Fold Ranch. In 2012, he moved to Skiatook and I started his first business, The Leadership Initiative - located in Tulsa, he currently coaches almost 200 businesses with a combined annual revenue of over \$350M.

Clay Staires – Republican

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I support parent choice when it comes to their child's education. How that is funded is a conversation that I am looking forward to being a part of. I have no problem with having to personally pay for "the choice". However, you shouldn't have to pay twice. We must come up with a solution that is win/win for parents and for schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I don't initially approve of the current ideas for using vouchers. However, I support parent choice when it comes to their child's education. How that is funded is a conversation that I am looking forward to being a part of. I have no problem with having to personally pay for "the choice". However, you shouldn't have to pay twice. We must come up with a solution that is win/win for parents and for schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

It starts at the top - The State Board of Education. Before any budget cuts or additions can be made, we must know where and how the current money is being spent. I think we will learn a ton with the current Forensic Audit that is going on with the State Board of Education. Once this is complete, we hope to have a better idea of where the money is so we can answer questions pertaining to recruiting and retention incentives. Recruiting and retention isn't a mystery. More often, the issue not being able to sustain ideas. That's why we have to know where the money is being spent currently before we can have the conversation on where to spend it in the future.

Clay Staires – Republican

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Government partnerships with local healthcare providers. In many cases, we don't need "new and different" programs, we just need to support and expand the good programs that are already in place. Too often, government rushes in to fix a problem and completely overlooks the valuable resources that already exist in the rural areas. In rural areas where there are very limited resources, it's important to partner with local universities, local private healthcare providers and businesses, as well as urban hospitals to incentivize and draw quality healthcare providers to rural areas. We have to work towards providing a more level competitive field for rural healthcare.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

To my knowledge the schools in my district already have the control to choose their school calendar structure.

Clay Staires – Republican

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

This is mainly a "funding" issue. Partner with local, rural business to defray costs. Incentivize urban small business to partner with rural businesses. Incentivize big business to partner with rural businesses. I don't think this is rocket science to come up with a way to fund this. But it can't be just heaped onto the governments back to fix it. It will never happen that way.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Not at this time



HOUSE DISTRICT 70



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 70 serves the following communities:
Tulsa



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Suzanne Schreiber – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://suzanneforstaterep.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/suzanneforstaterep>
- **Email** – info@suzanneforstaterep.com
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio – After choosing to stay in Tulsa for law school, Suzanne began her legal career practicing civil defense and clerking for two federal judges. She married a Tulsa native and together they are raising four children—all products of Tulsa Public Schools. She's spent the last 10 years working at the George Kaiser Family Foundation to help create opportunities for the Tulsa community while also serving for the last eight years on the Tulsa School Board.

Suzanne Schreiber – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits because the focus should be on improving the state of public education.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I also oppose funding private school tuitions in the forms of vouchers or educational saving accounts because the focus and efforts should be on improving public education.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Oklahoma has funds to invest in and strengthen our public schools. The first step I would take is incentivizing and supporting new teachers with some of these funds followed by working on policies that allow teachers to do their work without fear, and finally ensuring that students have what they need to survive so they can learn such as food, healthcare including mental health, and shelter.

Suzanne Schreiber – Democrat

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

I was part of a strategic coalition to bring Medicaid expansion to the state because students and families need comprehensive, affordable healthcare including mental health. I would support all state funded initiatives to incentivize more rural providers while also supporting funding for broadband connectivity and any policy changes needed to make telehealth accessible for rural Oklahoma.

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

As a former school board member, I am in complete support of local control for elected school boards.

Suzanne Schreiber – Democrat

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

The State of Oklahoma is creating a broadband office - I look forward to strong leadership there that will prioritize and understand the needs of delivering reliable and affordable internet to the families of rural Oklahoma. The funds are available, now the hard work of implementation has to be done.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Rural and urban public schools should continue to work together to elevate and improve our critical public school system. I look forward to sharing in that work.

Brad Banks – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://votebradbanks.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/votebradbanks>
- **Email** – brad@votebradbanks.com
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio – Brad and his wife Lene were married in Copenhagen, Denmark in July 2006 and have four children together. They reside in midtown Tulsa and are longtime members of Woodland Acres Baptist Church. Brad believes in traditional family values, hard work, and giving back to your neighbors and community. At home, Brad enjoys working around the neighborhood, camping, sport-shooting, and spending time with his wife and children. Brad enlisted in the Marines in the fall of 2000. Private Banks was assigned to Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment as a rifleman and combat reconnaissance craft coxswain. He was deployed to the Western Pacific with 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2002 and 2003. Brad currently owns and operates two small-businesses in Tulsa. Eagle Eye Construction, Inc. specializes in concrete, drainage, grading, and fencing work and has served the greater Tulsa area since 2016. Brad also remains an active engineer working on retaining wall design, drainage improvement, erosion repair, and construction inspection through his Oklahoma licensed engineering firm, Bridgewater Engineering, Inc., est. 2018

Brad Banks – Republican

- **Banks did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Website lists following for education platform:**

What makes a good school? It's one to which students want to go and parents want to send them. It provides instruction in a way that the teachers and students naturally enjoy. It provides meaningful instruction in the core curricula of reading, writing, and math and cultivates interest in extra-curricular activities such as art, sports, and tech. Good schools don't need to advertise, the proof is in the success of the student and people generally recognize a good thing and word will spread. We have an obligation to every new generation to prepare them for the world they will one day inherit. There is nothing wrong with teaching our children the reality and brutality of the history of mankind, or about biology and the mechanisms of procreation. It is not the role of our schools, however, to choose a side or insert themselves in every sensitive cultural and political issue of the day. We need to shift this debate away from "what agent of the state shall determine what kids learn?" and onto something that places the agency in the system where it belongs. We don't want to tell teachers what to teach. Education is a passion for most teachers and we want to encourage and reward creative approaches. The least we ask is that they tell us what they are teaching and allow us to make an informed choice about whether it's what we want for our children.



HOUSE DISTRICT 71



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 71 serves the following communities:
Tulsa



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Amanda Swope – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.amandaswope.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/swope4ok>
- **Email** – info@amandaswope.com
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio – Amanda Swope is a native Tulsan and the Tribal Juvenile Justice Program Director for the Muscogee Nation. She is a descendant of the Osage Nation and a citizen of the Muscogee Nation and is the daughter of a veteran and a public servant. Amanda began her career in nonprofit management as a Development Director fundraising and grant writing for social services organizations, Tulsa CARES and Iron Gate. After she received her Masters of Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma, Amanda began working at the Muscogee Nation as a Self-Governance Analyst negotiating federal compacts and identifying areas of sovereignty expansion. Today, she remains employed with her Tribe as the Tribal Juvenile Justice Program Director committed to reimagining the future of justice in Oklahoma and Indian Country. She's served on multiple diversity, equity and inclusion committees, and police advisory councils. Additionally, she has volunteered with organizations like the Community Service Council, Junior League of Tulsa, TYPROS, Junior Achievement, Little Blue House, and the Terence Crutcher Foundation.

Amanda Swope – Democrat

- Swope did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No information on website regarding education as a platform issue.

Mike Masters – Republican

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.votemasters.com/> – website is password protected as private
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/VoteMikeMasters>
- **Email** – none found
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio – none found

Mike Masters – Republican

- Masters did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No website or social media – no information on education as a platform issue.



HOUSE DISTRICT 79



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 79 serves the following communities:
Tulsa



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Melissa Provenzano – Democrat Incumbent

- Campaign Website – <https://www.proven4oklahoma.com/>
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/proven4oklahoma>
- Email – melissa@proven4oklahoma.com
- Hometown – Tulsa
- On the ballot – November final election

Candidate Bio – Melissa is a lifelong Tulsa area native. As a graduate of Northeastern State University with a BS in Organismic Biology and then from the University of Oklahoma with a MEd in Educational Leadership, Melissa honed her commitment to improving the lives of her fellow citizens by becoming an educator. First, as a Biology teacher at Will Rogers High School, then as an administrator at Booker T Washington High School, Hale Junior High, and Bixby High School. ***OF NOTE: Representative Provenzano earned our highest ranking possible for supporting public education.***

Melissa Provenzano – Democrat Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

No. Public tax dollars should go to our public schools.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

No. Public tax dollars should go to our public schools

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Supporting the University teacher prep pipeline with scholarships and stipends for retention upon graduation and employment in a public school. Current teachers - true administrative support for the things they need to be successful in the classroom. Retention stipends for current teachers. Eliminating unnecessary testing and place faith in teachers to utilize authentic student assessments.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

A few avenues - decreasing counselor to student ratio in schools to 1 to 250 students (current state average is above 1 to 400). Increasing staffing via funding, and providing telehealth options for very hard to staff locations.

Melissa Provenzano – Democrat Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes indeed- whether it be 4 day weeks, curriculum offerings or safety practices.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

I support the current efforts to fund and expand broadband access across our state and in particular to rural areas, and will continue to support funding efforts to that end, as well as efforts to provide appropriate technology to teachers and students.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Teacher Professional Development requirements at federal, state and local levels can be overwhelming and time-intensive. My plan is to work to overhaul the PD requirements next year to fit into a new framework that is more feasible and allows more time prepping for students in the classroom. I will also continue to work to address the bus driver and support staff shortages. Thank you! ***OF NOTE: Rep Provenzano achieved our highest possible rating for supporting public schools based off her voting record in the Oklahoma House.*** She also voted AGAINST major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.

Paul Hassink – Republican Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://hassinkok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/HassinkforHD79>
- **Email** – Paul@HassinkOK.com
- **Hometown** – Tulsa

Candidate Bio – A regulatory affairs expert with decades of management success in industry, Paul shared his expertise nationally to protect our power grid. Paul is an active member of the Knights of Columbus, and he serves the community through the Home Improvement Ministry. Paul earned his Eagle Scout, graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and attained his Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from Purdue University.

 **WARNING ALERT**  -

Endorsed by organizations and individuals that heavily promote “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs.

Paul Hassink – Republican Challenger

- **Paul Hassink did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Per website, educational platform is as follows:**

I don't know about you, but I get so frustrated with those that think they know what is best for you and me. Why not let the parents and teachers who are closest to the problem have first shot at solving it. One size fits all education is not working because every student has their own needs. We must delegate authority to the level closest to the situation to find lasting solutions. The Federal government, school boards, and unions are resources, not masters!

 **WARNING ALERT**  -

Endorsed by organizations and individuals that heavily promote “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs.



HOUSE DISTRICT 83



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 83 serves the following communities:
Edmond, Nichols Hills, OKC, The Village



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Greg Clyde – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.gregclydeforok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/gregforok>
- **Email** – info@gregclydeforok.com
- **Hometown** – NW OKC

Candidate Bio – Greg Clyde is a fifth-generation Oklahoman and was born and raised in Lawton, Oklahoma. The son of a nurse and career soldier turned special education teacher, Greg learned early on about the importance of service above self and the benefits of giving back to your community. Since graduating pharmacy school over 25 years ago, Greg has made Northwest Oklahoma City home serving his community as a pharmacist. Sensing a need for his neighbors to have a locally owned option for their prescriptions, Greg successfully opened Clyde Pharmacy, his own independent pharmacy in 2019. Greg currently serves as a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). CASA's serve our most vulnerable foster kids.

Greg Clyde – Democrat Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

No.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

No.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

The first, and most important thing, stop demonizing teachers. We need direct support for classroom teachers.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

We need to decrease counselor ratios and provide direct classroom support.

Greg Clyde – Democrat Challenger

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Broadband access in rural communities must be a priority.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

No.

Eric Roberts – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.robertsforhouse.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/StateRepEricRoberts>
- **Email** – ericrobertshouse83@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – NW OKC

Candidate Bio – A third-generation Oklahoman currently serving as a State Representative, Eric Roberts became an owner and operator of Colonial Center LP, which he has built to success while employing locally for almost 30 years. Eric is also a successful commercial real estate developer. Eric has been married for 28 years to the love of his life, Leigh, and they are devoted to their two college-age children, a son and a daughter. Eric and Leigh are both actively involved in their church and Teen Challenge. Leigh is a parent mentor with two national organizations that help parents navigate the tough waters of adolescent drug and alcohol addiction. He serves as a board member for Ozarks Teen Challenge, Maps 3 citizens oversight committee for the fairgrounds. Eric, Leigh and their children are active members of a community church, and Leigh is a leader in a women's prison ministry. Eric has been a member of Rotary Club International since 1992, serves on the MAPS 3 Citizen Advisory Oversight Committee - a position he was first appointed to by former OKC Mayor Cornett, Habitat for Humanity, Christmas in April, and on the board of Ozark Teen Challenge. Eric is a 2020 graduate of Oklahoma's Leadership Exchange Academy.

Eric Roberts – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Roberts voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Eric Roberts – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Roberts voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE



HOUSE DISTRICT 84



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 84 serves the following communities:
Bethany, OKC, Warr Acres, Woodlawn Park



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Tammy West – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <http://thewestreport.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/TammyWestHouse84>
- **Email** – TammyWestforHouse@cox.net
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Rep. Tammy West is serving as the majority whip during her third term in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. West is a strong supporter of local control of schools. She was elected to the Putnam City School Board of Education in 2009 and reelected in 2014, both times unopposed. She served as president of the Board in 2013. In addition, she was honored with the Distinguished Service Award from the State Regents for Higher Education during the 2017 legislative session. She completed the Southern Leadership Conference's Center for the Advancement of Leadership Skills program, the premier professional development program for elected and appointed Southern state officials, in 2017. She received the 2018 Rising Star Award by the State Chamber of Oklahoma for her role as a legislative leader in the business community. She was awarded the AARP Legislative Leadership Award and named the Legislator of the Year by the Oklahoma Association of Realtors® in 2019.

Tammy West – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep West voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Tammy West – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep West voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep West voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Jeremy Lamb – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.jeremylamb.org/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/JeremyLambHD84>
- **Email** – info@jeremylamb.org
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Jeremy grew up in and around District 84, attending both Rollingwood and Lake Park Elementary, Western Oaks Jr. High, and Putnam West. He and his family were deeply involved at Bethany First Nazarene Church. Lamb earned his first degree at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Kansas City where he received both academic and football scholarships. Later he earned a Masters of Health Science at the University of Oklahoma. Jeremy's first job out of college brought him back to his alma mater, Putnam West, where he taught and coached. Following graduate school, Jeremy has worked for 12 years as a Physician Assistant. In 2016 Lamb along with a partner opened the first of four urgent care clinics in the metropolitan area. These clinics served over 50,000 patients a year. Jeremy has been married to Laurie for 20 years. Together they have six children. Four of their six have been fostered and adopted through DHS. Jeremy and Laurie are active members of Oklahoma City First Church of the Nazarene where Jeremy serves on the board. Lamb brings experience in education, health care, small business ownership, and working with foster care/adoption to serve the people of District 84. When not watching his children play sports or attending dance recitals, Jeremy enjoys golf, traveling with his wife, and new challenges.

Jeremy Lamb – Democrat Challenger

- Lamb did not respond to our questionnaire.
- Website lists education platform as follows:

Jeremy believes all kids should have access to a quality education no matter their zip code. As both a former teacher and product of public schools in house district 84, Jeremy will fight to protect public education. Oklahoma consistently falls in the bottom 10 for funding public education and our student outcomes reflect that. Oklahomans continue to demand increases in school and teacher funding, a demand that has fallen on deaf ears at both the Governor's Mansion and the state capital for the past decade. Our current leadership is actively working to gut public education for the benefit of the wealthiest Oklahomans at the expense of those with the most to lose. Jeremy will fight to make sure quality education is available for all Oklahomans.



HOUSE DISTRICT 85



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 85 serves the following communities:
OKC



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Cyndi Munson – Democrat Incumbent

- Campaign Website – <https://www.cyndimunson.com/>
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/CyndiMunson85>
- Email – cyndi@cyndimunson.com
- Hometown – OKC

Candidate Bio – First elected in September of 2015 and re-elected in 2016, Cyndi Munson became the first Asian-American woman elected to the Oklahoma Legislature. A first generation college student, Cyndi graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, where she earned a Master of Science in Leadership Education. Cyndi also spent a semester of her college experience studying at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. Before her election to the Legislature, Cyndi spent a decade working and volunteering in Oklahoma City's non-profit community. In her most recent work with Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma, she provided leadership programs for thousands of girls in low-income schools, juvenile detention centers, and public housing. Cyndi is a member of Leadership Oklahoma Class 31 and an alumni member of Leadership Oklahoma City's LOYAL Class VIII. She serves on the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women, is a member of the Oklahoma Messages Project Board of Directors, and is the past chair of the Infant Crisis Services Young Professionals Group. OF NOTE: ***Representative Munson earned our top rankings for supporting public education with her voting record.***

Cyndi Munson – Democrat Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Munson voted AGAINST diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not addressed directly on social media or website but conversations with Rep Munson confirm she opposes vouchers and fully supports rural public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Cyndi Munson – Democrat Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Munson voted FOR local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Munson voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

OF NOTE: **Rep Munson achieved our highest possible rating for supporting public schools based off her voting record in the Oklahoma House.** Rep Munson voted AGAINST major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations. Her website lists education platform as follows: A product of Oklahoma public schools, Cyndi knows that our state is only as strong as our public schools. Cyndi is dedicated to ensuring that our schools have the funding they need to provide a first-class education and our teachers have the pay and benefits they deserve. She has consistently fought for more resources for our classrooms and voted against budgets that don't provide the investments that our children need.

Donna Rice Jackson – Republican Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – None found
- **Facebook** – None found
- **Email** – pawsrice@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – No website or social media - no personal information available.

Donna Rice Jackson – Republican Challenger

- **Donna Rice did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **No website or social media – no information on education platform**



HOUSE DISTRICT 87



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 87 serves the following communities:
OKC



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Ellyn Hefner – Democrat

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.ellynhefner.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/ellynhefnerhd87>
- **Email** – info@ellynhefner.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Ellyn Novak Hefner is a single-working mother with three children. Life changed and so did her career path when her youngest son was born with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Learning to navigate the developmental disability service system and advocate for her son is what inspired Ellyn to become a champion for disability rights in Oklahoma. She has spent the last 18 years as a caregiver and professional dedicated to helping Oklahoma parents find hope and resources for their children with IDD. Originally a small business owner with her late husband in Oklahoma City, Ellyn shifted careers to become a health coordinator for the Oklahoma Family Network, a nonprofit serving families with disabilities and special health care needs. She became more involved at the policy level after graduating from Partners in Policymaking, a leadership training program designed to teach people with disabilities and family members the power of advocacy to positively change the way people with disabilities are supported, viewed, taught, live and work. She served on the Interagency Coordinating Council for Sooner Start as a member and Chair. In 2015, Ellyn helped organize the Roll and Walk from 11th and Walker to the Capitol to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act Sunday, July 26, 2015. She was appointed by the Governor, in 2015, to serve on the Advisory Committee on Services to Persons with Developmental Disabilities. Ellyn is currently a financial advisor at Bluecrest Financial Alliances in Midtown. She is a Chartered Special Needs Consultant (ChSNC) and helps families access information, specialists, financial products and services that improve the quality of life for Oklahomans with disabilities and special needs. She is also an ambassador for OKSTABLE accounts, which allows individuals with disabilities to save and invest money without losing eligibility for certain public benefits programs. She recently worked alongside State Treasurer Randy McDaniel and Rep. Kyle Hilbert on an Income-tax deduction for Oklahomans who contribute to STABLE accounts.

Ellyn Hefner – Democrat

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Oppose/I have been an advocate for kids with a disability, there is not a plan for all kids to be accepted and have a program for students who have a disability/intellectual disability.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Approve with hesitation/my son has the Lindsey Nicole Henry voucher, it is not perfect, not inclusive for all. This voucher needs a lot of work and private schools need to be able to accept and teach students who have a disability. It is limited because there are very few slots for students who have an Intellectual Disability. My son has grown so much in independence by being in an inclusive school. Oklahoma is far off in making this happen for the majority of students with an intellectual disability.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Teachers need to have a competitive pay, to start.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Counselors are needed and support for families with a child who has mental health challenges is needed. I have an understanding that families are vital in helping a child with a mental health challenge. I have experience with mental health challenges in my family, it is not a one size fits all.

Ellyn Hefner – Democrat

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Yes. I believe that culture and community are important to families and schools.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Wifi has to be looked at for students of all communities within the city and rural areas. I would find the experts, who may be teachers, in rural schools, parents who understand the needs of their child to see what is needed first. Spending money and building something new without asking those who use/need the access is not how I would want to spend taxpayer dollars.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

I live in an urban area and would ask families who live in rural schools to help educate myself on the needs in their community before I propose or create policy. I know a lot about education within Special Education classes. I look to how we care for students with a disability when I look at public schools as a whole. I fear that leadership has taken disability out of the conversation as they move forward on pushing vouchers. I see rural schools left out of that conversation as well. NOT talking about plans for kids with disabilities and kids in rural schools hurts families. There is a lot that needs to be done with transition/DRS/DHS/waivers/employment, Votech...why are we talking about vouchers? We should be talking about paying teachers a competitive salary.

Gloria Banister – Republican

- Campaign Website – <http://gloriabanister.com/>
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/GoGloD87>
- Email – grawli@outlook.com
- Hometown – OKC

Candidate Bio – No website or social media - no personal information available.

Gloria Banister – Republican

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I would consider supporting funding private schools with tax dollars, however diverting public tax dollars is not what I understand to be happening. I would want to see all the legislation and proposals on tax credits.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I would consider supporting tax dollars to fund private schools. However, I would need to see all the legislative proposals and bills on vouchers and savings accounts before effectively answering this.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

I cannot effectively answer this. I must see what policies are out there and speak to Educators myself.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

Mental health is on my agenda 100%. I would need to see all the legislative proposals and bills before effectively answering this..

Gloria Banister – Republican

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

I cannot effectively answer if rural school districts should have local control. I would need more information.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

I understand this is a HUGE issue. I would need to see all the legislative proposals and bills.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

I am not in office, I am running for office. When I am elected, I will make myself available to EVERYONE... I really want to hear from all sides and read any legislative proposals and bills before effectively making any policy decisions for something that effects our future generations. Our Oklahoma children need to be educated, not indoctrinated.



HOUSE DISTRICT 88



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 88 serves the following communities:
OKC



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Mauree Turner – Democrat Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.maureeturner.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/MaureeTurnerOK>
- **Email** – hello@maureeturner.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Mauree Nivek Rajah Salima Turner (They / Them/ Theirs / Representative) is the newly-elected State Representative for Oklahoma’s 88th House District. Rep. Turner was formerly the Regional Field Director for the Campaign for Smart Justice, an ACLU campaign focusing on criminal justice reform, and its many intersections. They are an Oklahoma community organizer, born and raised, coming from a Muslim and Baptist upbringing. In elementary school, if they were missing class it was because they were at an HIV and AIDS Awareness event or LGBTQ+ advocacy event with their mother. They have also worked with the NAACP of Oklahoma, Freedom Oklahoma, CAIR OK, and a number of community-based and student lead groups working in and researching the intersections of racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, religious freedom, reproductive rights—just to name a few.

Mauree Turner – Democrat Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Turner voted AGAINST diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not addressed directly on social media or website but conversations with Rep Turner confirm she opposes vouchers and fully supports rural public schools.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Mauree Turner – Democrat Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Turner voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

OF NOTE: *Rep Turner achieved our highest possible rating for supporting public schools based off her voting record in the Oklahoma House.* Rep Turner voted AGAINST major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations.

Jed Green – Independent Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – None found
- **Facebook** – None found
- **Email** – None found
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – No website or social media - no personal information available

Jed Green – Independent Challenger

- Jed Green did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No website or social media – no information on education platform.



HOUSE DISTRICT 90



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 90 serves the following communities:
OKC



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Nana Dankwa – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – nanaforhd90.com
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/NanaDforOKC/>
- **Email** – info@nanaforhd90.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Born in Oklahoma City in 1981, the son of Ghanaian immigrants, Nana has overcome every challenge by embracing the dreams his parents envisioned when they came to the United States in the 1970s. Nana grew up in the Putnam City School District. Soon after graduating high school, he received his diploma in Surgical Technology and worked full-time in the medical field for 9 years while earning his Associate's and Bachelor's. He left full-time work to focus on his MBA and a law degree. He passed the Oklahoma State Bar, became a licensed Attorney, and now works in Banking Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Protection. He ran for Oklahoma City Council, Ward 1 in the 2021 election, coming in third of seven candidates, and went on to be elected as Secretary of the Oklahoma Democratic Party in the same year. Nana's success is the fulfillment of his parents' dreams, but if you ask Nana what his greatest achievements are, he will tell you it is being a husband to Lauren, and a father to their two children, Nana-King and August.

Nana Dankwa – Democrat Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

I oppose. Instead, our tax dollars should be used to improve our public schools and to ensure a quality education for every child.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

I oppose. Instead, our tax dollars should be used to improve our public schools and to ensure a quality education for every child.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

Increasing teacher pay and providing them with the resources they need to be successful in the classroom would be a great start for improving recruitment and retention of quality educators. Respect, pay, and protect our teachers to keep them in our state.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

I would support any measure that advocates for greater access to mental health services. For our rural populations, I would support measures to recruit and retain more affordable access to in-person mental health providers as well as telehealth psychologist, psychiatric and addiction services.

Nana Dankwa – Democrat Challenger

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Absolutely. I will support legislative efforts to incorporate local control into individual school structures. Collaboration at every level is necessary to ensure the success of all our children.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

Approximately 90% of Oklahoma school districts are rural, and currently a quarter of Oklahomans still do not have access to broadband internet. I will support any legislative measures like those passed in the recent infrastructure bill that bring quality broadband to our rural areas. Rural schools need our support especially post COVID when many people in rural areas could not take advantage of remote schooling or remote job opportunities.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

Support aggressive recruitment and retention of quality educators. Support increasing qualified social workers and school counselors to support student and educator efforts. Find alternatives to standardized testing that disproportionately impact the individual, focused needs of our rural students. Focus less on rote memorization and more on high quality knowledge retention.

Jon Echols – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website** – <http://jonechols.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/jonforok>
- **Email** – jon@jonechols.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Jon is a fourth generation Oklahoman who's spent his whole life in OKC. His roots go back to the Land Run. His family still owns a farm in Okeene that they've had since 1889. Jon married his childhood sweetheart, and now they are raising their three children, ages 14, 12 and 9, here in OKC too. Jon is a local small business owner. His companies focus on healthcare. Jon received his undergraduate degree from the University of Oklahoma and his law degree from Oklahoma City University. Jon serves on the Board of Directors for the City Rescue Mission. He's also the Co-Founder of Shelter Oklahoma Schools, a charity that has raised over \$2.5 million to build storm shelters at schools across the state, including Western Heights and Moore. Jon has served the citizens of House District 90 as their representative for 6 years. After 4 years in office, Jon was named House Majority Floor leader, one of the top positions at the Capitol. He directs the flow of legislation, from committee assignments to bill presentations on the floor.

 **WARNING ALERT**  -

Supports “School Choice” – diversion of tax dollars from public schools to fund private school tuitions via tax credits or vouchers/ESAs

Jon Echols – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Echols voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080). He has been a public supporter of these programs and authored other similar legislation.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media. OF NOTE: Rep Echols has historically been a public supporter of school choice voucher programs.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Jon Echols – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Echols voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Echols voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

OF NOTE: Rep Echols voted FOR major changes to the Oklahoma School Funding Formula - this bill was also opposed by all public education advocacy groups and organizations. His website does not list education as a platform issue.



HOUSE DISTRICT 95



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 95 serves the following communities:
Midwest City, OKC



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Tegan Malone – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.teganforok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/teganforok>
- **Email** – tegmalone@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Tegan attended East Side Elementary, Ridgecrest Elementary, Monroney Junior High, and Carl Albert High School, where she graduated as senior class president and valedictorian. After graduation, Tegan attended Rose State College and the University of Oklahoma. In 1999, Tegan gave birth to her son Brayden, and her family became an Air Force family - being stationed first at Travis AFB in California. After adding their second son, Camden, to their family, Tegan went back to school and earned a post-baccalaureate teaching certificate and a Masters Degree in Teaching from Western Governors University. She began teaching elementary school shortly after receiving her Masters. After returning to Oklahoma, Tegan continued teaching at Pleasant Hill Elementary, where she was a finalist for Mid-Del's district Teacher of the Year, Fairview Elementary, and Kerr Middle School. Tegan transitioned out of the classroom and into the nonprofit sector. Tegan is an avid cyclist and led the Oklahoma Earthbike Fellowship. She also brought the popular Bike Club program from Tulsa to the OKC metro, starting the first program at Kerr Middle School (now Del City Middle School). Tegan is currently the president-elect of BikeOklahoma, and a member of the Oklahoma Trails Advisory Board which assists the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation administer the Federal Recreational Trails Grant Program.

Tegan Malone – Democrat Challenger

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

Absolutely not. We have a constitutional obligation to provide for common education, a.k.a. our public schools. More than that, the government should not be in the business of financially supporting institutions which are not open and accessible to all.

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

Same answer as before - Absolutely not. We have a constitutional obligation to provide for common education, a.k.a. our public schools. More than that, the government should not be in the business of financially supporting institutions which are not open and accessible to all. This is not a field that needs economic development stimulus.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

I would love to see pre-service teachers have a career tech program available to them. This would serve a few purposes. First, it would give high school students a springboard into the wide array of educational careers. Learning child development/psychology, starting on basic level college courses, and even have experiential learning experiences in a variety of educational settings at this early stage, could help identify and recruit for smaller districts. After high school/career tech, a student should be ready to complete any child care licensing and/or paraprofessional requirements. This would enable folks to begin working not only at day cares, but in after school programs, as a paraprofessional, and other occupations directly part of the the educational team. We have incredible career tech programs in our state, with many resources that we already have in our career techs coupled with the incredible teacher preparation programs we already have, we could develop an outstanding program that get our young people into a career field sooner. Obviously, we need to have a much better pay structure for all experience and education levels. I want to talk to budgeting experts to determine the best, most sustainable method of ensuring this happens for our teachers. We shouldn't have to take on extra duty assignments, coaching gigs, or move to administration to be able to breathe financially.

Tegan Malone – Democrat Challenger

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

I would love to see our public schools make a return to a community school model with integrated services. This is a wonderful way to allow the village to do its best work! I understand that in rural areas having access to counselors and therapists can be a defining challenge. I would like to encourage the development of health care consortiums that can form regional pods to begin to provide this service to our students. Legislatively, I would like to see stipulations on how many hours our school counselors can be pulled to do tasks that aren't counseling our students (like test administration).

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

Absolutely! I don't have a problem with minimum HOUR requirements, as school districts need to have the flexibility to meet the needs of the community. Let's face it, one of the main reasons our calendars are like they are right now was to accommodate local agricultural needs. The needs shifted, but our education traditions remained. This is a primary example of the loss of local control - our rural districts evolved as much as they could to meet the demands of education standards, funding standards, and state-wide goals. While I am sure that they still maintain those commitments, it is a fight to regain the right to self-determination for an individual district.

Tegan Malone – Democrat Challenger

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

To create a shift in policy, we first have to create a shift in the way we think about amenities such as broadband. I have lived on the edges of suburban areas before that were not up to date with the latest broadband access before. I have been told that it is not economically feasible to run lines to certain areas because the return on investment is not present. I believe it may be time to look realistically at reclassifying internet service as a public utility and create a system which is equitable across all population densities in our state. We will soon have a massive influx of federal dollars to begin addressing this issue, but without the foresight to create a public utility, we may find ourselves in yet another unequitable situation in the years to come.

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

I was a public school educator for over 14 years. I come from a long line of Oklahoma educators in both urban, suburban, and especially rural areas. Even though I physically left the classroom, my heart is still there. Since common education makes up the largest majority of our state's budget, having people in office who understand at least some of the major issues our schools, the students, and staff face. We also need folks who carry compassion for this most noble of professions to the policy making tables.

Max Wolfley – Republican Incumbent

- Campaign Website – None found

Candidate Bio – none available

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/MaxWolfleyforHouse95>

- Email – MaxWolfleyforHouse95@gmail.com

- Hometown – OKC

Max Wolfley – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Wolfley voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Max Wolfley – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Wolfley voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE



HOUSE DISTRICT 97



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 97 serves the following communities:
Forest Park, Jones, Lake Aluma, Midwest City, Nicoma Park, OKC, Spencer



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Jason Lowe – Democrat Incumbent

Candidate Bio – none available

- **Campaign Website** – None found
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/JasonLoweEsg>
- **Email** – _Lowe4HD97@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Jason Lowe – Democrat Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Lowe voted AGAINST diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Jason Lowe – Democrat Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Lowe voted FOR local control of rural school calendars.

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Lowe voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Lisa Janloo – Republican Challenger

- Campaign Website – none found

Candidate Bio – none available

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081744921536>

- Email – lisajanloo3@gmail.com

- Hometown – OKC

Lisa Janloo – Republican Challenger

- Janloo did not respond to our questionnaire.
- No website or social media – no information on education as a platform issue.



SCHOOL BUS

HOUSE DISTRICT 100



OK RSC

Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

House District 100 serves the following communities:
Bethany, OKC, Warr Acres



Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition

Marilyn Stark – Republican Incumbent

- **Campaign Website –**
- **Facebook –** <https://www.facebook.com/votemarilynstark>
- **Email –** votemarilynstark@gmail.com
- **Hometown – OKC**

Candidate Bio – Marilyn has lived in Oklahoma most of her life. A registered nurse with over 15 years working primarily in Intensive Care, she also worked in the faith-based/ nonprofit world for 20 years. As the Executive Director of Love Link Ministries, Marilyn worked on zoning, remodeling, and EPA/DEQ issues that directly aided those in need. Marilyn also worked with Tenaciously Teal, a nonprofit organization that offers support to cancer patients, as well as Villages, OKC, a nonprofit focused on healthy aging and staying in your home as long as possible. Representative Stark serves as Vice-Chair of the Health Services and Long-term Care Committee. She also serves on the Public Health and General Government committees and the Human Services Appropriations and Budget Committee. Born in Iowa, Marilyn's family moved to Yukon, Oklahoma where she spent her early years, and later moved to Muskogee, where she graduated from high school. Marilyn earned a BS in Chemistry and Biology from Southern Nazarene University and received her BSN in nursing from the University of Oklahoma College of Nursing. Marilyn lives in Bethany and is a member of Calvary Church of the Nazarene. She has served in various church positions, including teaching Sunday School, volunteer youth leader, District NYI secretary, and choir member. In addition, she has served as a Registered Song Evangelist for the past 22 years.

Marilyn Stark – Republican Incumbent

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of tax credits?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Stark voted FOR diverting public dollars to private school tuitions via tax credits in 2021 (SB1080).

- **Do you support or oppose diverting public tax dollars to fund private school tuitions in the form of vouchers or educational savings accounts?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Educators are leaving Oklahoma's classrooms at record rates. Recruitment can be particularly difficult in the rural areas of our state. What policy ideas do you have to support the recruitment and retention of quality educators in our public schools?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

- **Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Oklahoma has seen a sharp rise in mental health challenges among our children and teens. Access to quality care is a struggle in all communities, but rural areas are being disproportionately impacted due to lack of access to quality mental health professionals in their rural communities. What policy ideas do you have to provide increased mental health support for public school students and their families, particularly in rural areas?**

NO RESPONSE - not directly addressed on website or social media.

Marilyn Stark – Republican Incumbent

- **Local control is important to public school supporters. Rural school districts face unique challenges that require innovation at a local level. Would you support legislative efforts to restore local control to elected school boards to choose their school calendar structure?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Stark voted AGAINST local control of rural school calendars in 2019 (SB441).

- **Lack of reliable and affordable internet access presents a significant challenge for schools and students in rural Oklahoma. This can place these students at an academic disadvantage compared to other students in more accessible areas. What policy ideas do you have to support the expansion of reliable and affordable internet access in rural areas of Oklahoma?**

NO RESPONSE - Rep Stark voted FOR broadband expansion in 2021 (HB2946)

- **Is there anything additional you would like to add about what you believe would benefit Oklahoma's public schools from a policy perspective? This is your opportunity to share your additional thoughts not captured above.**

NO RESPONSE

Chaunte Gilmore – Democrat Challenger

- **Campaign Website** – <https://www.gilmoreforok.com/>
- **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/ChaunteGilmoreforHD100>
- **Email** – chaunteforhd100@gmail.com
- **Hometown** – OKC

Candidate Bio – Chaunte graduated from Putnam City High School and is a proud alumna of Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) where she received my associate's degree in physical therapy. She completed my Bachelor's degree at Oklahoma State University in Athletic Training and received her Master's in Business Administration and Healthcare Administration from Mid-America Christian University. She has served as an officer in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc, Director of Alumni and Recruitment for New Leaders Council, and Oklahoma Chapter Director for New Leaders Council. Gilmore was also a member of Oklahoma City Young Professionals for three years, the Junior League of Oklahoma City, the Greater OKC Urban League Guild, and Leadership Oklahoma City.

Chaunte Gilmore – Democrat Challenger

- **Gilmore did not respond to our questionnaire.**
- **Website lists the following for education platform.**

Oklahoma's kids and teachers deserve better. For far too long, our state has failed to adequately fund education. In order for us to be a well-educated community, we must ensure that our teachers are making a living wage with competitive benefits to keep them here instead of going out of state.