

## Looking Back...Moving Forward

Over the past decade, Oklahoma's educational system has and continues to undergo pendulum dynamics.

Pendulum dynamics are the reforms that swing from negative to positive within two quadrants - legislative and economic manifestations.

Reading is the force and the weight gravity uses to speed up the momentum, swinging the pendulum back and forth typically, at a 180 degree arc.

Master educators statewide will pause the clock long enough to examine, reflect, and assess the impact the last 10 years of reading professional development has had on student achievement.

The timeline of conferences have chronicled how laws and funding have benchmarked educational outcomes – particularly, the transformation of reading instruction.

### **360 Degrees of Reading Conferences in Review: 2008 – 2018**

#### **2008-2009: Critical Literacy and the Adolescent Child – Content, Comprehension, Creativity and Complexity**

The nation's first elected African American President, Barack Obama, and the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, released a \$4.35 billion Race to the Top competitive grant to ignite innovation and reform in K-12 education. Oklahoma threw its hat into the ring but was quickly beat out by other contending states.

#### **2009-2010: Supporting the ELL Learner in the Classroom and Beyond**

In June 2009, the *Oklahoman* reported a new state and national trend - the start-up and the first wave of baby boomers retiring. The baby boomers' mad exit from the classroom and teachers leaving the state for higher paying jobs are two hard pressed, alarming attributors to the teacher shortage locally and nationally.

#### **2010-2011: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacy Learning Environments**

Oklahoma's demographics changed mirroring the national shift. The minority population is rapidly increasing, according to the *Oklahoman* Analysis of U.S. Census Data. Children of color made up the majority within 11 Oklahoma counties, including Oklahoma County, the state's largest county.

#### **2011-2012: Come for a MEAL: Motivate, Energize, and Activate Learning!!!**

After serving as the Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction for two decades, Sandy Garrett retired in 2011. Janet Barresi was elected as Garrett's successor.

**2012-2013: Writing Across the Curriculum**

Educators and legislators geared up for the long awaited implementation of the Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA), enacted in 1997. The *Oklahoman* reported an estimated 16 percent of special education students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) would be affected by the reading law. An estimated 7,645 special education students faced the possibility of not advancing to the fourth grade, a direct result of RSA.

**2013-2014: Two of the Faces of RTI - Response to Intervention**

RSA was mandated into Oklahoma's public schools during the 2013-2014 academic year. RSA's goal was to improve Oklahoma children's reading skills before the end of third grade.

**2014-2015: Meaningful Engagement with Complex Text**

Oklahoma was one of 40 states to adopt the Common Core Standards, only to discard the standards within the same year. Lawmakers repealed Common Core, with House Bill 3399 in 2014, making way for the new Oklahoma Academic Standards.

**2015-2016: Focusing on Potential over Poverty**

The newly elected Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction, Joy Hofmeister, defeated the one term incumbent, Janet Barresi.

**2016-2017: Proven Strategies to Strengthen Struggling Readers**

The Oklahoma Academic Standards were successfully launched in 2016, tagged the standards written by Oklahomans for Oklahoma. Taking ownership for Oklahoma's educational outcomes, master teachers set out to champion and channel the wealth of reading strategies to teachers statewide. It was a professional development year crafted by teachers for teachers.

**2017-2018: Looking Back...Moving Forward**

This year, the 2017 – 2018 reading conference, Looking Back and Moving Forward will blend the data generated over the past to inform the futuristic objective: To meet and exceed the reading needs of Generation I, or also known as the Boomlets.

There were a record number of births in 2006, outnumbering the baby boomer generation. Forty-nine percent of those births were Hispanic. There are two groups of Generation I – the tweens and the toddler/elementary age children.

The 2009 U.S. Census estimated 29 million tweens ages 8 to 12 had families, who spent \$51 billion each year. Another \$170 billion was spent on the tweens directly.

Sixty-one percent of Generation I tweens have televisions in their rooms, 35 percent own video games, 14 percent have DVD players, and 4 million have their own cell phone and computer. These digital natives entered life connected to the worldwide web.

Instead of conventional toys like Barbie dolls and board games, by age 4 or 5, preschoolers are more inclined to play on a computer. Generation I is less interested in traditional toys, and as a result, toy manufacturers are suffering because of it.

### **Looking Back on Lessons Learned**

Looking back, embedding technology, infusing perfected strategies, as well as connecting and engaging the English Language Learner (ELL) was the focus during years one through 10.

Beginning with the end in mind, Dr. Renee Hobbs, the conference's very first nationally recognized media educator will be streamed live from Rhode Island. In 2008, Hobbs began the journey, keynoting the conference with Critical Literacy and the Adolescent Child/ Content, Comprehension, and Complexity.

Returning via video conference will be Doug Buehl. In 2011, the Wisconsin noted author and scholar invited everyone to join him at the table for Come for a Meal – Motivate, Energize, and Active Learning.

Making a repeat appearance, Dr. Nell Duke from the University of Michigan's School of Education will join the conference via video. The prolific professor, researcher, and accomplished author addressed the Sooner State in 2012 from the conference theme of Writing Across the Curriculum.

All three national scholars will take on Generation I - an added value.

### **180 Degree Arc – In Motion**

Moving forward, keynote, Dr. Misty Sailors, the professor and assistant department chair of interdisciplinary learning and teaching from the University of Texas in San Antonio (UTSA) will advance educators into the future.

Sailors serves as the editor of the *Journal of Literacy Research* and is the director of UTSA's newest research center, the Center for the Inquiry of Transformative Literacies. She is also the acting director of the San Antonio Writing Project.

The international researcher is the author of 50 publications, 30 technical reports, and 100 paper presentations. She was also the primary investigator for several large, federally funded projects spanning three countries.

The timeslot for the 10th annual Reading Conference Anniversary Celebration is Friday, September 15 at the University of Oklahoma's PHF Conference Center within the Colloquium Room and in the Regents' conference room, located at 655 Research Parkway in Oklahoma City. Parking is FREE.

Join the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, in collaboration with Cameron University, Langston University, Northeastern State University, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma Nationally Board Certified Teachers, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma University, Oral Roberts University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, University of Central Oklahoma, and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, for Looking Back...Moving Forward.

The pendulum is in full swing, moving upward by the force of Generation I.

The time is NOW!