

I am thankful for the community support we have in Bartlesville.

Last week, in the spirit of Thanksgiving, Bartlesville Public Schools Foundation board members went to every school in the district to express their gratitude for our teachers. They visited each classroom, passing out drinks to every teacher and staff member. It was a small gesture, but along with the billboard on Adams, it reminds our teachers and staff how much our community appreciates them and all they do.



Over 160 volunteers manned over 30 hands-on stations at the second annual “Hands On, Minds On Bartlesville Math and Science Night” event on Monday evening, November 6, at Madison Middle School. More than 700 area students took part in the event, with over 500 of them coming from Bartlesville's Madison and Central Middle Schools. The event featured interactive STEM stations manned by professionals and volunteers, along with free pizza and great prizes. “Hands On, Minds On” was sponsored and facilitated by ConocoPhillips and the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, the Oklahoma State University chapter of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the OSU College of Engineering, and Truity Credit Union. The event was hosted by Madison Middle School with extensive support from school staff, especially Madison’s Science Building Coordinator Theresa Miller and Principal Joey Eidson.

Our students know the importance of giving back as well. In October, the BHS Freshman Academy held a walkathon and the Freshman Academy Leadership Council voted to donate the proceeds to the Agape Mission. The walkathon raised \$2,730 for the mission. Mr. Demaray’s Advisory class raised the most money as a class, at \$428, and two freshman students raised over \$200 each.

I would also like to congratulate our cross country teams on their hard work that continues to pay off. The boys team won its second consecutive Class 6A State Championship, while the girls were State Runner-up after a three-year streak of consecutive state championships. This is the Bruin Cross Country program's fifth state championship in four years under the leadership of head coach David Ayres and assistant coach Bon Bennett.

After eight weeks in special session, Oklahoma lawmakers could not muster the 75% supermajority in the House to pass new revenues that would have addressed our state’s structural budget problems and provided teachers with a long-overdue raise. While we are thankful that the latest proposals would spare the public schools from even more cuts, it is very disappointing to see the state again relying on one-time funds and cuts to many state agencies to balance its budget.

We cannot attract and retain the teachers we need until the state dramatically increases teacher salaries. I will be grateful if and when Oklahoma lawmakers finally come together to adequately fund public education and belatedly show our teachers the respect they earn every day in the classroom.

I hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving Break. GO BRUINS!

###

This column is online at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KMRUzRwAoCDfjuyzzDRorEAn6JJGbX8vEwvdJBXVShI/edit?usp=sharing>