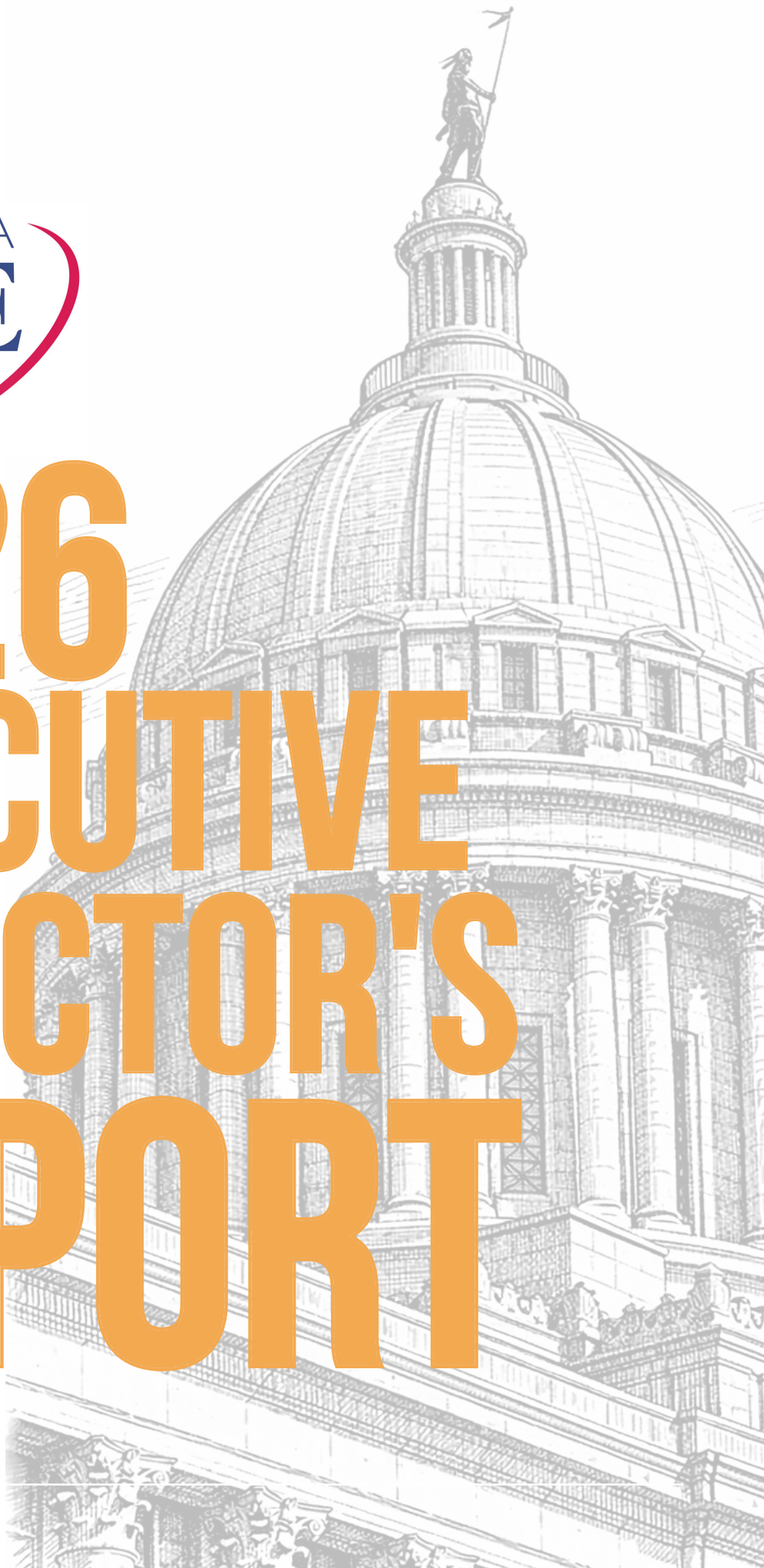




2026 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026 Oklahoma Legislative Session marked the second year of the 60th Legislature's two-year legislative cycle. As the constitutionally required second regular session, lawmakers focused on advancing priority policy initiatives while completing work on the Fiscal Year 2027 state budget. More than 2,800 bills and joint resolutions were filed during the session, with approximately 500 measures ultimately signed into law by Governor Kevin Stitt following legislative approval.

At the beginning of this session, we were tracking around 1000 bills that could affect CareerTech Centers, K-12 programs, students and overall workforce issues. In the end about 150 new bills became law in this two-year cycle that will impact us in some way. It was not the typical legislative session as legislative leadership and the Governor made and voted on a budget deal earlier than ever before and as a result, they were able to adjourn a few weeks early. This was important to many in the legislature who wanted to get on the campaign trail before the June primary.

Education was one of the Legislature's highest priorities. Lawmakers approved several significant reforms aimed at improving student achievement, strengthening literacy, supporting teachers, increasing school time and increasing accountability. Among the most notable measures was landmark legislation overhauling Oklahoma's early literacy policies, including enhanced reading intervention requirements and the return of stronger third-grade reading proficiency standards.

There were some positive changes made in the areas of teacher/student communication and technology center accreditation.

HB 1937 (Student Communication) requires corroborative evidence that inappropriate communication happened before the teacher can be put on administrative leave, it also clarifies local school boards are responsible for defining the definition of an emergency.

SB1735 (Accreditation) streamlines technology centers accreditation by giving all authority to the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE).

The legislature also passed **HB 3021 (Graduation Requirements)** which again changed Oklahoma's graduation requirements. Although most of the changes will not impact us, one change will directly take away students' flexibility in a big way. This change will restrict some CareerTech programs from counting towards the math and science credits for graduation. Most programs will still qualify but we will continue to work with legislators in future legislation to make sure that flexibility continues for students to choose the best path for their futures.

House Bill 3021 substantive language change:

3. Four units or sets of competencies of mathematics, two of which shall include Algebra I and either Algebra II or Geometry. The other two units may include Algebra II, Geometry, Trigonometry, Math Analysis, Calculus, Statistics, Math of Finance, Computer Science, college courses approved for dual credit, a full-time postsecondary career and technology program that teaches math content with a real-world application, or locally approved math based application course, or any mathematics course with applied knowledge of content and rigor above Algebra I. For the purposes of this section, a full-time postsecondary career and technology program that teaches math content with a real-world application shall not include courses categorized as Arts, A/V Technology and Communications, Education and Training, Hospitality and Tourism, or Human Services, including, but not limited to: Barbering, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts,

Esthetician, Event Management, Horticulture, or Hospitality Management;

4. Three units or sets of competencies of laboratory science requirements including one unit or set of competencies of life science meeting the standards for Biology I; one unit or set of competencies of physical science meeting the standards for Physical Science, Chemistry, or Physics; and one unit or set of competencies from the domains of physical science, life science, or earth and space science, or full-time postsecondary career and technology program that teaches science content with a real-world application or locally approved science-based application course, or any science course with applied knowledge of content and rigor above Biology I or Physical Science. For the purposes of this section, a full-time postsecondary career and technology program that teaches science content with a real-world application shall not include courses categorized as Arts, A/V Technology and Communications, Education and Training, Hospitality and Tourism, or Human Services, including, but not limited to: Barbering, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Esthetician, Event Management, or Hospitality Management;

Property tax decreases were another major topic this session. Two changes to property tax calculations and reimbursements (summarized below) will be voted on by Oklahomans in state questions in August and November. SJR 39, if passed, will directly reduce our local funding and cause us to look to the state to fill those holes in order to maintain the current level of services and operations we provide.

- **SJR 39** by Senate Pro Tem Lonnie Paxton, R-Tuttle, and House Speaker Kyle Hilbert, R-Bristow proposes an August 2026 state question to amend the Oklahoma Constitution to lower the maximum increase in taxable fair cash value of property. The amendment to this bill does the following and also includes changes to the Senior Freeze for Homestead properties (State Question 847-Nov. 3rd ballot)

- **HJR 1087** by House Speaker Kyle Hilbert, R-Bristow, and Senate Pro Tem Lonnie Paxton, R-Tuttle, would ask voters to amend the Oklahoma Constitution and let the legislature decide when and how much local government entities including schools would be reimbursed for the five-year property tax exemption for qualifying manufacturing facilities. (State Question 844-Aug.25th ballot).

The Appropriations bill that passed lead to many agencies receiving flat budgets, but they did find cash to make some targeted investments in some agencies to support their priorities. The CareerTech system received about \$6.1 million in new dollars, which included funds to fully fund flexible benefit allowances for our teachers.

While this legislative session had its challenges, we are looking forward to seeing how the upcoming elections in August and November will impact us in the future. With dozens of fresh legislative faces and almost all new statewide officers, it will definitely be different! Please spend time in the coming weeks and months researching candidates' positions on public education. Be sure and vote on Aug 25th and November 3rd for candidates who will support funding and expanding CareerTech opportunities for students statewide!



INTERIM STUDIES



As the Oklahoma Legislature shifts its focus to the interim, OkACTE is actively monitoring interim studies that could impact Oklahoma CareerTech programs, students, funding, and system operations. These studies often help shape legislation for the upcoming legislative session.

Committee hearings will begin in August and continue through the fall. OkACTE may be asked to provide testimony or expertise on issues affecting CareerTech and will keep members informed as these studies progress.

A list of the interim studies currently being monitored is provided below.

HSP2001 A study on state agency administrative rules and potential uses for AI in enhancing them.
Kendrix, Gerrid(R)

HSP2019 A study on adjunct and emergency certified teachers.
Lowe, Dick(R)

HSP2020 A study on high-stakes testing and ACT requirements in public schools.
Lowe, Dick(R)

HSP2023 A study on successful transition from incarceration to the workforce.
Eaves, Ryan (F)(R)

HSP2024 A study on updates in Oklahoma's innovation economy and opportunities for growth.
Banning, Chris(R)

HSP2027	A study on the professional development landscape in public schools. West, Tammy(R)
HSP2034	A study on vapes, kratom, THC products and other potentially harmful substances, focused on youth access and impacts. Pogemiller, Ellen (F)(D)
HSP2040	A study on school discipline, classroom order and teacher retention. Hall, Rob (F)(R)
HSP2044	A study on nuclear workforce in the state. Stinson, Preston(R)
HSP2045	A study on school accountability systems. Pogemiller, Ellen (F)(D)
HSP2057	A study on changes to extend the school calendar. Ford, Ross(R)
HSP2060	A study on business retention and growth in the state. Lawson, Mark(R)
HSP2061	A study on aerospace and defense industry presence within the state. Miller, Nicole(R)
HSP2065	A study on workforce intermediaries. West, Tammy(R)
HSP2066	A study on workforce development and education. Townley, Tammy(R)

- HSP2084** A study on tax reform, including property taxes.
Chapman, Mark (F)(R)
- HSP2088** A study on expanding access to CareerTech and Vocational
Tech training.
Chapman, Mark (F)(R)
- HSP2097** A study of the Initiative Petition and State Question processes.
Crosswhite-Hader, Denise(R)
- HSP2110** A study on expanding workforce development by enhancing
industry-driven apprenticeship programs through CareerTech.
Norwood, Kevin (F)(R)
- HSP2112** A study to examine current charter school authorizers and
potential reforms.
West, Tammy(R)
- HSP2120** A study of artificial intelligence accountability in high
impact state services, agency use of such data, transparency,
human review, and related public trust.
Clinton, Amanda (F)(D)
- SSP2006** A study on putting kids first in the OK School Report Card.
Boren, Mary(D)
- SSP2013** A study on tax reform, including property taxes.
Chapman, Mark (F)(R)
- SSP2006** A study on putting kids first in the OK School Report Card.
Boren, Mary(D)

HSP2066	A study on the right to repair. Boren, Mary(D)
SSP2013	A study on tax reform, including property taxes. Chapman, Mark (F)(R)
SSP2024	A study on workforce partnerships. Coleman, Bill(R)
SSP2029	A study on incentives for gun safety courses. Dossett, Jo Anna(D)
SSP2054	A study on voucher accountability in state-funded private education. Hicks, Carri(D)
SSP2057	A study comparing outcomes across state university systems. Hines, Kelly (F)(R)
SSP2064	A study on aerospace industry competitiveness. Mann, Mark (F)(D)
SSP2070	A study on home economics in Boley, OK. Nice, Nikki (F)(D)
SSP2078	A study on rural students and the state's workforce needs. Pugh, Adam(R)
SSP2088	A study on bonding and property taxes. Sacchieri, Kendal (F)(R)

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



The OkACTE Legislative Agenda outlines the Association's official legislative priorities, as determined by our membership. Members are invited to submit potential priorities, which are reviewed and discussed during the Legislative & Appropriations Forum. Following that process, the OkACTE Political Action Committee—comprised of two representatives from each division—votes to adopt the Association's legislative agenda for the upcoming year.

Throughout the legislative session, OkACTE actively monitors legislation that could impact CareerTech education and our members, whether positively or negatively, and advocates on behalf of the priorities established by the membership.

The final document includes the 2026 OkACTE Legislative Agenda and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE) Appropriations Request.

Upload the 2026 Legislative Agenda [here](#).



LEGISLATIVE & APPROPRIATIONS FORUM OCTOBER 1 | 4:00 - 5:00 PM | ON-LINE FORUM

Help Shape the 2027 Legislative Agenda!

Your voice matters! Help identify the legislative priorities that will guide OkACTE's advocacy during the 2027 Legislative Session.

Get involved in two ways:

- Submit your legislative priority ideas by September 19 using the **Suggested Priorities Form**.
- Attend the Legislative & Appropriations Forum to discuss, refine, and vote on the priorities that will become the 2027 OkACTE Legislative Agenda. **Register here**.

Your ideas. Your voice. Your advocacy.



HB 2288 – Retire-Rehire (Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System)

- Revises OTRS retire-rehire requirements by extending the required separation period from 60 days to six months.
- Removes earnings limitations for all retirees returning to work.
- Allows both certified and classified retirees to return to any position in a school district after the required separation period.
- Any employment, volunteer service intended to secure future paid employment, or deferred compensation during the six-month separation period results in forfeiture of retirement benefits received during that time.

HB 4268 – National Board Certification (NBCT) Bonus

- Creates a National Board Certification Bonus Program providing a \$5,000 annual bonus for five years to teachers who earn National Board Certification.

HB 4326 – Oklahoma's Promise Expansion

- Expands Oklahoma's Promise eligibility by updating income, custody, and certified teacher qualification requirements.
- Broadens the definition of certified teacher to include full-time school counselors, librarians, nurses, and athletic trainers in public schools and CareerTech centers.
- Includes alternatively certified teachers in the definition of certified teacher.
- Extends eligibility to adopted children and children under the legal guardianship of certified teachers.
- Excludes teachers holding emergency or provisional certificates.
- Allows Oklahoma's Promise scholarships to be used at CareerTech schools.

SB 201 – Teacher Pay Raise

- Increases the state minimum teacher salary schedule by \$2,000 at every step.
- Does not require additional raises for districts whose salary schedules already exceed the new state minimum by at least \$2,000.
- The pay increase is not mandatory for every district beyond the updated state minimum.

HB 3151 – Instructional Days

- Increases the minimum school year from 166 to 173 instructional days.
- Permits up to five professional development days and two parent-teacher conference days to count toward the required total.

HB 1937 – Digital Communication Clarification

- Defines a student as an individual who has not earned a standard high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma, excluding adult CareerTech students.
- Clarifies that local school boards establish emergency exceptions.
- Requires reports of violations to be corroborated before a school employee may be placed on administrative leave.
- Prohibits documentation in an employee's personnel file when an investigation determines no misconduct occurred.

SB 1734 – Artificial Intelligence in Public Schools

- Requires educators or authorized school employees to review AI-generated content before using it for instruction, feedback, assessment, or decision-making.
- Prohibits AI from serving as the primary basis for grading, discipline, placement, promotion, retention, or other high-stakes decisions.
- Requires student-facing AI tools to be age-appropriate and used only for clearly defined educational purposes.
- Requires AI tools to comply with federal and state student privacy laws, including FERPA, and applicable security standards.

- Requires districts to minimize the amount of student data shared with AI tools.
- Requires districts to provide annual written notice to parents identifying:
 - AI tools used by the district.
 - AI vendors.
 - Categories of student data collected.
 - How student data is shared.
 - The educational purpose of each AI tool.

SB 1144 – Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for Teacher Retirees

- Provides a COLA for OTRS retirees receiving benefits as of June 30, 2026, who continue receiving benefits on or after November 1, 2026:
- 0% for retirees with fewer than 8 years of retirement.
- 3% for retirees retired at least 8 years but fewer than 20 years.
- 6% for retirees retired 20 years or more.

HB 3462 Plumbing License

- Reduces the waiting period to retake a failed licensing exam from 90 days to 30 days after any subsequent failed attempt.
- Establishes a minimum passing score of 70% for all plumbing licensing examinations.
- Creates eligibility requirements for the residential journeyman plumber examination, including experience and education pathways:
 - 4,000 verified work hours plus two years of experience, or
 - Approved plumbing education plus 3,000 work hours, or
 - Military plumbing experience plus 3,000 work hours.

HB 2398 Credential of Value

- Creates a new "credential of value" designation for postsecondary and career-tech credentials in Oklahoma.
- Authorizes the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education to designate credentials as "credentials of value."

- Requires a credential of value to demonstrate a positive return on investment, including:
 - Graduates earning at least the statewide median earnings of Oklahoma high school graduates within a specified timeframe.
 - Graduates earning enough to recover their net cost of attendance within a specified timeframe.
- Authorizes the State Regents and CareerTech to adopt rules and procedures for implementing the credential of value program, including:
 - Calculating return on investment and net cost of attendance.
 - Measuring workforce demand.
 - Reviewing and designating credentials.
 - Establishing statewide reporting requirements.
- Requires colleges, universities, and CareerTech institutions to annually report data needed to evaluate credentials, including:
 - Enrollment.
 - Completion and credential attainment.
 - Graduate employment and earnings.
 - Program costs.
- Authorizes data-sharing agreements between the State Regents, CareerTech, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, the Oklahoma Workforce Commission, and other state agencies to support credential evaluation.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: STATE QUESTIONS 844, 847 & 843

HOW PROPERTY TAX CHANGES COULD RESHAPE CAREERTECH FUNDING

Heads up – this is a big one. **State Questions 844, 847 and 843 could significantly affect local funding for communities across Oklahoma.** Together, they could reduce local property tax revenue or change how communities are reimbursed for lost property tax revenue, affecting the CareerTech system and many other locally funded essential services.

The background: Property taxes, also known as ad valorem taxes, are local taxes paid on real estate. They are collected in your community and invested back into your community by locally elected officials to support local priorities and services.

Related to SQ 844, Oklahoma offers qualifying new manufacturing facilities a five-year exemption from local property taxes to encourage economic development. Since that exemption cuts into local property tax collections, the Oklahoma Constitution currently requires the state to reimburse CareerTech and other local entities – K-12 public schools, counties, libraries, county health departments, EMS districts – for the revenue they would have otherwise received.

SQ 844:

- Changes how local communities are reimbursed for property tax revenue lost through Oklahoma's manufacturing ad valorem tax exemption program.
- The Legislature – not the Constitution – would decide the amount and method of reimbursement going forward, allowing the potential for a reduction in reimbursement amounts.
- On the ballot August 25

SQ 847:

- Would limit how much taxable property values can increase each year.
- On the ballot November 3

SQ 843:

- Would gradually eliminate property taxes on owner-occupied homes over three years.
- Is currently being challenged and its constitutionality is under review by the Oklahoma Supreme Court.
 - If the Court rules the measure is unconstitutional, it will not move forward.
 - If the Court upholds the measure, it could be placed on a future statewide ballot.

Why it matters to us: All 3 measures have the potential to significantly reduce the amount of funding that each community receives from property tax revenue. Approximately 63% of revenue for Oklahoma's CareerTech Centers and k-12 school districts is generated through local property taxes. Those local dollars help our technology centers respond to workforce needs, expand high-demand programs, purchase industry-standard equipment, and maintain facilities that serve students, adult learners and employers. CareerTech programs delivered through K-12

school districts could face a compounded impact, as both CareerTech funding and local school district funding rely heavily on local property taxes. If one arm of our CTE system takes a deep cut, it will be felt throughout the entire system.

It's not just us, either – these same taxes also support our K-12 public school district partners, libraries, emergency services, county government, roads and bridges, and public health.

There is no identified replacement funding source for potential reductions in local property tax revenue, nor is there any guarantee that future reimbursement levels would remain the same. If local funding decreases, communities would face difficult choices such as:

- Reducing services
- Shifting costs to other taxpayers: individuals, commercial or agriculture
- Seeking replacement funding from the state

Because of the potential impacts on the CareerTech system and other locally funded community services, OkACTE has taken an official position opposing all three ballot measures and urging members to vote NO on State Questions 844, 847 and 843 (SQ 843 pending Supreme Court decision).

Your role: In your official capacity as CareerTech or public school employees, you cannot use school resources or time to advocate for or against any ballot measure. You can only provide accurate, factual information. **However, outside of work, you are free to express your personal views and advocate as a private citizen.**

What to do now:

1. Visit OkACTE's Frequently Asked Questions webpage that explains the state questions, how local property taxes support the CareerTech system and other community services, and what the measures propose. The FAQ will continue to be updated as new questions arise and should serve as your primary resource for accurate, factual information.
2. Learn the basics of how the state questions will impact your communities so you can speak confidently if it comes up.
3. Share what you know with coworkers, business partners, community groups, friends and family. Informed conversations start with understanding how these measures could impact local funding.
4. Ask the question: Do you want your local elected officials determining your communities' budgets, or the state?

Bottom line: Three ballot measures, real funding stakes for the CareerTech system and our communities. Get informed, stay updated, and help others do the same.

Don't wait until election season to get up to speed. Start now.

