

OPTIONS

*A newsletter about alternative education from
the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center*

Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Seeking Nominees; Dr. Meritt to Provide Webcast on Application Process

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, a non-profit organization that recognizes and encourages academic excellence in Oklahoma's public schools, is seeking nominations for its 2008 Academic All-State Scholarships and Medal for Excellence Awards.

Scholarships and educator awards totaling \$258,000 will be presented at the foundation's 22nd annual Academic Awards Banquet May 17, 2008, in Tulsa. The event, which is attended by nearly 1,000 state education supporters, is broadcast statewide on public television and emceed by David L. Boren, the founder and chairman of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.

"We know that education is the best investment our society can make for the future," Boren said. "If we make all of the right policy decisions in every other area but fail to adequately educate the next generation, we will imperil the future of our society. By working together to give outstanding students and educators the recognition they deserve, we send a strong message to our state and to the nation that Oklahomans value academic excellence."

At the 2007 Academic Awards Banquet, Boren announced that the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence has met its goal of raising a \$5 million Academic Awards Endowment, allowing the organization to increase its annual Academic All-State Scholarships from \$1,500 to \$2,000 and its Medal for Excellence Awards from \$7,500 to \$10,000 each. In addition, cash awards directly to the schools of Medal for Excellence winning educators have been increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Academic Awards Program nomination forms are available on the foundation's Web site at www.ofe.org. Nominations are being accepted in the following categories:

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Talented Gore Student Has Colorful Future



Students at the Gore Alternative School got a jump on Halloween by painting the windows on their highway-side building. Taking the lead was Jon Hall, an artistic junior who will be the first in his family to graduate from high school. Jon also painted a new Alternative Education sign for the front door.

According to Mary Beth Gately, the program's teacher, the students received many compliments on their art work. They completed their designs just in time for Fin 'n Feather weekend, an event sponsored by a nearby resort.

Gore is a small town of 850 located in Sequoyah county.

OU-Tulsa Professional Development and Leadership Academy presents:

SUCCESS 2008 and BEYOND

A conference for Prevention and Intervention (Pre-K through 12th) for graduates of Oklahoma's 2nd Century

February 6, 2008 Tulsa, Oklahoma

Details and registration information in the December issue of *Options*

A Professional Development Series Child Abuse & Neglect

Presenter: Fran Roberson, LCSW, LMFT
Center for Children and Families, Inc
Norman, Oklahoma



Part 1 Categories and Prevalence	11 minutes, 31 seconds	24.8 Mb
Part 2 Signs and Symptoms	19 minutes, 11 seconds	22.7 Mb
Part 3 How to Respond and How the System Works	26 minutes, 19 seconds	24.6 Mb
Part 4 Frequently Asked Questions	Available soon	

Free downloads available for professional development. Just go to www.otac.info. Check out our other webcasts while you're there!

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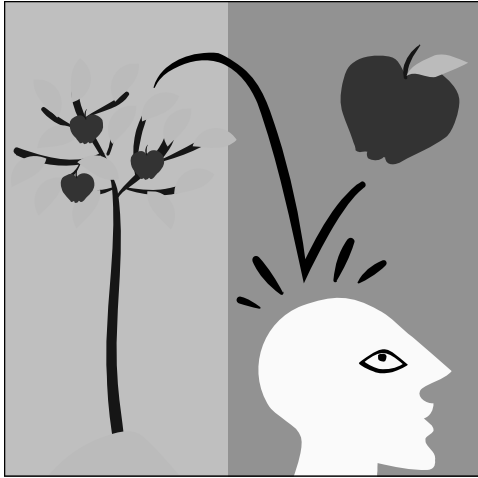
Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Wants the Best of the Best

1. **Academic All-State**, which honors 100 public high school seniors with a \$2,000 scholarship. Students must be nominated by their superintendents or principals. Schools are encouraged to nominate all eligible students. To qualify, students must meet at least one of the following requirements: a composite ACT score of at least 30; a combined SAT critical reading and math score of at least 1350; or be selected as a semi-finalist for a National Merit, National Achievement or National Hispanic Scholarship.
2. **The Oklahoma Medal for Excellence in Teaching and Administration**, which honors four educators (a public school elementary, secondary, and college/university teacher and an elementary/secondary administrator) with a \$10,000 cash award and a glass sculpture. In addition, the school, department or school system of these four award winners will be presented a \$2,000 cash award to support academic programs. Both individuals and schools are eligible to nominate educators for these awards.
3. **The Oklahoma Medal for Excellence in Alternative Education**, which honors the public school alternative education program judged to be the most effective. The winning program receives \$10,000 and a glass sculpture. Any person familiar with the program is eligible to make the nomination.

All Medal for Excellence nominations must be postmarked by Nov. 26, while Academic All-State nominations must be postmarked by Dec. 1. Scholarship and award recipients are chosen by an independent selection committee, chaired by Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Marian P. Opala and comprised of business, education and civic leaders, as well as former All-Staters and Medal for Excellence winners. Since 1987, the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence has awarded more than \$3.2 million in academic awards and scholarships. For more information, visit the foundation's Web site at www.ofe.org or call Brenda Wheelock at (405) 236-0006.

Dr. Mary Meritt, former Asst. Superintendent of Schools, will provide step-by-step application instructions in a Webcast available from OTAC later this month. Just go to www.otac.info and click on the Webcast directory.





Popular Student Conference Expands to Two Locations

For the first time, the OTAC Student Conference will be held in two separate locations, OSU-Tulsa and UCO in Edmond. For years this popular event has been a one-day conference that was at or over capacity and students sometimes couldn't get into the sessions they wanted to attend. Even with the addition of an additional day in a different city, both sites filled up within days of our accepting registrations.

Although some of the breakout sessions differ from place to place, participants at both conferences will enjoy the music and humor of the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Monte Selby. For those of you who attended the Summer Conference, you will remember how entertaining Dr. Selby was. In addition, both groups will be addressed by Lisa Pryor, Assistant Superintendent for Alternative Education.

Below are descriptions of the breakout sessions and their availability at each location.

Monty Selby (Tulsa and Edmond)

Monty's breakout sessions will allow students an informal setting to ask follow-up questions or discuss related concepts. The session will include an interactive exploration of the music industry and how daily decisions impact personal and financial success.

Our Environment (Tulsa only)

The Owasso environmental club, "The Green Team" will be doing a presentation about Global Warming—the causes and effects, how to help offset the problem and the three Rs of environmental awareness: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Shaken Baby Syndrome (Edmond only)

A graphic presentation about the devastating form of child abuse called Shaken Baby Syndrome. Students will give a brief demonstration of what occurs when a young child is shaken and show a short video about an actual victim. Attendees will be given child abuse prevention blue ribbons, **wrist bands**, and information that may save a life.

Point, Click, Publish (Tulsa and Edmond)

Bring your "story" to life. Attendees will use PhotoStory to add special effects, soundtracks, and voice narration to digital photos and will create slideshows that bring their photos to life. These skills can be used to create personal photo collections, digital reports, photo montages, photo essays, and many more creative projects. Point, click, publish ... let the creativity begin!

Creative Problem Solving (Tulsa only)

Problems occur everyday – in class, with friends, and with our family. We all face these troubles everyday and occasionally they can really get us stumped!! Come and learn new ways to get "unstuck" from some of our everyday problems –and have fun doing it!

Team Thunder (Tulsa only)

Team Thunder is a Top Fuel education/racing team that engages students from Kindergarten through post-secondary level. Its educational messages focus on making good choices and understanding how math, science, technology, language arts, and other subjects are applied in the real world. Team Thunder delivers their unique message in classrooms and school assemblies that leave students and teachers energized about school and informed about making good choices.

Latin America Experiences (Tulsa only)

Come join the Jenks Alternative students as they take you on an adventure through Latin American countries. Join them as they share their experiences through the culture, language, music, and dance.

Podcasting, Making Music, and Digital Storytelling (Tulsa and Edmond)

In this working, hands-on session, you will learn how to use Apple Macbooks and Garageband software to create loop-based original music, record music using a keyboard and microphones, and create enhanced podcasts that feature still pictures with narration and background music. If this sounds complicated and difficult, think again! By the end of the session, participants will understand the basics of podcasting, digital music creation, and digital storytelling! Experience some of the most powerful and creativity-enhancing digital technologies available on the planet!

Dancing with the Stars (Edmond only)

Experience the latest craze—Ballroom Dancing! Learn to Fox Trot, Mambo, Swing, Waltz, and Tango. Results and fun guaranteed even if you have two left feet. GIVE IT A TRY !

Blues You Can Use (Tulsa and Edmond)

Crossroads Learning Experience will provide a big dose of fun, along with thought-provoking information, insights, and life skills. We'll use the harmonica as the vehicle to teach decision-making, relationship building, and positive attitudes about the life long learning process. Each participant will receive a Bluesband harmonica and instruction book. Come and experience the joys of learning while you play the boogie on your own harmonica.

All About Birds (Tulsa and Edmond)

This presentation from the George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center is designed to excite and inform students about our feathered friends and their unique adaptations. We will explore how birds are one of the best barometers of the health of our environment and serve many important roles in benefiting mankind. Participants will enjoy a close encounter with several birds and have the opportunity to ask questions.

Turning your Anger into Action (Edmond only)

GRrrrrrr/Sigh..... Why am I so angry?!?! Anger is a natural emotion but how you handle your anger makes all the difference. Often we get in situations where we feel our anger keeps us from doing things we feel we need to do. This interactive workshop helps you focus on controlling the energy of anger and making it work for you.



FY2008 Alternative Education Statewide Academy Technology Grants Awarded

According to State Superintendent Sandy Garrett, House Bill 1133 authorized the Oklahoma State Legislature to appropriate \$100,000 to establish robotics projects in school districts. The State Board of Education awarded grants to school districts in the amount of \$5,000 each to implement remote-controlled robot projects for entry in Oklahoma regions and national competitions.

Applicants had to demonstrate commitment to the development of student teams, recruitment of volunteer mentors, designing and building of remote-controlled robots, and entering competitions. The following alternative education programs received the award:

Antlers	Garfield County Interlocal	Mustang
Atoka-Coal Interlocal	Geary	Okemah
Bartlesville	Granite	Perkins-Tryon
Blackwell	Grove	Pond Creek-Hunter
Broken Bow	Idabel	Quinton
Choctaw-Nicoma Park	Ketchum	Sand Springs
Claremore	Mannford	Smithville
Coalgate	McAlester	Talihina
Comanche	McLoud	Western Heights
Cordell	Muldrow	Westville
Coweta	Muskogee	Woodward

More on Our Webcasts.....

We have received a great deal of positive feedback on the availability, content and easy access of our webcasts. We are happy to be able to meet such a need in a convenient and cost-effective way.

All of the webcasts are archived and downloadable, which means you can watch them totally at your convenience—on your planning period, with a group of teachers after school or from your own home. You have access to all productions, even those that were taped last year.

To give you an idea of what we're working on now, here are a few topics that should be available by Thanksgiving break:

- Highlights from all our regional meetings
- Child Abuse & Neglect (Part 4—Q & A)
- Dr. Merrit takes you through the application process for the Medal of Excellence
- Idioms and Core Knowledge
- The Golden Triangle (Writing)

Just log onto www.otac.info to see how easy professional development can be!



CHARACTER EDUCATION GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Deadline Date – December 3, 2007

Grant Resource – John Templeton Foundation

Category – Character Education School Award

Description – Every year, the [Character Education Partnership](#) names ten public and private schools and districts (K-12) as National Schools of Character for their outstanding work in character education. The purpose of the awards program is to honor these exemplars, showcase their work, and help them to inspire and lead others. With support from the [John Templeton Foundation](#), 2008 NSOC award recipients will receive a \$20,000 grant: \$10,000 to enhance their program and \$10,000 to provide outreach to other educators. Once selected as a National School or District of Character, winners will develop an approved plan for conducting outreach activities, to include providing staff development or mentoring for another school or district. To be eligible, a school must have been engaged in character education for a minimum of three full years, starting no later than December 2004 for the 2008 awards. Districts need to have been engaged in character education for a minimum of four full years, starting no later than December 2003. Schools must have a minimum of 175 students to apply. Smaller administrative units that maintain a separate identity within a large district may apply in the district category (e.g., a school pyramid or cluster).

Size of Grant – 10 awards of \$20,000

Cost Sharing or Match – No

Web http://www.character.org/site/c.gwKUJhNYjrF/b.993295/k.180D/National_Schools_of_Character_Awards_Program.htm



LA Schools Turn to Technology for Dropout Problem

The Los Angeles Unified School District is the second largest in the country with over 700,000 students. With an ever-increasing dropout rate (17,000 students this year alone), school officials are using recovered dropouts as the messengers for getting dropouts back to school. They will be using MySpace, YouTube, text messaging, and radio waves to reach students at risk of dropping out of school and to lure back thousands who have already left.

District leaders recruited and hired 80 special counselors to work in the middle and high schools where the largest numbers of students at risk of academic failure are concentrated.

Those “diploma-project advisers” determine which students in their schools are most at risk of dropping out. They work with those children, meet their parents, and design an individual graduation plan that may include catching up on credits by taking online courses, enrolling in classes at a community college, and switching to an alternative placement such as continuation high schools, which are small schools for students older than 16 who may need evening courses and other accommodations if they work or have children.

Go to the following link to view the full article. You will need to register, but there is a free subscription available. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/17/08dropout.h27.html>

Anything goes....

I have two broken ribs. I won't bore you with all the particulars; let's just say that I have had to take several days off and learned a lot about being home during the day. First of all, daytime television is galactically boring. I've never understood the public's infatuation with soap operas and just how many reruns of *Law and Order* can there be?! And, more importantly, do I care who fathered this woman's child?

With television out of the picture (so to speak), I turned to reading, one of my favorite hobbies. After several days, I had read everything in the house including a 1960 cookbook on fondue cooking. "I'll just pop over to the library." I thought to myself. Uhhhhhhh, no can do. Alrighty then, I'll catch up on the laundry. Big mistake. I quickly added bending over to my list of don'ts along with coughing, sneezing, reaching, twisting and hiccupping, the latter to be avoided at all costs.

I felt somewhat foolish when people were kind enough to bring me food or water my plants. I had no cast or bandage, my eyes weren't bright with fever, there will be no scars— yet I was in agony.

I tried spending time on my computer, but couldn't seem to focus—pain pills will do that to you. So what to do, what to do?

Rarely have I had so much time to reflect on my job and on life. It occurred to me that many of our alternative students are in similar situations. They may not have broken ribs, but they have an inner pain that shows no bruises on the outside. Our students, especially those in secondary school, are quite adept at hiding their pain. Many times their defiance is simply a mechanism to mask frustration or fear. A sullen attitude could be hiding inner disappointment.

As good educators, we know to focus on the things that can't be seen. Attitudes, hopes, opinions, fears, joy and pain are just as essential to understanding our students as dealing with their visible scars.



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