

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2017-2018 Performance Report

Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA – 266)

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

OETA'S MISSION

OETA provides essential educational content and services that inform, inspire and connect Oklahomans to ideas and information that enrich our quality of life. We do this by consistently engaging Oklahomans with educational and public television programming, providing educational training and curriculum, outreach initiatives and online features that collectively encourage lifelong learning.

The intent of OETA is to assure that new educational technologies, both over the air and online, benefit all citizens of the state. OETA is the #1 rated PBS network in the United States, with *two million* weekly viewers. Research shows children who watch OETA KIDS programs do better in school and life. OETA is Oklahoma's ONLY source for PBS programming and it connects Oklahoma communities, reaching all 77 counties. Additionally, OETA is the only provider of thousands of hours of original Oklahoma content.

OETA's goals include providing more educational content, improved local services, increased civic engagement, and more coverage of state government. With the coming advances in television technology (next-gen TV), in the near future, the state of Oklahoma will be able to provide instant, statewide, essential, geo-targeted two-way communication for emergencies/public safety, training and citizen involvement via OETA's broadcast spectrum, robust statewide infrastructure and ancillary bandwidth.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

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GOVERNANCE:

OETA is governed by a 13-member board made up of both public officials and private citizens. The makeup of the board is statutorily defined.

Six public officials are members of the board by virtue of other positions they hold within state government:

- Ms. Joy Hofmeister, State Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- Dr. Glen Johnson, Chancellor of the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education;
- Dr. Cheryl Evans, representing presidents of two-year community colleges;
- Dr. Larry Rice, representing presidents of regional four-year universities;
- Dr. David Boren, President of the University of Oklahoma; and
- Mr. Burns Hargis, President of Oklahoma State University.

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Seven private citizens are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Oklahoma State Senate. These members serve terms of seven years each with one position rotating to vacancy each June 30. Members are appointed to represent the five Congressional districts and two members are at-large:

- Ms. Suzanne Lair, Tulsa, District 1
- Mr. Garrett King, (Board Chair), Weatherford, District 3
- Mr. Clarke Stroud, Norman, District 4
- Ms. Mary Melon, Oklahoma City, District 5
- Ms. Terri Cornett, Oklahoma City, at-large
- Mr. Reese, “Cody” Inman, Oklahoma City, at-large
- Dr. Richard Beck, Claremore, District 2

The board has an Executive Committee and a Finance Committee.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the chair, vice-chair and secretary-treasurer of the OETA board. They function to discuss and convey information to other members during the year between regular board meetings conducted each February, April, June, August, October and December.

The Finance Committee helps give oversight to OETA budgeting and functions as the audit committee. This group bids, selects and interviews potential auditing firms to make an official recommendation to the board for the annual audit conducted after the close of the fiscal year.

Other committees or study groups may be appointed from time to time to further examine certain areas of interest or concern. These are temporary appointments and committees.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

August 2017

October 2017

December 2017

February 2018

April 2018

June 2018

There is no official board attendance policy, although members generally attend the regularly scheduled board meetings. A quorum of seven members is required and any action item must receive seven affirmative votes for passage.

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MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

With the loss of \$1.3 million in state appropriations, OETA has had to streamline many of its functions over the last several years. As employees have left the agency other employees have had job duties rearranged to help fill the vacancies.

As for other cost-cutting efforts, some expenses were eliminated from the OETA annual budget by closely examining all functions and prioritizing. Also technical equipment maintenance contracts for the most part have been eliminated and repairs have been accomplished with as-needed contracted services. OETA has transitioned from satellite delivery of its signal to a statewide fiber connection. This provides a higher quality network while reducing operating costs.

OETA is a very streamlined operation and has for many years had a goal to become the most efficient state public broadcasting network in the nation. This is being accomplished while at the same time providing four program streams including a 24-hour kids channel. With advances in digital technology and the advent of “next-gen” television, OETA will be able to continue to increase the amount of service it provides to the state. Areas of expansion in the future will include employing the existing robust statewide infrastructure to provide enhanced emergency alerting services.

Over the past year, OETA provided the following services for the citizens of Oklahoma:

- Increased usage of OETA PBS LEARNING MEDIA by educators from 6,500 three years ago to 8,900 presently. **Oklahoma educators** use OETA’s online library of more than **100,000 free classroom tools and teacher resources**.
- OETA and Oklahoma State Parks take STEM learning outside in four different locations, connecting with more than 800 families. This partnership provides interactive science and nature learning experiences at state parks based on OETA’s STEM programming for children.
- Doubled attendance to **Read Across Oklahoma**, with more than **5,000 at-risk preschoolers, as well as children and families** from the general public attending a day full of interactive literacy activities and receiving free books.
- Provided **90 Electronic Field Trip scholarships** in partnership with the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence to Oklahoma schools. OETA’s Electronic Field Trip Programs take **thousands of Oklahoma students through U.S. history via a live broadcast** that includes Q&A with historians and experts of U.S. history.
- OETA conducted a statewide teacher professional development training program to help educators to best leverage OETA content in the classroom, as well as available community level programs. Training covered topics that explain the use of tools such as LearningMedia, OETA children’s programming and Ready to Learn initiatives in the classroom.

- **Fall Literacy Festival** – An event focused on introducing PBS produced literacy based television programming to the Oklahoma City Community such as Super Why! and Word Girl. The event was held at Will Rogers Park (event partner) and attended by 633 people from OKC and surrounding areas.
- **Winter Writers Fair** – An event designed to help prepare parents and children for participation in the OETA/PBS Kids Young Writers Contest while exposing families to OETA literacy based television content (mentioned above). Approximately 400 parents and children in Tulsa and Oklahoma City participated in a series of activities utilizing PBS content to introduce basic writing and illustration concepts consistent with the Oklahoma Academic Standards for early elementary grades.
- **The OETA/PBS Kids Young Writers Contest** – The local implementation of the national writing contest for kids, where kindergarten through 3rd graders write and illustrate their own storybooks. Although, the national contest ended due to loss of funding, OETA continues to offer the competition to Oklahoma families. Fifteen winners from over 100 entries were selected. The awards ceremony was held at the State Capitol. In addition to prize packages, winners participated in a “meet and greet” with their legislators and received official commendations from them as well.
- **OETA Summerfest** – OETA’s year-end event that exposes families to the entire suite of OETA children’s television offerings and provides strategies for prevention of summer “slide”. Additionally, this event serves as the official launch of OETA’s summer learning program. Held in partnership with the Greenwood Cultural Center in Tulsa, this event was attended by approximately 500 people.
- **OETA STEM Fair** – Based on STEM-based television programming, families from across the State were invited to participate in a STEM competition where parents and children worked together in project teams to engage in the engineering process by using everyday items to solve real-world problems (concept from Curious George). Held in conjunction with Summerfest at the Greenwood Cultural Center, 35 project teams participated in the competition with 15 winners selected. Awards were distributed by State Education Superintendent Joy Hoffmeister.
- **OETA Local Event Series** – Small-scale events were held in various rural locations exposing 200 families to the early learning media resources (television, online web games, and mobile apps) available to them at no cost to support their children’s learning. The OETA partnered with local libraries and community organizations for events with the OETA Mobile Lab in places like Duncan, Stigler, and McAlester.
- **OETA Summer Learning Camp** – A two-week summer camp experience in partnership with the Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma City Boys and Girls Club, and the Greenwood Cultural Center (Tulsa) where

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150 children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd participated in a series of activities based on OETA/PBS children’s television programming and designed to help enrich their learning experiences from the previous school year. The summer camp program is based on the View, Read, Do model from PBS.

- **Odd Squad Camp** – Fifty children in grades kindergarten through 3rd grade were engaged in a two-week summer math camp experience at the Greater Oklahoma City Urban League based on the Odd Squad television program. Participating children showed a 48% increase in math ability by the end of the camp.
- **Scratch Jr. Family Creative Learning Experience** – Twenty-five Oklahoma City families participated in the four-week workshop experience at Educare OKC. Participating families were introduced to coding and pre-coding skills based on the PBS Scratch Jr. mobile App.
- OETA has expanded its content services to include digital projects like “What’s the Deal?” a STEM-focused online-only series targeting Oklahoma middle school students. Educational materials for the classroom are in use by more than 100 middle school grade teachers. Fall 2017.

CORE MISSION:

OETA is functioning within its core mission and has not been mandated to provide any services outside that mission.

OETA functions are not being duplicated by other state agencies (or other entities). Other state agencies depend heavily upon OETA to accomplish their missions of disseminating information to the people of Oklahoma. Video productions from other entities (education, game and wildlife, agriculture, career development, etc) are aired on OETA in order to provide statewide distribution.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

No other private entity performs the functions of OETA as the mission is much different from those of commercial broadcasters.

OETA is prohibited by federal and state regulations from operating as a commercial television network.

OETA works closely with private enterprise to accomplish its goals and also helps businesses meet their needs. Tower agreements, in-kind donations to OETA and carriage on more than 300 cable systems reflect private businesses utilizing OETA.