Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

FY 2026 Budget Hearing Presentation

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Executive Director

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability's (OEQA) mission is to **Inform, Improve, and Innovate** education in Oklahoma. OEQA's statutory functions include:

- Providing **data-driven insights** through the **Oklahoma Educational Indicators Program (OEIP)**.

- Ensuring rigorous **accreditation and program review** for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs).

- Developing **teacher certification assessments**, awarding assessment certification scholarships and setting cut scores and Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs).

- Advancing **professional learning** with programs like **National Board Certification scholarships** and the **mentorship pilot** for new teachers.

- Supporting district performance through **School Performance Reviews** and **school transfer audits**.

Founded in 2014, this agency now encompasses the following divisions: Educator Preparation, Professional Learning, District Performance, and Data & Analysis.

Agency Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision: We envision an educational system where all Oklahoma students receive a high-quality education through data-driven decision-making, continuous improvement, and transformative innovation.

Mission: Our mission is to inform, improve and innovate. We do this by developing and sustaining a well-prepared professional teacher workforce, improving P20 school efficiency and effectiveness, and providing comprehensive statistical information for all stakeholders.

Core Values:

1. **Educational Excellence:** Ensuring every student has access to a top-quality, evidence-based education.
2. **Data Accessibility:** Ensuring all stakeholders have accessible, high-quality data to inform decision-making and enhance educational quality.
3. **Innovation:** Promoting a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.
4. **Resource Efficiency:** Resources through high-impact, cost-effective programs.
5. **Statewide Impact:** Ensuring that our programs are accessible and impactful for stakeholders throughout the entire state.
6. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Encouraging collaboration among all stakeholders to support a unified approach to educational improvement.

Accomplishments

Top accomplishments for FY 2024 – FY 2025

- **Increased Efficiency and ROI:** Through a full-scale agency redesign, OEQA achieved $400k in cost savings—approximately 1/3 of our effective budget—through automating processes for school transfer audits, certification testing, and scholarships and restructuring the National Board-Certified Teacher (NBCT) program. The changes saved 3 FTE annually and improved ROI and customer service, for example, by eliminating a 2-week wait time for out-of-state test reviews. The NBCT restructuring decreased costs from a 5-year average of $52,000 per successful candidate to a projected $5,000 per candidate. These funds were redeployed to hire a Qualitative Researcher, Director of Assessment, and Director of Educator Quality and Pathways, as well as launching a new website and implementing other technical upgrades to enhance program delivery, better fulfill our mission and implement a transformation proposal adopted by CEQA without the need for additional appropriations.

- **Expanded Program Impact:** Through improved outreach, including the launch of a new website and .gov delivery, OEQA significantly expanded program participation. The National Board Certification program received 385 applicants, with 100 candidates accepted for FY25, marking a dramatic increase as the program had only 53 candidates achieve certification over the past 5 years total. Certification testing scholarships, which previously struggled to fill 200 spots, received 1,279 applicants in a week this year.

- **Advanced Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS):** OEQA worked collaboratively with SDE, Regents, OESC, and CareerTech to advance the development of a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Efforts included securing legislative sponsorship, convening a multi-agency working group, and obtaining federal funding to send a 5-agency contingent to a national SLDS workshop.

Analysis of Agency Challenges

	Challenge	Current Actions (Briefly describe how the agency is currently addressing the challenge.)	Planned Actions (Briefly describe how the agency plans to address the challenge going forward.)
1	High demand for certification testing and NBCT scholarship programs exceeds capacity.	(1) Prioritizing applications based on quality and need.	(1) Advocate for increased funding to support program expansion; (2) Explore lower-cost or free options for certification testing, reducing the need for scholarships.
2	Small team responsible for diverse functions (K-12, higher ed, data).	(1) Cross-training staff to enhance versatility; (2) Restructuring staff; (3) Utilizing contractors for specialized tasks.	(1) Explore potential for restructuring, including potential to revisit agency duties; (2) Expanding staffing to provide more coverage in key areas.
3	Inefficient state processes and burdensome requirements consume time and resources.	(1) Streamlining internal processes and procedures; (2) Actively engaging with OMES to address shared service challenges and improve communication.	(1) Advocate for legislative changes to streamline operations; (2) Explore alternative service delivery models that minimize reliance on shared services.
4	Siloed and limited data hinders in-depth analysis and the ability to track program effectiveness.	(1) Enhancing data sharing and integration with state agencies; (2) Strengthening data analysis and visualization capabilities; (3) Improving existing data products for greater impact.	(1) Advocate for the development of a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS); (2) Expanded stakeholder engagement to better understand and meet needs.
5	Attracting and retaining top talent, particularly in data roles.	(1) Benchmarking all positions for market competitiveness; (2) Promoting the agency's mission to attract qualified candidates; (3) Offering benefits like remote or part-time work to attract talent.	(1) Advocate for increased funding to support competitive salaries and professional development opportunities.

Savings & Efficiencies (Current or Planned)

Savings or Efficiency Name	Brief description of how savings were achieved	Savings in Unit of Measurement	FY 2024 (Actual $ Savings)	FY 2025 (Projected $ Savings)	FY 2026 (Projected $ Savings)
Restructuring ELO Program	Transitioned from agency-administered program to a virtual vendor solution.	*1.5 FTEs*	*$0*	*$250k*	*$250k*
Leveraging Technology and AI	Leveraged technology to make highly manual school transfer audit process more efficient, reducing headcount need from 1 FTE to .1 FTE. Also leveraged tech to reduce travel needed.	.9 FTEs; Reduced amount of time spent on Transfer Audits from 2,080 hours to 200	$20k	$90k	$90k
Restructuring Testing Staffing	Reducing services on costly psychometrician contract, hiring full-time staff member rather than utilizing several staff to do the job, we have a better staffing, more quality program and at reduced net costs.	$125,000 savings in contractor savings, offset by $110k in additional staffing costs.	$0	$15k	$15k
Scholarship Program	Moving scholarship award process from manual process to automated process, leveraging technology	.2 FTEs	$10k	$20k	$20k
Reduced Office Overhead	Moved from paper to digital processes, surplused and donated items no longer needed.	Eliminated 1 printer and 1 storage unit.	$5k	$20k	$20k

Agency Goals and Key Performance Metrics

	Goal	Metric	FY 24 Target	FY 24 Actuals	FY 25 Target	FY 29 Target
1	Ensure teachers entering the profession have the necessary knowledge and skills to be effective in the classroom.	Total number of certification exams taken	8,000	6,803	8,000	10,000
2	Reduce barriers to entry into the field by providing teacher certification exam scholarships to educators committed to serving in Oklahoma	Total number of scholarships awarded	200	200	1,000	500
3	Provide meaningful site, district, and state-level data to improve student achievement and policy.	# of site visits/downloads and stakeholder satisfaction with the accessibility and usefulness of the data.	2,000,000	2,836,384	2,000,000	5,000,000
4	Prepare High Quality Teachers through ensuring EPP Accreditation and Program Review	Number of programs accredited	6	3	4	4
5	Support the professional development of high-quality teachers in Oklahoma through the Education Leadership Oklahoma Program.	Number of newly certified NBCTs	100	14	20	70
6	Improve district efficiency, effectiveness, and student outcomes by analyzing operations, instructional quality, and resource allocation, and providing actionable recommendations for improvement.	Number of districts served	0	0	0	20
7	Increase the number of quality seats available to students	Number of audits	51	51	51	51

Projects for FY 2025

1. **Select and Implement a High-Quality, New Pedagogical Assessment for Teacher Certification**: Necessary due to the discontinuation of the PPAT by December 2025, this project will ensure teachers have the skills needed to succeed in the classroom.

2. **Revamp Oklahoma Educational Indicators Program (OEIP)**: Update key metrics, modernize reporting systems, and improve data accessibility to support data-driven decision-making.

3. **Identify Opportunities to Further Support School Districts and Policy-Goals with Data Through Targeted Surveys**: Revamp surveys, such as First Year Teacher and Supervisor Surveys, and pilot new surveys, such as School Climate Surveys, to gather insights and support high-quality education.

4. **Advance the Development of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)**: Integrate K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data to better support the success of Oklahomans and drive better policy decisions.

5. **Implement New NBCT Support Program**: Implement new mentoring program to increase participation and success rates for National Board Certification candidates.
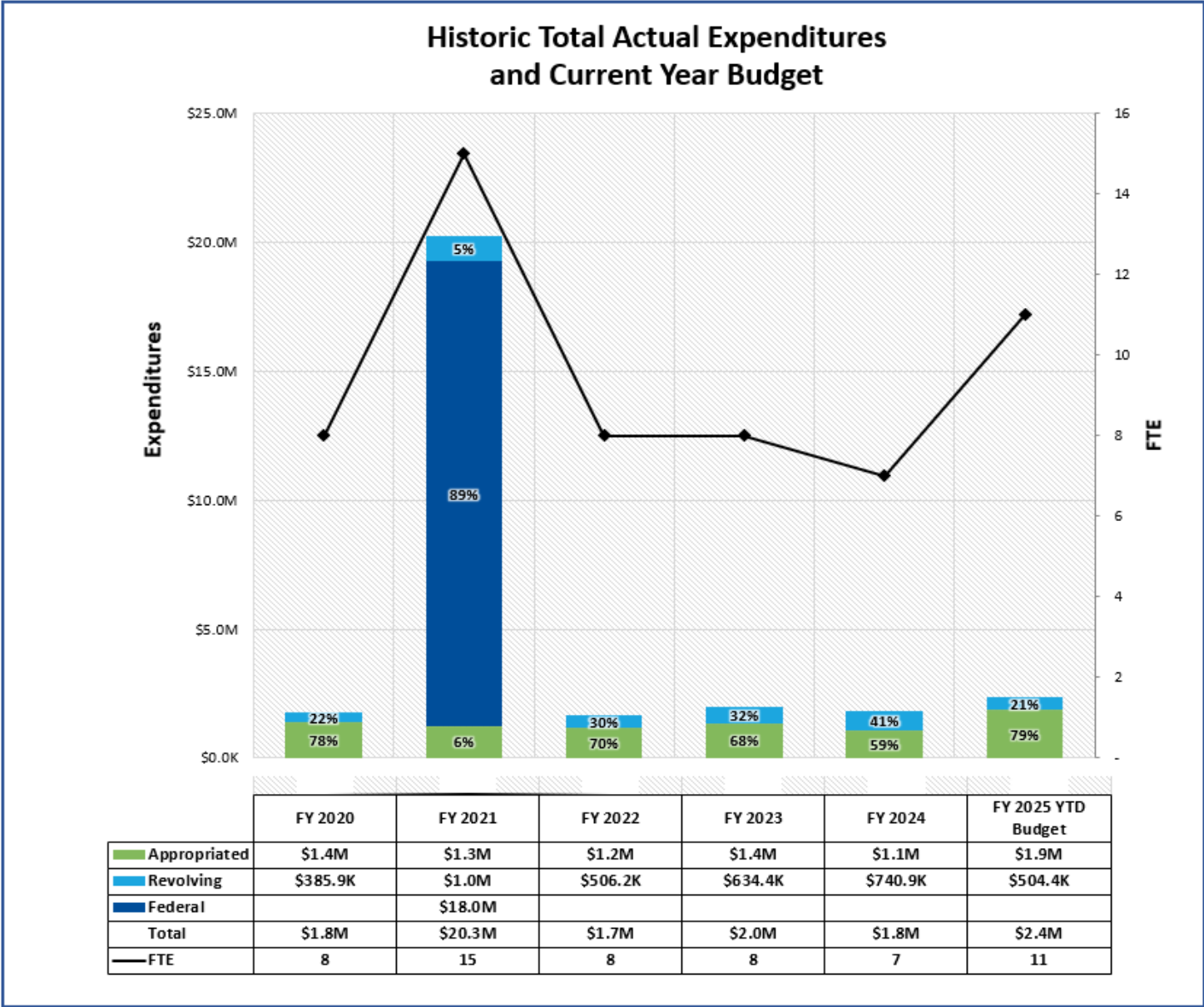
Projects for FY 2026

1. **Support Teacher Certification Assessment Replacement**: Continue the rollout of the new pedagogical assessment, ensuring teachers are properly supported with preparation resources. Explore the development of a practicum option based on stakeholder feedback.

2. **Finalize the Revamped Oklahoma Educational Indicators Program (OEIP)**: Implement stakeholder feedback from the FY25 rollout, refine reporting systems, and deliver a finalized product that provides actionable, high-quality data for decision-makers.

3. **Advance Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Implementation**: Continue to support multi-agency collaboration to move the SLDS project forward. Ideally, the SLDS team will issue an RFP in FY26 to select a vendor and begin system build-out.

4. **Expand and Refine Targeted Surveys for Data-Driven Improvement**: Analyze results from the newly redesigned surveys such as the First Year Teacher Survey and pilot instruments, such as the School Climate Survey. Identify the most valuable tools for districts and provide meaningful, no-cost data to help schools improve student outcomes and staff support.

Total Historic Actual Expenditures (FY 2020-24) and Current Year Budget (FY 2025)

Explanation of Changes and Trends

Large increase in FY21 due to receipt of federal funding for the GEER program.

Historic Total Actual Expenditures and Current Year Budget

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025 YTD Budget
Appropriated	$1.4M	$1.3M	$1.2M	$1.4M	$1.1M	$1.9M
Revolving	$385.9K	$1.0M	$506.2K	$634.4K	$740.9K	$504.4K
Federal		$18.0M				
Total	$1.8M	$20.3M	$1.7M	$2.0M	$1.8M	$2.4M
FTE	8	15	8	8	7	11

FY 2025 Budgeted Full Time Equivalents (FTE)

	FY 2025 Budgeted FTE
Total FTE	10.8
Supervisor FTE	3
Supervisors to Total FTE Ratio (%)	28%
Current Budgeted but Unfilled FTE	1.8

Appropriation History

Fiscal Year	Legislated Appropriation ($) *(Includes supplementals and SRF/ARPA if applicable.)*
FY 2021	$1.6M
FY 2022	$1.6M
FY 2023	$1.6M
FY 2024	$1.9M
FY 2025	$2.1M

Five-Year Appropriation History
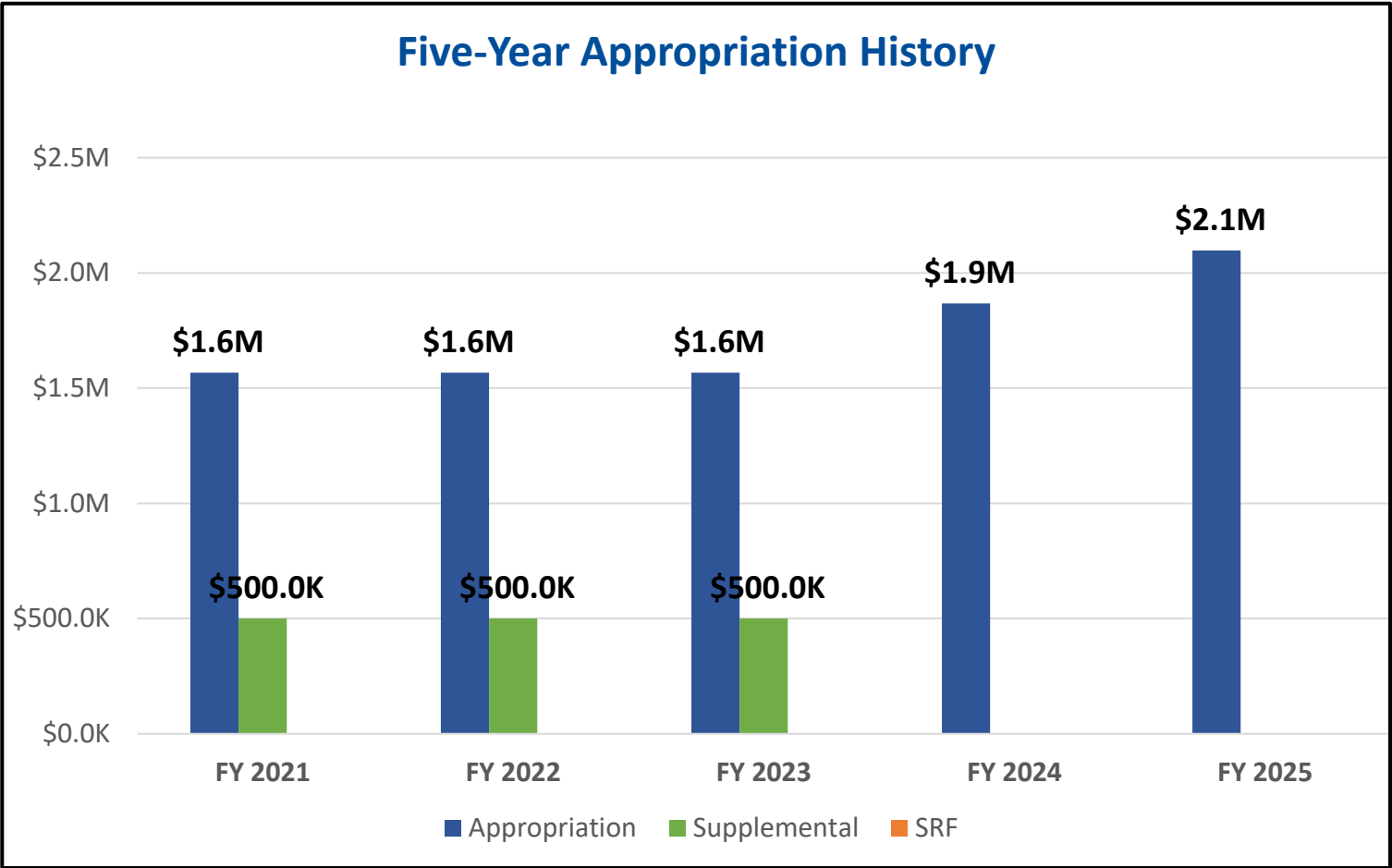
Financial Resource Analysis

Carryover	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Total appropriated carryover amount expended ($)	$570,000	$641,963	$800,715	$18,720

Historical Cash Balances	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Year End Revolving Fund Cash Balances *(All Revolving Funds)*	$2,059,209	$1,135,454	$856,586	$576,118

Revolving Class Fund # *(Unrestricted only)*	Revolving Class Fund Name *(Unrestricted only)*	Current cash balance ($)	Projected FY 2025 year-end cash balance ($)
20000	OEQA Revolving Fund	$250,802	$161,759
21000	Donations Fund	$3,939	$3,939
#		$	$
#		$	$
#		$	$
#		$	$
Total Unrestricted Revolving Fund Cash balance:		$	$

Unrestricted funds are those that are not limited by state or federal law, rule, regulation, other legally binding method, or donor restriction.

FY 2023 – 2024 Appropriation Change Review

Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease	Amount FY 2023	Amount FY 2024	Total amount received FY 2023 - 24	Total amount expended by 11/1/2024	Included in FY 2025 approp? (Yes/No)	If not expended fully, please explain.
Appropriation Increase	$	300,000	300,000	0	No	
	$	$	$	$		
	$	$	$	$		
	$	$	$	$		
	$	$	$	$		
	$	$	$	$		
	$	$	$	$		
	$	$	$	$		
Totals	$	$	$	$		

Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.

FY 2025 Appropriation Change Review

Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease	Amount of increase or decrease ($)	Does this need to be included in your FY 2026 appropriation? (Yes/No)	If yes, included in appropriation for same purpose? (Yes/No)	If not included for same purpose, please explain.
	$			
	$			
	$			
	$			
	$			
	$			
	$			
	$			
Total adjustment	$			

*Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.

Budget & Supplemental Incremental Request Summary

	Request Name	FY 2026 Incremental Appropriation Request Amount ($) {or FY 2025 for Supplementals}	Type of Request: Recurring, One-time, or Supplemental
1	Legislatively Mandated Program Support	$380,166	Recurring
2	Increases in Staffing Costs and Shared Services	$175,000	Recurring
3	Dashboarding, AI, and GenAI Tools	$27,700	Recurring
4	Office Cost Increases	$24,000	Recurring
5	Education Organization Subscriptions Paid on Behalf of State (SREB, ESC, NASDTEC, etc.)	$350,000	One-Time
6	Teacher Certification Test Scholarships	$130,000	Recurring

(1) Incremental Budget Request

Legislatively Mandated Program Support	
Type: Recurring	$380,166
Total funding of $380,166 is requested to support mandated activities, including hiring a Reading Specialist on contract ($50k), a Data Integration Specialist ($85k base, $130k with benefits), psychometrician contracts for comprehensive psychometric support for teacher certification and student assessments ($100k), and securing dedicated legal counsel ($35,166).	

(2) Incremental Budget Request

Increases in Staffing Costs and Shared Services	
Type: Recurring	$175,000
Funding of $175,000 is requested to cover increased personnel costs ($90k) due to turnover and hiring replacements at competitive market rates, implement FY25 pay-for-Performance Incentive program ($40k) for 2024-2025 raises (3% of total salary spend), utilize OMES shared services for HR support ($25k) and graphic design ($5k) and hire a consultant for a small communications and media relations support contract ($15k).	

(3) Incremental Budget Request

Dashboarding, AI, and GenAI Tools	
Type: Recurring	$27,700
Funding is requested to implement advanced dashboarding, AI, and GenAI tools to improve data visualization, facilitate better decision-making, and leverage artificial intelligence for enhanced data analysis, forecasting, and reporting capabilities.	

(4) Incremental Budget Request

Office Cost Increases	
Type: Recurring	$24,000
Funding is requested for an additional $24,000 to cover the cost of expanding office space for OEQA and parking at the new facility. Currently, our office has a capacity for only 8 staff members, but we have 11 employees, resulting in insufficient workspace.	

(5) Incremental Budget Request

Education Organization Subscriptions Paid on Behalf of State (SREB, ESC, NASDTEC, etc.)	
Type: Recurring	$350,000
$350k is requested to subscription costs for essential educational organizations (SREB, ESC).	

(6) Incremental Budget Request

Teacher Certification Test Scholarships	
Type: One-Time	$130,000
$130,000 is requested to increase the certification testing scholarships to support Oklahoma's teacher certification candidates.	