



# FACTS

- Including benefits, Oklahoma ranks at either 48th or 50th in the nation in average teacher salary and dead last in our region.
- Oklahoma teachers have not seen a state increase in the minimum salary schedule in 10 years.
- Oklahoma is ranked 47th in the nation in per pupil funding and spends almost \$1,700 per pupil less than our neighboring states.
- This year alone, the state Board of Education has approved 1,943 emergency teacher certifications. In the 2011-2012 school year there were only 32 emergency certifications granted.
- Over 90 School districts have moved to four day school weeks.
- Since the 2013-2014 school year, Oklahoma has 700 fewer teachers with increased student enrollment of over 15,000 students – that means that class sizes across the state are expanding.

## FALSE ASSERTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL FUNDING

### **Schools have more money than they have ever had before.**

Over the past decade, state general funding is down nearly \$180 million while K-12 enrollment has grown by more than 50,000 students. School districts have very little discretion in how local and federal funds may be used so those monies alone cannot solve the teacher shortage and fulfill the operational needs of schools.

### **Schools could use local ad valorem dollars to pay teachers better but instead only build buildings.**

Ad valorem taxes and bond issues cannot be used to raise teacher salaries.

### **Education already gets 50% of the state budget – how much is enough?**

Actually, K-12 public schools only get 32% of the overall state's appropriated budget.

### **If only we didn't have so many school districts in the state we could afford to pay our teachers more.**

If we got rid of every superintendent in the state except 1 to run all the districts, that wouldn't save enough money to pay for a \$1,000 pay raise for every teacher.

### **Why didn't the Lottery fix education funding?**

The lottery brings in a little over \$30 million a year to public schools, but that is less than 2% of the school funding formula. So while it helps, it is not enough to "fix" school funding – especially with the cuts education has sustained through the years.

### **Schools are hoarding money in carryover accounts.**

State revenue to schools has been extremely volatile the last few years. In fact, in the past 3 years, schools have had to make mid-year budget cuts totaling over \$79.5 million dollars. Without carryover, many schools could not have paid their teachers or bills during these times. State statute regulates how much a school can carry forward and having a reasonable carryover is imperative in these unpredictable economic times. Many schools don't receive the bulk of their local ad valorem taxes until January and February. Money has to be carried forward to pay the bills until then.

### **When you look at cost of living and our benefits, Oklahoma teachers actually do pretty well.**

All the national rankings of teacher salaries do take into account benefits and if you did adjust for cost of living, Oklahoma teachers would still need a raise of over \$6,000 for their average salaries to reach the national average adjusted for cost of living.

### **Superintendent pay and administrative costs in our schools are where the real problems lie.**

Oklahoma school districts spend less than 4% of their budgets on administrative costs and rank 44th nationally on per student administration spending. Oklahoma law currently caps administrative costs.

**We have more than 690,000 reasons to fund education.**

**THERE ARE NO MORE EXCUSES. THIS IS REAL AND STUDENTS IN OUR SCHOOLS ARE SUFFERING!**