



Nov. 3, 2015

Dear School Board Member,

I am pleased to share with you that the OSSBA Board of Directors voted unanimously last weekend to endorse “Oklahoma’s Children, Our Future” – the penny sales tax plan to support public education.

Led by University of Oklahoma President David Boren, the sales tax initiative is projected to generate about \$615 million a year, with about \$427 million a year dedicated for funding to school districts. Supporters will soon begin gathering signatures on an initiative petition to put the question on the November 2016 statewide ballot.

A long-term funding plan for schools is a key recommendation within For the People: A Vision for Public Education and anchors the association’s legislative goals. Funding has simply not kept pace with growing enrollment and additional mandates. More important, tight budgets have made it increasingly difficult to provide students with the learning opportunities we know they need to prepare them well for their lives beyond school.

The largest portion of the sales tax proceeds would pay for a \$5,000 teacher pay raise. Our teachers deserve fair compensation, and Oklahoma simply must offer competitive pay to address the teacher shortage. For two straight years, OSSBA’s teacher shortage survey has found more than 1,000 teaching positions have gone unfilled. In local districts, our search for solutions has been agonizing. We’ve seen our schools cut classes, increase class sizes and hire substitutes and teachers with emergency certification thanks to an insufficient pool of highly qualified educators.

While our school districts aren’t allowed to advocate for passage of a ballot measure, I am lending my personal support to this plan and hope you will consider doing the same. We must talk to our family, friends and fellow local elected leaders about championing this effort to support Oklahoma’s students and teachers. We all benefit from a strong public education system.

The OSSBA website has a resource page with information about the plan, including a one-page summary, the proposed ballot language and links to news coverage. You can view the information at www.ossba.org/sales-tax-plan.

Shawn Hime, OSSBA’s executive director, can answer any questions you might have. He can be reached via email at shawnh@ossba.org or at 405.528.3571.

Sincerely,

Mike Mullins
President, OSSBA Board of Directors
Vice President, Sand Springs Public Schools Board of Education

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