

## It's A Great Day To Be A TIGER!

This month, Cheryl Kelly officially begins her second, consecutive term as a member of our Board of Education. Ms. Kelly is a proud product of Oklahoma Public Schools and a graduate of Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. She was employed for 30 years by the Broken Arrow Public School District, and during that time she taught at every level of K-12 and served as Director of Professional Development. She also spent time as a coach, and if you listen carefully, you may hear some people still refer to her as Coach Kelly.

Ms. Kelly comes from a long line of educators and her familiarity with education is a valuable asset to our Board of Education. She has served as a board member for five years, and during her first term, she played an integral role in a number of transformative changes. For example, she was a strong supporter of the district's participation in a strategic planning process in which the Board of Education, administrators, employees and community leaders developed a Strategic Plan, mission and vision that were adopted in January 2012. This plan is reviewed yearly and guides future district decisions.

Ms. Kelly is also a staunch advocate of obtaining stakeholder input on a variety of levels and projects. From the development of the Long Range Planning Committee to the implementation of district climate surveys currently being developed, she takes her role as an elected official very seriously – she wants to hear from those whom she represents.

I am grateful to serve alongside Ms. Kelly in making Broken Arrow one of the best districts in the nation. Since the 2009 bond issue was passed by patrons, students have access to better and more equitable learning facilities, and as a board member, Ms. Kelly's primary focus is always on our students. Her decisions are carefully considered and each action she takes is done with the intention of enhancing opportunities for student learning throughout the district. I am excited to have her back for another five year term, and I am looking forward to all that we will accomplish together.



*Jarod Mendenhall*  
Jarod Mendenhall, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

### FEATURE

## Multicultural Festival returns for eighth annual celebration

With a mission to present cultural diversity within Broken Arrow Public Schools and the Broken Arrow community, the Multicultural Diversity Festival is returning for its eighth year on March 6, 2014, from 6-9 p.m. at the Broken Arrow Community Center.

This free event is presented by International Cultures for Education (ICE) PTA and Lynn Wood Elementary.

"The festival will promote awareness between cultures, break down ethnic barriers, and provide an environment to create social relationships and unity," said Felisa Hilbert, event organizer and ELL bilingual assistant at Lynn Wood Elementary. "This event will educate all our students, parents and school staff about different cultures, foods, music, traditional attires and customs. Guests will be given the opportunity to learn and travel around the world in one night without all the formalities of needing a passport in hand."

Created in 2006, the Multicultural Festival was originally created to attract minority parents to get involved in school activities, participate in parent-teacher conferences and actively engage in their children's education.

Over the years, the festival has grown tremendously. In 2013, 35 countries presented, 14 groups performed, 12 community resources offered their free services and more than 1,200 guests attended.

Hilbert hopes for even more growth this year.

"I hope we will see an increase of awareness and knowledge about diversity and the value of cultural enrichment," she said. "This community event gives our school parents, local residents and members of all cultures a sense of connectedness as they come together to celebrate each other's cultures."

Hilbert's involvement with the festival and various other activities has brought her many praises and awards, including being named the 2008 Multicultural Paraprofessional of the Year. Earlier last year, she was selected by Parenting Magazine to represent Oklahoma at the second annual Mom Congress in Washington, D.C. She has also been named a White House Champion of Change on Education because of her passion for educating students and families about diversity acceptance.

She has worked diligently to organize the International Cultures for Education (ICE) PTA, a group that was created in 2008 with only 15 members who represented five continents. Today membership has grown to more than 150 members who represent more than 30 countries.

If you'd like to join ICE PTA, memberships are only \$5. For more information about the festival or ways to get involved, please contact Hilbert at 918-259-4430.

## Professional Development Corner

The University of Tulsa hosts numerous Presidential Lecture Series sponsored by the Darcy O'Brien Endowed Chair. On Thursday, March 27th at 7:30 p.m., Frank Wilczek, a theoretical physicist, mathematician, and MIT professor will discuss his latest book, "Lightness of Being." Wilczek was awarded the Nobel Prize for work he began when he was only 21. He is adept at explaining scientific topics such as dark matter, string theory, and The God Particle to a wide audience. The free presentation is open to the public and will be held at the Donald W. Reynolds Center at 3208 East 8th Street. A book signing will immediately follow the lecture.