

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER ONE
OF TULSA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 9, 2024

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District Number One of Tulsa County, Oklahoma, was held on December 9, 2024, commencing at 6:38 p.m., in the Cheryl Selman room, ground floor, at the Charles C. Mason Education, 3027 S. New Haven Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Notice of the meeting was given by service of written notice of the meeting to the office of the County Clerk of Tulsa County, Oklahoma, as required by Title 25, O.S., § 311(A)(5), and by posting the agenda and recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools in prominent public view in the enclosed glass display case at the main door of the Charles C. Mason Education Service Center at 5:00 p.m. and at tulsaschools.org at 4:55 p.m. on December 6, 2024, pursuant to the provisions of Title 25, O.S., § 311(A)(9).

PRESENT: E'Lena Ashley
John Croisant
Susan Lamkin
Jennettie Marshall
Calvin Moniz
Sarah Smith
Stacey Woolley

ABSENT: None

OPENING EXERCISES

Ms. Stacey Woolley, president of the Board of Education, called the meeting to order, roll called, and declared that a quorum of the board was present; therefore, the meeting was qualified to consider the agenda items. The flag salute was led by the Daniel Webster High School JROTC.

Board President Woolley reminded the board and the public that the agenda, goal monitoring reports, live stream link, and the supporting document containing board member questions regarding agenda items and the district's responses were posted on the main Tulsa Public Schools' web page.

SUPERINTENDENT'S CORRECTION TO AGENDA

Superintendent Johnson stated that agenda item E. 23 – Qualtrics Employee Experience Software (listed on pages 6 and 70) should reflect a term of 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 and that all funds will be paid out of FY25. Additionally, Dr. Johnson withdrew agenda item E.15 – Aspiring Educators.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS/AWARDS/RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Irene Drew, President of the Tulsa Council of PTA presented on the status of parent-teacher associations across the district.

C.1 Motion, discussion, and vote on motion to endorse the Tulsa Metro Chamber's 2025 OneVoice Regional Legislative Agenda. (Exhibit A)

Superintendent Johnson introduced this item and answered questions of the board.

Board Vice-President, John Croisant made a **motion** to approve, and Ms. Susan Lamkin **seconded** the motion. The motion **passed** by the following vote:

AYE: Jennettie Marshall, Calvin Moniz, Sarah Smith, John Croisant, Susan Lamkin, E'Lena Ashley, and Stacey Woolley; NAY: None; ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

There were no minutes submitted for approval.

CONSENT AGENDA

A **motion** was made by Mr. John Croisant, and Mr. Calvin Moniz **seconded** the motion.

Superintendent Johnson and district staff answered questions of the board. The consent agenda **passed** with the following vote:

AYE: E'Lena Ashley, Susan Lamkin, John Croisant, Sarah Smith, Calvin Moniz, Jennettie Marshall, and Stacy Woolley; NAY: None; ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION AGENDA

There were no actions items.

ACTION AGENDA

There were no action items.

GOAL MONITORING REPORTS

K-5 Multilingual learner English proficiency growth (Goal 1/Interim Goal 1.3) – The percentage of K-5 multilingual learner students meeting their annual English language proficiency assessment will increase from 32% in May 2021 to 45% by May 2026.

6-8 Multilingual learner English proficiency growth (Goal 2/Interim Goal 2.2) – The percentage of 6-8 multilingual learner students meeting their annual English language proficiency growth targets on the ACCESS 2.0 language proficiency assessment will increase from 19% in May 2021 to 25% by May 2026.

Mr. Calvin Moniz made a **motion** to accept receipt of the reports, and Mr. John Croisant **seconded** the motion.

Board Member Susan Lamkin reminded the Board of the fundamental questions that the board should consider as they review the goal monitoring report. She called for a motion and second to accept receipt of the Goal 1/Interim Goals 1.3 Goal 2/Interim Goal 2.2 report.

Superintendent Johnson introduced the report and presented framing context to guide the discussion. Dr. Johnson and district staff answered questions from the board.

The motion to accept receipt of the reports **passed** by the following vote:

AYE: Jennettie Marshall, Calvin Moniz, Sarah Smith, John Croisant, Susan Lamkin, E'Lena Ashley, and Stacey Woolley; NAY: None; ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: None.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Vice President Croisant mentioned the recent mayoral inauguration and the opportunity to work with Mayor Nichols' office to further support the district's students and families. He also recapped the MPSCC Youth Forum that was attended by Mayor Nichols, Chief Dennis Larsen, Superintendent Johnson, and moderator Hannibal Johnson as well as the Shop With a Cop event supported by the Tulsa Rotary Club that he was able to participate in benefitting Celia Clinton families.

Ms. E'Lena Ashley gave a shout out to the Lady Cardinals East Central Flag football team for taking 1st place and the Lady Cardinal wrestling team placing 2nd. She also recognized the East Central boys' basketball team who traveled to New York and won the tournament. She also shared that over 100 East Central seniors have submitted their college applications.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Speaker #1 – The questioning of the lack of integrity of the SDE changes to cut scores by applying them to 2024 state tests results and the impact that those changes will have and have had on teaching, learning and the pupils.

Speaker #2 – Disparate impact of teacher retention rates at schools across the district. I am a teacher at McLain High School. Nearly 50% of our staff are brand new to McLain this year, and many are new to teaching altogether. I am requesting teacher retention data disaggregated by school and specifying certificate type, years in TPS, and years at the specific site,

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

The superintendent's report is available online on the District's YouTube channel, youtube.com/tulsaschools and the Superintendent's Facebook page.

NON-ROUTINE ITEMS

There were no non-routine items.

NEW BUSINESS

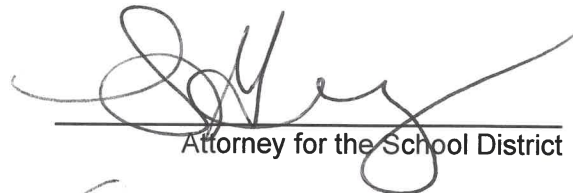
There was no new business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

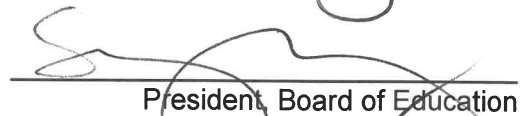
Board President Woolley announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education would be held on Monday, January 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Let the record show the meeting was digitally recorded. The recording is on file as a matter of record.



Attorney for the School District



President, Board of Education



Superintendent of Schools



Clerk, Board of Education



2025 Regional Legislative Agenda

STATE PRIORITIES

ENSURING A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

Modernize, Connect and Broaden the Region's Industrial and Logistics Ecosystem to Drive Economic Growth

Our region's current industrial and logistics ecosystem, consisting of Tulsa International Airport, Tulsa Port of Catoosa (TPOC), Fair Oaks, Tulsa Port of Inola, and MidAmerica Industrial Park, gives the region a unique advantage when competing for economic development opportunities.

Continued investment in these assets is required to compete for mid- to large-scale development projects.

- a. At the state level, direct funding for targeted improvements and capabilities studies focused on streamlining connections amongst these industrial and transportation assets to improve our competitive position.
- b. Amend the Local Industrial Development Act (LIDA) in a manner that encourages and incentivizes the development of public-private partnerships or multi-jurisdictional partnerships for the purpose of securing property and constructing infrastructure thereon for developing industry within or near a municipality or county.
- c. Appropriate funds to improve and expand modal connections between all five of our industrial and transportation assets. This should include, but not be limited to, improvements to the E Port Road/SH266 corridor and US-412 that will support freight connections and additional warehousing.
- d. Support targeted investments aligned with strategic planning initiatives that contribute to safe and efficient shipping container movement on trucks, rail and barge, and enhance surface and air freight handling.

Advanced Mobility Cluster

Support the next generation of autonomy and mobility by building on significant investment in Tulsa's Tech Hub (\$38.2 million Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant awarded in 2022 and \$51 million Tech Hub awarded in 2024, both from U.S. Economic Development Administration), which aims to position the region as the best place to develop, test, manufacture, and deploy autonomous systems, such as drones. These investments will attract new business and encourage economic growth through the state of Oklahoma by supporting local entrepreneurs and investing in talent pathways to build a strong and nimble technology workforce. In addition to the \$15 million commitment in 2024 from the State of Oklahoma for Tulsa's Tech Hub, state leaders should consider additional investments in research and technology, workforce development, entrepreneurial and venture support, and regional economic development strategies needed to grow Oklahoma's autonomy and mobility industry.

Increase the Department of Tourism's Promotional Fund

As preparations are underway for the 100th anniversary of Route 66 in 2026, we need to take advantage of increased national and international tourism to Oklahoma and increase the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department's marketing budget. Tourism is the third largest industry in Oklahoma. With our beautiful state parks, longest stretch of historic Route 66, rich



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Native American history, and thriving business community, Oklahoma has much to offer visitors to our state. We need to increase funding for the Department of Tourism to compete with our surrounding states, which each spend more to attract tourists than Oklahoma. 2022 was the best year for tourism in Oklahoma state history with \$11.8 billion in economic impact, a sustained 103,300 jobs, and \$1.2 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue. Increased revenue for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department will better allow us to create, maintain, and promote the incredible assets that we have in our state.

Support Legislation to Create a Governing Board for the Department of Commerce

As the State of Oklahoma continues to recruit and expand primary job creation at a more competitive rate, consistent leadership of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce is critical. Currently, the Secretary of Commerce and Executive Director of the Department of Commerce are appointed by the governor with confirmation from the State Senate. This results in multiple appointments over the course of an administration and significant changes within the department every 1 to 4 years. The proposed future structure would be for the House of Representatives, Senate, and governor to have multiple appointments to a governing board that would then hire a “CEO” for the Department of Commerce. This would allow for more longevity and stability of leadership at one of our most important state agencies and help support communities across the state in their own economic development efforts.

Support Oklahoma’s Film and Music Industries

Continue to support the growth of the booming Oklahoma film industry and its direct and indirect workforce by streamlining the current law and making it more competitive with other states by increasing the cap to \$80M on the incentive rebate. Texas just passed a cap of \$100M a year mainly due to business lost to the surrounding states, namely Oklahoma. This year alone, the Northeastern Oklahoma region has produced more than 45 films, television, and other productions, and the industry has had a direct fiscal impact of over \$200M in the state. We need to capitalize on this momentum and invest in this growing industry. As more productions choose to film in Oklahoma, the demand for qualified personnel continues to grow. Strengthening workforce development initiatives is essential to building a skilled crew and ensuring the state’s continued competitiveness in the industry.

To strengthen Oklahoma’s music industry, the state must introduce new legislation to support local musicians, small venues, and business development. Previous legislation called for incentive payments to eligible venues that host performances by local artists. These venues can receive rebates of up to 75% of state sales tax or mixed beverage gross receipts tax collected within 12 hours before and after a local show, based on the venue’s capacity. This initiative will help grow the nighttime economy, creating jobs, boosting tourism, and enhancing the cultural vibrancy of communities.



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BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE CRITICAL TO BUSINESS

Support Critically Needed Transportation Funding

Return our streets and highways to a state of good repair by fully funding the projects included in the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's Eight Year Plan. Support funding for the studies, plan development, and highway improvements to upgrade the US-412 corridor between Tulsa and Northwest Arkansas to Federal Interstate standards. Increase state appropriations to ODOT for the construction and improvement of all transportation facilities of which it has a responsibility to manage effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of citizens, business, and industry.

Discontinue the transferring of funding from the state transportation fund to special cash. Support the proper distribution of state resources and funding to ODOT divisions responsible for ensuring that all state transportation and infrastructure remains in a state of good repair.

Implement Policies to Expedite Deployment of Critical Energy Infrastructure

To effectively protect and promote energy infrastructure in Oklahoma, particularly transmission lines and pipelines, we urge the state to implement policies that expedite the deployment of critical energy infrastructure. This includes ensuring timely permitting processes and deployment of approved projects while supporting robust investments in the construction and maintenance of energy transmission systems. Until new projects can be built, encourage reliable and cost-effective deployment of interim solutions, like grid-enhancing technologies, that allow for more electricity to flow to consumers and reduces the cost of avoidable congestion. By prioritizing these actions, Oklahoma can enhance its energy security, facilitate the efficient delivery of electricity and energy resources to market, and strengthen its position as a leader in energy production and distribution. Such measures are crucial for sustaining economic growth and meeting the increasing energy demands of both businesses and residents in the state.

Support Dedicated Funding for Addressing High Priority Structurally Deficient (SD) Off-system Bridges

Oklahoma has made tremendous strides in addressing structurally deficient bridges on the state highway system over the last decade, going from one of the states with the most SD bridges to one of the states with the fewest. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for addressing off-system city and county bridges where Oklahoma rates among the worst 10 states. Many of these structurally deficient bridges carry thousands of vehicles a day and are on local school bus routes. Dedicated state funding is needed to partner with cities and counties to address the worst structurally deficient (off-system) bridges in Oklahoma in a timely manner.

Modernize Oklahoma's Housing Laws

Lawmakers should continue to modernize Oklahoma's Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to maintain safe housing for Oklahoma renters. Oklahoma is one of only six states that doesn't have basic anti-retaliation laws. Without this protection, renters can be evicted simply for requesting repairs to protect their health and safety. Neighboring states that Oklahoma is in direct competition for jobs and economic development already have common sense anti-retaliation provisions included in their state law. Preventing housing instability is crucial for a healthy workforce - workers who have been forced from their homes are substantially more likely to miss work or lose their jobs.



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Keeping families in healthy homes also preserves safe and secure affordable housing for Oklahoma workers and their children.

Modernize the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act to Authorize Remote Participation of Voting Members Without Requiring Every Member to be in a Location Physically Accessible to the Public

The recent legislative changes have underscored the importance of evolving the Open Meetings Act to better serve both public bodies and the citizens of Oklahoma. While the integrity and transparency of public meetings must remain paramount, there is an opportunity to continue to modernize the Act to enhance participation and operational flexibility. The legislature should consider amendments to the Open Meetings Act that allow public bodies to authorize remote participation of voting members via tele/video conference, provided a quorum is physically present at published, open, physical location(s). Members participating above quorum may do so at non-published locations if their virtual attendance is indicated on the advanced published meeting agenda and indicated in meeting minutes. This adjustment would eliminate the requirement for each remote location to be open and accessible to the public, which can be a barrier to broader participation. Such flexibility is crucial not only for enhancing the resilience of public body operations during emergencies but also for increasing the involvement of citizens across the state, particularly in regions like Northeast Oklahoma. To maintain the Act's core values of transparency and accountability, the legislature should ensure that meetings remain open to the public, with online streaming as an optional component, that public notices of meetings are upheld, and that meeting materials are accessible to the public.

EDUCATED AND HEALTHY WORKFORCE

Create a Sustainable Future for Workforce Development and Higher education in Oklahoma

Now is the time for the Legislature to look more strategically at the education and workforce training landscape in Oklahoma, including expanding our career pathways and embracing skills-based training. We encourage the Legislature to review the State Regents new systemwide strategic plan, Blueprint 2030, as well as the remaining recommendations spelled out by the State Regents Task Force on the future of Oklahoma higher education, to implement policies needed to increase efficiency, innovation, and modernization. This includes better integrating workforce training and credentialing programs, upskilling and reskilling programs, engaging employers through internship and apprenticeship on-ramps, and empowering higher education to create a comprehensive vision for developing Oklahoma's 21st century workforce. We need to sufficiently provide resources for our higher education institutions, career tech and industry-recognized training programs that meet the demands of Oklahoma's diversifying economy to ensure persistence and success for all students and adult learners.

Expand Support for Working Families

Too often parents and caregivers leave or stay out of the workforce because the necessary supports are not available to them. The state should pass policies that support working families by removing barriers and investing in the future workforce, their children. This includes expanding access to



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affordable dependent care to make it financially feasible and safe for parents to return to work, expanding access to no-cost meals to remove the financial disincentive for parents to work if they earn above the maximum income for benefits, and expanding access to afterschool enrichment to engage older youth while their parents work.

Health Care Workforce Expansion

Address the continuum of health care workforce shortages to meet the need of a growing, aging and diverse population by: utilizing state and federal resources to expand residency opportunities and positions around the state; prioritizing funding for the Health Care Workforce Training Commission; provide opportunities to expand health care loan repayment programs as an incentive for all health care workers; monitor and support full funding and implementation of the behavioral health workforce development fund, which increases psychiatric residencies, loan repayment and increases licensure cohorts and training. These efforts are crucial to securing the pipeline of the state's health care workforce, the future of our health care system, and ensuring our community's overall health and well-being.

Oklahoma's K-12 Funding and Governance

We appreciate past action of the Oklahoma legislature to increase appropriations for K-12 education and raise teacher pay. However, there is still more to do to improve student outcomes, post-secondary preparedness, and attract and retain talented teachers and paraprofessionals. We support efforts to improve reading sufficiency outcomes, math skills development and the inclusion of career ready skills while making annual increases in per pupil funding and teacher pay, until we bring Oklahoma in line with the regional averages on our way to becoming a top ten state. We also support preserving the governing authority of local school boards to ensure proper accountability, oversight, and decision-making for districts across the state. Providing needed resources and preserving local governance will give schools and teachers the support they need to give our students a quality education and prepare them to be productive Oklahomans.

Address Children's Mental Health

Support and invest in mental health and addiction treatment services by increasing Medicaid reimbursements for both outpatient and inpatient services. Improved reimbursements will sustain existing mental health and substance use treatment providers, help to improve community access to services, and help providers remain competitive with surrounding states. As Oklahoma's children experience mental health crises such as suicide and overdose at record rates, the future success of our workforce and the health of our families are at risk. The solutions should include adding appropriate inpatient bed capacity, creating adolescent detox beds similar to Tulsa's Sobering Center, bolstering the behavioral health workforce, ensuring appropriate school supports staffed by mental health professionals, enforcing mental health parity and network adequacy requirements, directing ODMHSAS to actively seek public-private partnerships with community providers, and ensuring that managed care organizations focus on social determinants of health to strengthen the overall well-being of families in Oklahoma as most of Oklahoma's Medicaid population moves to a managed care model. By addressing these urgent needs, we will build a stronger workforce and healthier communities for the future of our state.



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FEDERAL PRIORITIES

ENSURING A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

Support Reauthorization of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Program Funding

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has consistently fostered significant economic growth across the Tulsa Region and communities of all sizes. Recognizing its invaluable contributions, we strongly encourage the expedited reauthorization of the EDA, which is currently operating under annual budget authorization. We also encourage strengthening EDA's Economic Development Integration program, which works to coordinate programs and funding across multiple federal agencies. EDA reauthorization should also be paired with sustained, or even increased, funding for its proven programs.

Support Businesses Under New Federal Cybersecurity Provisions

As the federal government implements and considers additional legislation to protect the nation's infrastructure against cybersecurity breaches, ensure that solutions support the business community as a partner rather than penalizing them. Provisions should be crafted to avoid burdensome regulation, financial penalties, or efforts to single out specific industries. Protecting against cyberattacks is in the best interest of all, and legislation should provide tools and direction to the business community rather than mandates.

Support and Expand Federal Place-Based Initiatives

Tulsa has been a beneficiary of \$90 million in federal place-based investments through programs like the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC), Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs ("Tech Hubs"), and the CHIPS and Science Act. Layering federal investments across agencies and initiatives has a proven track record of generating positive outcomes and is critical to transforming and revitalizing communities across the nation by way of regional economic development, job creation, infrastructure enhancement, inclusive prosperity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Congress should continue to fund and expand programs such as Tech Hubs to drive Tulsa's economic growth and secure American global competitiveness in the years to come.

Designating Route 66 as a National Historic Trail

Support the designation of Route 66 as a National Historic Trail in honor of the "Mother Road's" 100th birthday in 2026. With Tulsa's recent federal approval and recognition as the Capital of Route 66, there is an opportunity to take advantage of that momentum and push for the Historic Trail designation. From neon signs and vintage diners to quirky landmarks and classic cars, Historic Route 66 is an enduring and an endearing aspect of America's identity.

Federal Historic Tax Credits

Support initiatives like the Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act to expand the Federal Historic Tax Credits for the restoration of historic buildings. For three decades, these credits have been an important catalyst for incentivizing private investment to preserve our nation's historically

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significant buildings and revitalize the historic cores of American cities. Increase the rehabilitation tax credit and modify certain requirements including:

- a. Expand the types of buildings eligible for rehabilitation by decreasing the rehabilitation threshold from 100% to 50% of project expenses.
- b. Eliminate the basis adjustment requirement for the credit and modify rules relating to the eligibility of tax-exempt use property for the credit. Increase the rate of the credit to 30% for certain small projects.
- c. Additionally, support the School Infrastructure Modernization Act, which expands the tax credit to include historic school buildings that still operate as an educational institution.

American Indian Lands Tax Credits

Encourage the renewal of the Federal American Indian Lands Tax Credit that applies retroactively and is renewed for a multi-year period into the future. The American Indian Lands Tax Credit is a key economic development tool for Oklahoma, allowing employment tax credits when employing tribal members or their spouses, and the accelerated depreciation of investments made on former reservation land. Oklahoma has the largest percentage of American Indian population in the country, and more than two-thirds of the state qualifies for this incentive. Extending the credit, and ensuring its benefits are retroactive to its expiration, is critical in fostering continued business expansion of employment and investment in Oklahoma.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE CRITICAL TO BUSINESS

McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System

Continue efforts to increase Congressional appropriations to address the approximately \$160 million in the backlog of critical maintenance on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, \$119 million of that on the Oklahoma segment. Failure to do so continues to put the system at risk of a long-term navigation shutdown due to failure of waterway infrastructure such as locks and dams. Support and fund the completion of the Three Rivers Project. This project seeks to address ongoing erosion of the land between the Arkansas and White Rivers near their confluence with the Mississippi River. Should an uncontrolled connection occur, low navigation pool between Norrell Dam (Dam 1) and Montgomery Point would be lost, impacting the entire MKARNS system. Because \$90M has been reallocated from Phase II of this project to complete Phase I, there is now a shortfall of funding for Phase II. Finally, continue to support efforts to deepen the MKARNS to its 12-foot authorized depth, thereby increasing barge productivity by up to 40 percent.

Support Timely Implementation of Improvements to US-412 to Bring the Corridor Up to Interstate Standards

The future Interstate which will be designated I-42 will extend from I-35 in Oklahoma to I-49 in northwest Arkansas. Funding initiatives and opportunities should be pursued by ODOT and our congressional delegation to bring US-412 corridor up to interstate standards in the most an expeditious manner. Upgrading the multi-state highway corridor that connects the Tulsa Metropolitan Area with northwest Arkansas and implementing Congress's designation of the route as a future interstate highway will improve safety, enhance travel time reliability, and elevate the



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visibility and marketability of the Tulsa Metropolitan Area and increase our economic development potential at the national level.

Pursue All Funding to Address Infrastructure Needs and Support Federal Reauthorization of Surface Transportation

Pursue all available opportunities for major federal discretionary grants such as INFRA, RAISE, MEGA, and the Bridge Investment Program and Congressional directed funding to implement critically needed regional transportation projects in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and local and tribal governments. Major projects may include expressway to expressway interchanges with I-44, US-169 and SH-51; grade separated interchanges and bridges on US-412 to meet Interstate highway standards and secure I-42 signage as an Interstate highway; a south Tulsa bridge over the Arkansas River or other high priority regional projects. Support timely reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs including increased utilization of formula grant programs as a vehicle to provide more flexibility, and less discretionary grants that are costly, and have time consuming and cumbersome application processes, in an effort to provide more predictable levels of funding.

Accelerate Permitting of Energy & Infrastructure Projects

Strongly support efforts to accelerate federal permitting for projects necessary to achieve domestic energy independence and complete infrastructure projects. Legislative and Administrative efforts should focus on ensuring concurrent and timely permitting for all federally required approvals and encourage coordination and communication with state permitting. These projects would create a boom in the U.S. domestic economy, support job creation, strengthen our trade balance, and increase product security and price stability on a global scale.

EDUCATED AND HEALTHY WORKFORCE

Reform Federal Financial Aid

Support the reform of federal financial aid and eligibility. Simplify student loans by eliminating interest and replacing it with a one-time, non-compounding origination fee that borrowers will pay over the life of the loan, and place borrowers in an income-based repayment plan. Allow short-term, industry-driven training programs to qualify for financial aid, and expand student loan forgiveness programs for graduates in high-demand occupations with workforce shortages. These strategies will enhance career readiness and meet the demands of the workplace.

Federal Immigration Reform

Support comprehensive immigration reform that enables the U.S. to attract the best and brightest talent from around the world. Steps should be taken to ensure reasonable, affordable, and efficient visa policies that empower American businesses to hire workers and remove barriers for top talent to work in the United States. This includes doubling the annual quota on the issuance of H-1B visas for high-tech workers, doubling the annual quota and instituting a permanent returning worker exemption for H-2B seasonal employment visas, expanding Premium Processing and other measures to increase processing efficiency and eliminate the significant backlogs for various



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immigration benefits, and digitizing the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS). In addition, Congress should support the Dream Act, which would provide undocumented high-school graduates and GED recipients a pathway to U.S. citizenship through college, work, or the armed services. Enabling immigrant students to access and/or continue higher education will help boost the number of high skilled, American-raised workers. As these taxpaying workers strengthen the available workforce in our nation, they will simultaneously contribute to public revenue at the local, state, and federal level.

Protect and Strengthen Health Care Workforce

Health care across the country is facing historic workforce shortages. As we expand our own education and training programs, enhance violence prevention efforts, and address other clinician concerns, we urge Congress to support policies that replenish and strengthen the health care workforce, including increasing the number of Graduate Medical Education slots, expanding and improving loan repayment programs for nursing students, and helping nursing schools recruit and retain qualified faculty and preceptors. Congress should also pass the SAVE Act, which aims to protect health care workers from violence by enhancing penalties for people who assault them and providing hospitals with additional security and training resources.

Expand Availability of Quality, Affordable Childcare

For many Americans, lack of available quality childcare is a barrier to employment, especially in low-income communities. We ask that the Federal government work to support state programs such as “Scholars for Excellence in Child Care” to aid in the state’s expansion of childcare for workforce families.

Encourage More Affordable Housing

Oklahoma, like many states, has reached a crisis-level deficit of affordable housing. National research indicates that Oklahoma needs over 81,000 additional affordable rental units to meet the needs of extremely low-income renters. An Oklahoman working for minimum wage would have to work 88 hours/week to comfortably afford a modest one-bedroom rental unit at current Fair Market Rent value, while 40% of Oklahoma workers don’t earn enough to afford a typical two-bedroom apartment working one fulltime job. Adding more affordable housing will support new jobs in several industries, allow new companies to move operations to our state and significantly reduce the risk of homelessness (and homelessness itself). Without focused action that supports additional resources for affordable housing developers, Oklahoma will continue to fall woefully short in meeting existing and future demand. There is great opportunity at the federal level to support the development of affordable housing by combatting developers’ greatest challenges. Specifically, we must move quickly to provide solutions to mitigate astronomical property insurance rate increases and increase funding for proven federal housing programs including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), HOME/CBDG and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programs.