

The 2018-19 school year has begun and is off to a great start as we welcome almost 6,000 students to our nine school sites. Thanks to local support for bond issues, our facilities have received much-needed improvements, and we are making strides in advancing the instructional technology available to students. This year every student in regular education at Bartlesville High School will have a Chromebook to use at school and at home for digital assignments. They and their instructors will be using Canvas, the same learning management system used at the University of Oklahoma, Southern Nazarene University, Texas A&M, the University of Texas at Austin, Baylor, Harvard, Yale, Brown, and many more.



Thanks to community support, Bartlesville Public Schools is a great place to teach and a great place to learn. Not only have local voters boosted our schools via bond issues, but generous community partners are making it possible for us to add another STEM module in every classroom from kindergarten through fifth grade. In addition to the computer science modules that were piloted last year, this year the students will also be engaged in biomedical or engineering modules. Those experiences lead into our middle schools, which are both Distinguished Schools in the Project Lead the Way STEM program. Our high school STEM Computer Science and Pre-Engineering programs are thriving thanks to talented teachers, quality curricula, and great facilities.

Our students also excel outside of the classroom. Our district is in a tie for the most 6A state championships over the last two years. Making available quality experiences in athletics and the fine and performing arts are important aspects of a well-rounded education and depend on the generous support of community members and voters.

A recent example of how our community partners make a difference is that, thanks to the generosity of Truity Credit Union, every teacher in the district was again given a 50 dollar bill at the start of this school year to spend however he or she chose. Teachers spend a great deal of money out of their pockets on supplies for their classrooms so that our students are well equipped and prepared for the start of school.

This help from Truity is appreciated since the lack of operational dollars from the state for your public schools means larger class sizes, fewer course offerings, and a lack of instructional supplies. Our local community is doing all it can via bond issues to make up for those shortcomings, and the state finally funded record teacher salary increases to address a still-growing shortage of qualified teachers. But the fact remains that despite the boost in teacher salaries Oklahoma's per-pupil spending is still dead last in the region.

It is important that you make an informed vote in the runoff primary on Tuesday, August 28. Some north and far west sections of the school district fall in House District 10, which will have a Republican runoff to determine which of that party's candidates goes on the ballot in the general election in November. There will also be Republican runoffs for that party's candidates for governor, state superintendent of schools, attorney general, and more. Both Democrats and Republicans will be determining their parties' candidates for the corporation commission. So please go to the polls on Tuesday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and help determine the future direction for our state.

Go Bruins!

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This column is online at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oE-7EwtYTXQ2rKFShL5ZKu0F7ndXIIv8yS0kz-JvX3c/edit?usp=sharing>