

OMEA Members,

We need your help NOW!! There is a bill in the state legislative process that would significantly impact music education in Oklahoma. House Bill 2574 has already passed the state house with roughly a 75% majority. The bill has now passed to the Senate, where they will deliberate and (hopefully) amend, pass, or defeat it. Several OMEA members have already been told by their principals that if the bill becomes law, they will lose their jobs so that more P.E. teachers (conveniently, most double as coaches) can be hired.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

If you think that this bill would adversely affect music education in Oklahoma, take time now to:

- 1) CALL, WRITE or EMAIL your state senator about it. If you have a parent's organization, get them involved – we want the senators to know that lots of people share our concern. Letters and phone calls generally carry more weight than emails. Use more than one way of contacting them!
- 2) Also, contact every member of the Senate Education Committee (see below). If you have a supportive principal, ask them to write members of the education committee with their concerns.
- 3) It would also be beneficial to contact your State Representative in case this comes back for conference committee (if the House and Senate versions are different). We are already behind since this passed the House by such a large margin. It seems that no one in the state House anticipated this unintended negative effect on music (and other arts) instruction.

#### WHEN YOU CALL, EMAIL, OR WRITE:

- BE RESPECTFUL. Our only chance is to sway them to our side
- Use your own words – don't cut and paste. Rephrase our arguments or make your own.
- Explain that we support the objective of healthy kids, we just don't want to harm what we already do well in Oklahoma – educating our students in the arts. Feel free to mention that, according to recent research, Oklahomans believe that arts instruction has a positive impact on academics in areas of problem solving, academic motivation, increasing positive results in other core subjects, grades, and learning. In addition, Oklahomans believe that arts education should have the same amount of time devoted to it as other core subjects, and be mandated as part of the core curriculum, and Oklahomans do not believe that lawmakers value arts education. See below (WHAT WE WANT CHANGED) for specific objections to this bill and for OMEA's recommendation.

#### HOW TO FIND YOUR STATE SENATOR:

<http://www.lsb.state.ok.us/> (scroll down to House Members or Senate Members, click on the link, then enter your address and it will look up contact information for your Senator or Representative).

## SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

(If you wish to call or write, phone and address info is at  
<http://www.oksenate.gov/Senators/directoryalpha.htm>)

Senator Judy Eason McIntyre (Tulsa) [easonmcintyre@oksenate.gov](mailto:easonmcintyre@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Kathleen Wilcoxson (Mustang, OKC, Yukon) [purinton@oksenate.gov](mailto:purinton@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Cliff Branan (OKC) [branan@oksenate.gov](mailto:branan@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Kenneth Corn (Eastern OK) [cochran@oksenate.gov](mailto:cochran@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Jay Paul Gumm (SE Oklahoma) [gumm@oksenate.gov](mailto:gumm@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Clark Jolley (bill author) (Edmond) [jolley@oksenate.gov](mailto:jolley@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Richard Lerblance (Hartshorne) [lerblance@oksenate.gov](mailto:lerblance@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Mike Mazzei (Tulsa, Bixby, BA) [mazzei@oksenate.gov](mailto:mazzei@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Jonathan Nichols (Norman) [nichols@oksenate.gov](mailto:nichols@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Susan Paddack (Ada) [paddack@oksenate.gov](mailto:paddack@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Jim Reynolds (OKC) [reynolds@oksenate.gov](mailto:reynolds@oksenate.gov)  
Senator Nancy Riley (Tulsa) [rileyn@oksenate.gov](mailto:rileyn@oksenate.gov)  
Senator John Sparks (Norman) [sparks@oksenate.gov](mailto:sparks@oksenate.gov)  
Senator James Williamson (Tulsa, BA) [brownb1@oksenate.gov](mailto:brownb1@oksenate.gov)

## WHAT THE BILL SAYS:

The bill prescribes 120 minutes per week of P.E. classes for grades 1-6. This amount is in addition to recess, which the bill requires the State Board of Education to “strongly encourage” schools to provide for twenty minutes each day. This means that students in grades 1-6 will have (on average) a 20 minute recess AND 24 minutes of P.E. per day.

In grades 7-8, schools are mandated to provide for all students 45 hours in “physical education, health, nutrition, family and consumer sciences or athletics.” This means that students in band, orchestra, or choir will have to have the extra 45 hours of instruction (roughly one hour a day for nine weeks) while students already in athletics will not. The wide variety of ways in which schools may satisfy this requirement means that students may or may not get information which will help them to get and stay healthy.

## WHAT WE WANT CHANGED:

- 1) Remove entirely the section that applies to grades 7-8. Rationale: Choices are already limited in most middle schools. This added mandate will further restrict and possibly eliminate electives, including band, choir, and orchestra. The negative effects will be greatest on small schools. If something needs to be done, mandate nutrition instruction for ALL students in an existing required class. With the smorgasbord of choices in the bill, no student is guaranteed to get instruction which will improve their weight or fitness level, but all students who desire music instruction will have fewer choices
- 2) Reduce the time to 75 minutes per week of the grades 1-6 physical education requirement. Rationale: The school day is already restricted with pressures from the NCLB act and academic testing. The 120 minute requirement and the recess suggestion further limits local choices and will restrict time available for arts instruction, which Oklahomans support. Parents can take their children for a walk – most parents cannot give their child music lessons.

For your reference, the complete text of the bill follows:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 1, Chapter 29, O.S.L. 2005, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 258, O.S.L. 2007 (70 O.S. Supp. 2007, Section 11-103.9), is amended to read as follows:

Section 11-103.9 A. Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, the State Board of Education shall require, as a condition of accreditation, that school districts provide to all students physical education programs which may include athletics.

B. Beginning with the ~~2006-2007~~ 2009-2010 school year, the Board shall require, as a condition of accreditation, that public elementary schools provide instruction, for students in full-day kindergarten and grades one through ~~five~~ six, in physical education or exercise programs for a minimum of an average of ~~sixty (60)~~ one hundred twenty (120) minutes each week. The time students participate in recess shall not be counted toward the ~~sixty~~ one-hundred-twenty-minutes-per-week physical education requirement.

C. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, the Board shall require, as a condition of accreditation, that public schools provide for students in grades seven and eight, instruction in physical education, health, nutrition, family and consumer sciences or athletics for a minimum of forty-five (45) hours each school year. Schools shall have the option of providing instruction in one of the areas of instruction or any combination of the areas of instruction during the required forty-five (45) hours per school year. Schools shall have the option of providing the instruction in one nine-week course or unit each school year or integrating the instruction throughout the school year.

D. The Board shall disseminate information to each school district on the benefits of physical education programs and shall strongly encourage districts to provide physical education instruction to students in grades ~~six~~ nine through twelve. The Board shall also strongly encourage school districts to incorporate physical activity into the school day by providing to students in full-day kindergarten and grades one through ~~five~~ six at least a twenty-minute daily recess, which shall be in addition to the ~~sixty (60)~~ one hundred twenty (120) minutes of required physical education, and by allowing all students brief physical activity breaks throughout the day, physical activity clubs, and special events.

~~D.~~ E. School districts shall provide to parents or guardians of students a physical activity report. The report shall be provided to parents and guardians at least annually and shall include:

1. A summary on how physical activity is being incorporated into the school day;
2. A summary of the types of physical activities the students are exposed to in the physical education programs;
3. Suggestions on monitoring the physical activity progress of a child and how to encourage regular participation in physical activity; and
4. Information on the benefits of physical education and physical activity.

~~E.~~ F. Instruction in physical education required in this section shall be aligned with the Priority Academic Student Skills as adopted by the Board.

~~F.~~ G. The Board shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2008.

Passed the House of Representatives the 11th day of March, 2008.