

# The Putnam Pioneer

SPRING 2020 ISSUE



## Topsy Turvy World



COVID-19 has sure put a kink in a lot of plans, huh? Educators are missing their students, children are missing their teachers, and many things are going undone.

How we choose to react to this crisis has the potential to make public education and all of us stronger when it is over, though.

**The PC Foundation exists to serve the students and teachers in Putnam City**, and when they are not around, that becomes a challenge for us to overcome.

We hope our social media platforms will provide you with answers to questions and resources for families to enrich their children's education for the foreseeable future. Teachers please share your ideas on our [Facebook](#) page.

If there is anything we can do to help, please ask. We want to innovate during this strange time, and need your input to be successful.

## Wall of Fame Postponed until August (hopefully!)

We are saddened by the need to postpone our most important event, but it is the right thing to do.

The Wall of Fame honoring **Dr. Greg Walton** will happen! We are working with our vendors to get a new date, and assessing the COVID-19 situation in order to make the best decision for our guests.

Tickets are still on sale, [so get them now!](#)

## Monthly Giving Continues to Grow!



Have you been making a yearly gift to the foundation? Would you like to give more to help our children, but don't see an easy way to do it? Consider monthly giving!

It allows you to do more by doing less.

Visit our [DONATE](#) page today and see how easy it is to set up a recurring donation through our secure site. You can still designate it for a program or give in honor/memory of a loved one, respected teacher, or a graduate.

Start today, and see how a small monthly gift adds up to a big gift for our children!

[Click here to contribute!](#)

## From the Blog: The Wonderful World of Oklahoma School Finance

Did you know that the Putnam City Schools Foundation has a blog? It comes out each Thursday on our website [WWW.PCF4KIDS.ORG](http://WWW.PCF4KIDS.ORG) and includes news about Putnam City, musings on Jennifer's time as a student and teacher in the district, and thoughts on the state of education in Oklahoma. The blog below is from Feb. 27, 2020. Please take time to read and comment on them each week!



In light of the historic passage of a historic bond for Putnam City's students (THANK YOU AGAIN VOTERS), I thought I would step back a moment and explain some strange aspects of Oklahoma school finance law. It is a rather convoluted process, and I don't understand it all, but I am happy to field additional questions and get you answers later. For now, let's get to the basics.

Oklahoma schools are funded

through what we call State Aid. Mostly, it is determined by the number of students in your district, but a variety of factors affect the final amount of money each district receives from tax revenues which fund State Aid. One factor that affects

the final amount is the amount of Chargeables figured into the formula. These are local revenue sources which go to the local school district, including property taxes, county taxes and others.

The state calculates the State Aid for each district, then subtracts the Chargeables, and you get a new amount of State Aid. Now, some school districts don't have the local revenue that others have, so their State Aid

amount will be higher than some.

Why? Why all rigmarole? Why not just take the total pot of tax revenue and divide it by the number of students and then give that amount per student to each district? Well, that is essentially what is happening. But this more nuanced method reveals an Oklahoma value as old as our state constitution.

The child in Guymon deserves as good of an education as the child in Hugo.

The playing field is ostensibly equal. Of course, you can look at the disparities in some of our districts and wonder if maybe there isn't a better way to reach the goal of equity in education. I would not disagree with you.

We'll get into some more details in a future post, and respond to your questions as well, so please keep them coming.

### Did you know?

#### We're nearing the end of our CareShare Endowment Fundraising Campaign!

By now you may have seen that the PC Foundation was generously granted a \$3 to \$1 match from the **Kirkpatrick Family Foundation** to increase our endowment. This means that for every \$3 we raise, they will donate \$1.

We decided that the funds will be restricted for our [CareShare](#) and [Penny's Closet](#) programs so we can continue to support children in these very basic ways

for years to come.

Would you like to honor someone by making a gift to this effort? Did you know **Penny Poe**, the founder of these programs, and want to make a gift in her name?

Please visit our endowment page with the Oklahoma City Community Foundation [HERE](#) and do that now so we can help children tomorrow.



*Tentatively Rescheduled  
for May 28th*

Our Foundation has yet to determine if it would be wise to host this event at the end of May, but if we can we will. Please continue to follow our social media for updates on this and all our activities.

## Mission Focus: CAST



The more we talk about the **CAST** program, the more people respond positively, saying it fills a much-needed gap in our community. **Communities and Schools Together** marries the need we have in public schools with the human potential to help. Lots of people support our schools verbally, but they don't know how to actually help. Now we have a conduit for how they can do just that.

**Sharon Williams**, whom you met in our last newsletter, is connecting churches, small businesses, local corporations and others with schools who have expressed an interest in being a part of CAST. We thank these entities and want to share their accomplishments on behalf of our children.

**Allegiance Credit Union** and **Oklahoma Council for Economic Education** chose **Apollo Elementary** as the State model for a new financial literacy program, One School One Book, aimed at promoting reading skills and financial concepts. *The Lemonade War*, a book by Jacqueline Davie is designed to create a shared reading experience by students, families and school.

**Energy FC** came to **Central Elementary's** rescue when their soccer nets disappeared by presenting new soccer goal nets, soccer balls and cones. The students enjoyed the pep talks given by **John Pascarella**, Energy FC head coach and **Alexis Vizarelis**, Energy FC

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## District's Top Teachers Celebrated

The Foundation along with the Putnam City Association of Classroom Teachers recently honored Putnam City's top teachers at a reception hosted by **Victory Church**.

Each school's top teacher received recognition and award in front of an audience of their co-workers, friends, and families.

The top five teachers, who were selected through an essay and interview process were named **Excellent Educators**. Each received a gift basket with items donated by area businesses and \$250 from the Foundation:

**Sara Camp**

Windsor Hills Elementary

**Malynda McClellan**

Western Oaks Elementary

**Cody Sivertsen**

Cooper Middle School

**Katie Wonderly**

Tulakes Elementary

**Terri Woosley**

Putnam City West



*Foundation Board Members were on hand to congratulate the Putnam City Teacher of the Year Katie Wonderly at the awards presentation on March 3. From left: Paul Hurst, Jeannie Carter, Katie Wonderly, Jessical Sherrill, and DiAnne Bryant.*

The evening culminated with the announcement of the **District Teacher of the Year Katie Wonderly!**

Katie received an additional \$250 from the Foundation, a fantastic prize package with items to enjoy all

year long, and will represent Putnam City in the State Teacher of the Year program.

Congratulations and our sincere appreciation to these educators for their exceptional skill and dedication.

## Golden Apple Awards

The [Golden Apple](#) recognizes outstanding work on behalf of Putnam City, and can be offered to staff, volunteers, administrators or teachers.

It is the highest award one can get, and the Putnam City Foundation is honored to be a part of the process. It's like winning an Oscar for being an outstanding person in education.

Once again our committee had a difficult time choosing among the amazing people who work for our kids, but this year's winners are:

**Karen Allen**, Volunteer, Wiley Post Elementary, Hefner Middle School, and Putnam City North - Karen is known for her servant attitude and selfless commitment as a dedicated parent volunteer for over 20 years. Her efforts have had a positive impact at every school in which she's been involved.

**Ken Attebery**, Vice Principal, Putnam City North - For 13 years Ken

has worked tirelessly to help so many. He is a strong supporter of special needs students and created a food pantry to assist students in need.

**Karen Kobs**, Physical Education Teacher/ABL Instructor, Hilldale Elementary - Karen is a 36 year veteran of Putnam City Schools. She is highly admired for her ability to development relationships with students, family, and colleagues.

**Elistin Pierre**, Lead Custodian, Cooper Middle School - In his sixth year with the district, Elistin is known for his warm smile and friendly attitude. Always willing to do much more than is required, he is loved by students and faculty alike.

**Eva Velasco**, Volunteer, Windsor Hills Elementary - As a dedicated parent volunteer for over five years, Eva is an integral part of daily school life. No matter the task she is always willing to help, from conducting fundraisers to producing the school



Ken Attebery



Elistin Pierre



Karen Kobs



Eva Velasco

Not pictured: Karen Allen

yearbook and helping out in the office.

Congratulations to this year's winners, and thank you to board member **John Milner** (Putnam City North Class of '03) and the entire selection committee for putting in the effort to recognize our best.

## Alumni Spotlight: Alicia Priest, PCHS Class of '89

**PP: Tell us about your work history.**

I have been in education for 25 years. I spent 12 years teaching elementary

Spanish and PreK-12th grade ELL and 4 years teaching middle school Spanish. Then, I was elected to serve as Vice President and then President of the **Oklahoma Education Association**. I am finishing my 5th year as President.

**PP: What is the most exciting**



**thing about being OEA Pres?**

Making a difference for our educators and the students we serve, helping teachers remember why they chose the profession and seeing them light up when they talk about their students, and working with our aspiring educators and early career educators all excite me.

**PP: What's most difficult?**

Not being able to solve all the issues is the most frustrating.

**PP: Did you have any mentors growing up?**

Absolutely! Mrs. Dennis is the first mentor I can remember. She subbed in my 4th grade class. I had just moved from Hilldale to Rollingwood and was having a hard time with all of the changes. She recognized before

my parents did. She continued as a mentor until her passing. It's funny that I remember her—but not my 4th grade teacher's name.

**PP: What is a favorite memory from high school at PCHS?**

Favorite memories are probably Little Caesar's crazy bread lunches with **Melonie (Stith) Dunson**, Mrs. Anderson's quick wit and use of humor in the classroom, and of course, having Coach Causey's class with my best friend **Laura (Dennis) Koehn**—good times!

**PP: Do you mentor anyone yourself?**

I do. Mentoring others is one of the most important ways to pay it forward to the next generation!

**SPECIAL THANKS TO LAST QUARTER'S MAJOR DONORS**

American Fidelity Corporation  
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Mike & Aimee Mitchell  
Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation  
Smicklas Chevrolet  
The Myers Trust



Our heartfelt thanks to Smicklas Chevrolet for a generous contribution in support of programs to assist children and families experiencing financial hardships and homelessness in our district. Pictured from left: Smicklas General Manager Kara Hudson, Foundation President Jennifer Seal, PCSD Director of Student Services Joe Ellis, and Smicklas Sales Director Carlin Williams.

**Welcome Friends!**

[Friends of the Foundation](#) are Putnam City employees who choose to support our programs through a monthly payroll deduction. Thank you to our newest friends and those who have increased their pledge!

- New Members**  
Jaisha Barber  
Mackenzie Bridgewater  
Amelia Brown  
Jamie Dorrough  
Deana Ellis  
Katrine Fulmer  
Meaghan Geary  
Amanda Gifford  
Shawnda Gilliam  
Taylor Hanska  
Katie Harless  
Carey Hollingshead  
Davon House  
Alexis Huffines  
Paige Krienke  
Rebecca LeDonne  
Kristin McMenamy  
Kaitlyn Nailly  
Jennifer Newman  
Brandi Ortiz  
Mumy Randolph

- Cynthia Shelton  
Erin Sisson  
Morgan Smith  
Stacy Stewart  
Bryan Taylor  
Stephanie Vinecke  
Catherine Westfahl

**These Friends Increased Their Pledge**

- Jana Bowers  
Dana Brinson  
Keshia Frost  
Betsy Kelley  
Bruce McDermott  
Dana Smith  
Kayla Stewart  
Cynthia Wagner



**Indoor Recess Returns in June**



It's not too early to start thinking about who will be on your team for Indoor Recess this June. Besides, you've got to ask that one gal who's really good at science,

or that teacher who knows a lot about English Literature to be on your team before someone else asks them.

**Mission Focus: CAST**

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The prizes will be better, the venue will be hip, we'll have another delicious meal, and we will all enjoy a great time to benefit our students and teachers.

goalkeeper coach. On their way out the door, each students received a 'hi-five' from Coach Pascarella and Coach Vizarelis.

Girls' Closet became a reality when community members hearing of her plight stepped up to make monetary donations for the young ladies.

Financial Secretary **Kathy Hale** at **Cooper Middle School** had a unique need. Young ladies were coming to her in need of sanitary supplies. Kathy's vision of a Cooper

The kind and generous acts of these organizations and individuals made an immediate impact on our students, an impact that may last a lifetime.

## Thanks to YOU!

Because of your generous support of the Foundation, **Putnam City North High School** Business/Computer Teacher **Katy Powers** received a [YES! Grant](#) so her students could participate in the Business Professionals of America (BPA) State Leadership Conference in Tulsa. The young people who attended participated in contests designed to help them prepare for the future such as accounting, job interviews, and web design. YOUR gifts truly make a direct impact on our students everyday!



From left: Students **Jill Nolasco**, **Jasmine White**, **Logan Kerfoot** and **Skyler Swart** with Putnam City North Business/Computer Teacher **Katy Powers**.



*The BPA conference taught me so many things in just the span of two days... Hearing my name called to go on stage was rewarding enough but to qualify for nationals made me really appreciate all who have helped me get to that point. I truly am so thankful for this club and opportunity to help navigate my future.*

*-Jill Nolasco*



*What I liked the most was when I went up on stage to receive my medal, and even though I didn't qualify for nationals, I just felt really happy that I made it here with the help of Ms. Powers. What I learned was that I had a lot of stuff on the test that I barely knew, so I decided that I will work on those things until I can do it as well as the other things that I already knew from web design.*

*-Logan Kerfoot*

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Putnam City Schools Foundation

## About Us

Our mission is to enhance and enrich the educational opportunities of children in Putnam City Schools. We serve the students, teachers, and staff of Oklahoma's fifth-largest school district, through support, recognition, and advocacy, and have for over 30 years.

More than 19,500 children and their families benefit from the work we do every day. The support we provide doesn't just impact our schools. It enables our students to dream big and continue building the strong community we share.

## Contact Us

### Foundation Office

5401 NW 40th St  
Oklahoma City, OK 73122  
**(405) 495-5200, Ext. 1205**

### Jennifer Seal, NBCT

President  
[jseal@putnamcityschools.org](mailto:jseal@putnamcityschools.org)

### Kris Baggerly

Communications & Programs Coordinator  
[kbaggerly@putnamcityschools.org](mailto:kbaggerly@putnamcityschools.org)

### Sharon Williams

Community Relations & Engagement Coordinator  
[sharonw@putnamcityschools.org](mailto:sharonw@putnamcityschools.org)

Putnam City Schools  Foundation

## Learn More

Please visit our website to learn about our programs, coming events, and how you can become involved:  
[www.pcf4kids.org](http://www.pcf4kids.org)

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