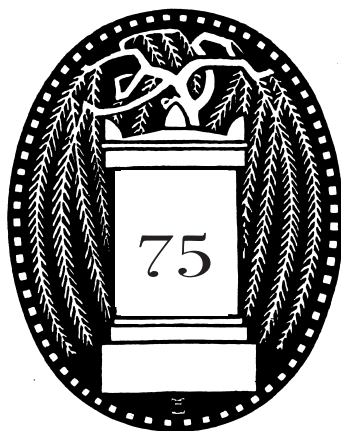


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Sanctioning the Sooner State: Revisiting Oklahoma's Educator Revolt of 1963–1965

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Introduction

“The National Education Association announced today the end of its war with the education authorities of Oklahoma” (“N.E.A. lifts sanctions,” 1965, p. 3); so declares a *New York Times* article of September 24, 1965. The “war” began when Henry Bellmon, Oklahoma’s newly elected Governor, vetoed legislation that would have raised Oklahoma teachers’ salaries for the first time in nearly two decades (Fuson, 1969; Hubbell, 1970). Though Bellmon professed there to be “no crisis” in teachers’ salaries when blocking the legislation, Oklahoma’s teachers disagreed (Fuson, 1969, p. 33; Hubbell, 1970, p. 322). Bellmon’s action triggered 28 months of concerted response by Oklahoma teachers that included political organization, teacher walkouts, voting campaigns, and, ultimately, sanctions against teachers by the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) and the National Education Association (NEA). During the summer of 1965, Oklahoma’s teachers succeeded in winning historic increases to educational funding—including teacher pay raises—via legislation, appropriations, and through the introduction and adoption of an Oklahoma constitutional amendment. These actions brought Oklahoma’s nearly three-year educational crisis, including enduring three months of sanctions, to an end.

We situate this paper in a wider lineage of teacher activism and collective teacher action by recounting the Sooner State’s educator revolt between 1963 and 1965 that culminated in the imposition and eventual resolution of NEA sanctions. We first present a review of relevant literature, we then trace the OEA’s response to Bellmon’s veto, the NEA’s subsequent investigation and its imposition of sanctions, and, finally, the events that ultimately led to the sanctions’ removal. We argue that, despite the controversy and limitations sanctions created, they functioned as an important tool for exercising collective action in 1965, one that, in the end, produced meaningful educational gains. We conclude this historical episode contains contemporary relevance as well, providing today’s teachers with inspiration, motivation, and a legacy of activism that continues to shape Oklahoma’s teaching profession.

Today, nearly six decades after Oklahoma was subjected to NEA sanctions, amidst the modern context of stunted teacher salaries, chronic school underfunding, teacher deprofessionalization, and associated teacher flight to other states or out of the profession entirely, Oklahoma's teacher battles continue, although the war of 1965 remains largely forgotten. In revisiting the 1965 sanctions, we seek to bring renewed focus to one of Oklahoma's key moments of statewide educational crisis while providing historical context for future political actions of those advocating for educational change in Oklahoma and elsewhere. Amid Oklahoma's recent sharp decline in educational rankings and increasing hostility toward teachers by elected officials, we think this historical act of teacher advocacy particularly ripe for reexamination.

Literature Review

We draw extensively from archival sources, including contemporary newspaper accounts, records from the OEA and NEA archives, the gubernatorial archives of Henry Bellmon, and relevant books, theses, and dissertations. Although local and, at times, national press reported on the sanctions as they unfolded—and a handful of scholars examined the issue in the immediate aftermath—recent scholarly engagement with these events has since been virtually nonexistent. We find the existing literature coalesces around three interrelated themes: (1) debates over the effectiveness of sanctions, (2) sanctions manifesting within a larger NEA/American Federation of Teachers (AFT) competition to represent teachers, and (3) teacher activism as a response to educational neglect and injustice.

Scholars offer conflicting assessments as to the efficacy of sanctions. Both the NEA (1965) and Fuson (1969) conclude that, while the 1965 sanctions were successful in improving the state's education conditions, such conditions were necessitated by a prolonged history of neglect, indifference, and general lack of leadership among state leaders—structural issues sanctions alone could not resolve. Similarly, Hubbell (1970) acknowledges that although sanctions facilitated the immediate goal of teachers, those sanctions came “at a cost many feared was too high” (p. iv), noting that sanctions alienated some stakeholders who considered themselves allies of public schools. Schnauffer (1966) contends that sanctions ultimately proved counterproductive because they gave “a school system and a community a bad name” (p. 16). Resulting public shaming associated with sanctioning, according to Schnauffer, in effect works to counteract any local politician's desire which is to present their school system and community in a positive light. However, Lieberman (1965) counters that sanctions may be less polarizing than alternative measures, such as teacher strikes.

Both Schnauffer (1966) and Stinnett (1968) place sanctions within the larger contest between the NEA and the AFT to represent teachers. The AFT was emboldened when, Stinnett argues, public sector workers

gained the right to unionize in 1962. As such, the AFT turned from the NEA's ally to its adversary as the AFT attempted to siphon teachers from the NEA's ranks. This competitive move by the IFT required the NEA to adopt more-forceful tactics, which, in Oklahoma ultimately culminated in sanctions. While Stinnett argues the NEA's sanctions were an effort to avoid the AFT's strike tactics, Schnauffer (1966) counters that the NEA's sanctions "don't work" (p. 17). Stinnett argues the AFT's tactics and goals more appropriate for working-class laborers than for teachers.

Finally, in the case of teacher activism, sanctions function as tools for collectively addressing systemic educational neglect (Fuson, 1969; Hubbell, 1970; Shamblin, 1970). Shamblin evidences how Oklahoma's annual teachers' salaries at the time of NEA sanctions were "nearly \$1000 below the national average" (p. 560). He argues that in the U.S. teacher militancy (in the form of strikes and sanctions) are driven by economic insecurity, poor working conditions, classroom overcrowding, and perceptions of diminished teacher agency (i.e., deprofessionalization), the very conditions affecting Oklahoma's teachers at the time. Hanneman (1985) argues Bellmon's governorship¹ was characterized by an inability to find common ground with Oklahoma's teachers; sanctions, then, provided a much-needed tool to help teachers rally, find their voices, and advocate for the profession.

Background: The State of the State

After WWII, Oklahoma's educational investment steadily lagged neighboring states and national averages. By 1962, despite being ranked first in the nation for teacher professional preparation, the state ranked below 30th in teacher pay (Hodenfield, 1964; Miller, 1964). Oklahoma teacher salaries had dropped to 85% of the national average, and post-war baby-boom enrollments coupled with inadequate school construction had led to overcrowded classroom conditions (Shamblin, 1970).

To help correct these deficiencies, in 1963 Oklahoma-school-superintendent-turned-state-senator Clem Hamilton (D) introduced SB146 designed finally to produce pay raises for the state's teachers—their first in nearly two decades. Though widely celebrated by Oklahoma's teachers, other stakeholders balked at the cost; an inside source told the state's leading newspaper, *The Daily Oklahoman* (Sullivan, 1963, p. 8) the bill's "pay scale can't be financed with revenue in sight for the next two years." Whatever arguments existed for and against the bill, it overwhelmingly passed the state legislature only to be immediately vetoed by the Governor (Duncan, 1963; Hall, 1963).² An outraged Hamilton, who also served as chairman of Oklahoma's Senate Common Education Committee, declared he would call up the bill the next day if he had the necessary votes ("School pay bill tops legislative agenda," 1963, p. 1). He did not, nor would he ever.³ The Governor's veto ignited a wave of resistance, setting the stage for an educator revolt in the Sooner State.

After the veto, relations between teachers, their legislative allies, and the governor's office steadily deteriorated, and reconciliation seemed unlikely. As a result, the OEA sought new approaches to improve teacher salaries and working conditions. With the intent of developing and approving a statewide salary schedule, it held a widely attended "Salary School" for its members in December, 1963. Salary School provided more than a place to learn, it was also a site of teachers' political organization and debate, serving a broader purpose to connect teachers while equipping them with tools to agitate and to understand activism as a necessary part of the profession. At Salary School, teachers discussed a myriad of potential responses to the veto, including boycotts, contract refusals, direct voter appeals, and the pursuit of sanctions. Tangibly, the School's attendees produced a recommendation that a "\$4,600 minimum base pay scale be pushed either through initiative petitions or the legislature" ("Teachers plan salary appeal," 1963, p. 1).

In January 1964, invigorated by the solidarity-building experience of attending Salary School, the OEA legislative council met to discuss further action. From this meeting, four state questions (SQ) emerged (Gibson, 1981). State questions had several attractive features for the OEA. As opposed to legislative bills, they could be enacted even while the legislature was in recess.⁴ Additionally, Oklahoma's constitution prevented the governor from vetoing measures voted on by the people, and so—unlike Senator Hamilton's doomed teacher-pay-raise bill—these proposals would bypass the governor's office entirely (OK Const. Veto referendum, 2024).⁵ Collectively dubbed the *Better Education* proposals, they focused upon local school levies (SQ421), state aid (SQ422), school consolidation (SQ423), and county superintendents (SQ424). Of the four, the question of state aid directly addressed teacher salaries and was considered "the heart of the educational questions" (Allard, 1964, p. 2).

When the *Better Education* proposals failed to pass, thanks in part to election shenanigans by the Governor, outraged teachers across the state threatened shutdowns and walkouts (Fuson, 1969; Seabee, 1964). OEA President, Dr. Raymond Knight, told teachers that they needed to take an interest in "practical politics" in order to accomplish their goals ("Teachers urge tax boost to meet salary demands," 1964)—in other words, teachers had to stop relying on assumed goodwill of both legislators and voters to advance their education agenda; both were fickle and had failed to provide requested support. Finding they had few allies, Oklahoma's teachers would instead need to advocate for themselves. Setting a deadline, Oklahoma City teachers declared that they would "seek sanctions if [their] demands were not met by 1 March, 1965" (Stinnett, 1968). Teachers realized activism was the way forward.

While the Governor ignored teachers' calls for a special legislative session or another special election, the teachers' virulent response to the

failure of the *Better Education* proposals concerned him enough to meet with them. There, Bellmon unveiled *Operation Giant Stride*, fundamentally a highway-bond proposal that would free general funds for education (Stinnett, 1968). While many Oklahoma teachers would see gains under this plan, others would not. Finding its uneven salary increases inadequate, OEA rejected *Operation Giant Stride* and state legislators formally killed it (“‘With regrets,’ OEA won’t support Bellmon’s plans,” 1964). Having no remaining prospects for meeting teacher demands, the OEA and NEA began steps to escalate action by imposing sanctions.

Sanctions

In the 1960s sanctions were a relatively new approach for the NEA, first adopted at their 1962 national convention. Since that time only one state, Utah, had been subjected to sanctions, and those were enacted to address deficiencies similar to Oklahoma’s, including inadequate teacher pay (Wyatt, 1964). As a professional organization, the NEA advocated for education broadly, and sanctions, it argued, could play a role by discouraging what it considered “unethical or arbitrary policies or practices” (Hodenfield, 1962) by a state. Sanctions provided a means of impelling a community (including politicians, business leaders, and voters) to support its schools (NEA, 1963). “As envisioned by top NEA officials,” an Associated Press report from the national convention conveyed, “sanctions would have the effect of blacklisting offending schools or school districts” (Hodenfield, 1962). It was argued public attention could shame political and local leaders to make improvements, but in a way that did not cause schools to shut down while negotiations took place, as a strike would. Sanctions also were seen as a way to place economic pressure on a region since poor schools reliably deter business leaders from expanding into areas with dismal educational facilities and outcomes.

NEA Investigation

The OEA also requested the NEA conduct a full-scale investigation into Oklahoma’s educational system. In December 1964, a NEA special committee spent several days in Oklahoma collecting data, including conducting interviews with more than 300 people—among them representatives from local Parent–Teacher Associations, Oklahoma teachers and administrators, and members of the Governor’s own study committee (“NEA selects 3 for probe,” 1964; “Oklahoma schools grossly inadequate, reports NEA,” 1964). Rather than waiting until March to revise and release its final report, as initially expected, the NEA special committee found conditions so dire that it issued an early interim report. The report’s authors contended “grossly inadequate schools” were found throughout the state and detailed “detrimental” educational conditions including “non-competitive teacher salaries, ... gross deficiencies in school buildings,” and other “subminimal” conditions such as “health and safety

standards, textbooks, teaching aids, libraries, special education, counseling,” and unsatisfactory teaching loads (“Bellmon not surprised by NEA,” 1964, p. 4; “Oklahoma schools grossly inadequate, reports NEA,” 1964, p. 1). Especially troubling for the NEA special committee was an absence of any foreseeable resolution to Oklahoma’s deteriorating educational conditions. Without additional aid and resources, the downward trend was expected to continue; therefore the prospect of sanctions gained increasing traction.

OEA Sanctions

Despite the NEA’s interim report and the convening of the state’s biennial 1965 legislative session, Oklahoma’s educational woes compounded, and its leaders still were failing to find solutions that met teachers’ satisfaction. As with the previous session, both the House and Senate signaled support for increased educational spending but were unable to reconcile competing proposals. Further intensifying the legislative impasse, the NEA released its finalized “Oklahoma report” in February, reaffirming the state’s schools were in crisis and emphasizing that the decline could be reversed through an expansion of the state’s tax base. Oklahoma, the report authors noted, fell far below the U.S. average in per capita tax revenues. The authors’ finalized report’s recommendations included “an immediate increase in state taxes” through additional *ad valorem* taxes and/or larger mill levies (“OEA may invoke ‘crisis’ sanctions,” 1965). Unlike many U.S. states with educational deficiencies—some facing even more dire conditions—the report’s authors note that Oklahoma possesses the financial capacity adequately to support its schools; nevertheless, the Governor, the legislature, and the electorate repeatedly choose inaction (Cromley, 1965).

At a March 6 OEA directors meeting, OEA President Knight warned of an “impending catastrophe” in the state’s educational system and announced that the OEA would take the drastic step of invoking sanctions until conditions improved. OEA’s sanctions applied pressure by quarantining the state, declaring it “unethical” for prospective out-of-state teachers to take jobs there, and threatening letters of censure to those who took teaching jobs in Oklahoma. The OEA also asked placement organizations to “withhold services for Oklahoma schools,” and requested national accrediting agencies re-examine Oklahoma’s school conditions. Sanctions effectively escalated publicity around Oklahoma’s educational crisis (“OEA clamps sanctions on schools,” 1965).

Another Failed State Question: SQ425 State Sales Tax

With OEA sanctions in place, a new state question was proposed, offering potential resolution through increased tax revenue. State Question 425 proposed a one-cent sales tax increase with public schools receiving the bulk of the benefit. Fearing another gubernatorial veto, supporters again took the issue directly to voters. Oklahoma House Speaker J. D. McCarty and OEA President Knight urged teachers actively to work to

support the hike, while the civic group *Oklahoma Progress* led a publicity campaign (“McCarthy tells teachers finances key to reform,” 1965). “Yes, Oklahoma is worth a cent,” declared ads across the state, making the case for support of the question. With the OEA’s encouragement, and as with the failed *Better Education* proposals, teachers again took part in a statewide campaign. Despite their advocacy the question was overwhelmingly defeated.⁶ Recognizing its efforts at the state level were failing to advance its educational agenda, the OEA appealed to its national affiliate for assistance.

NEA Sanctions

On May 11, 1965, the NEA agreed formally to sanction the state of Oklahoma. NEA and OEA representatives justified their organizations’ action; “It’s a disappointing situation,” said NEA Executive Secretary William Carr, adding “...somehow the people of Oklahoma must come to their senses and realize they are neglecting the education of their children” (Cromley, 1965, p. 4). R. E. Carleton, a public-school superintendent and member of the OEA executive committee, likened the sanctions to assigning a failing grade: it “records the failure of the state to pass the test of providing education for our children.” Like a failing student, he continued, “we know you can and will improve,” but “...we cannot sit by while [the people of Oklahoma] toss political spitballs and ignore [their] most important duty” (“Teachers’ patience worn,” 1965, p. 4). In an impassioned presentation to a cheering audience of teachers, the OEA’s Executive Secretary, Ferman Phillips, declared “I’m not willing to wait [another] two years to solve this problem in education.... We want it solved in this session of the legislature” (p. 4). Phillips argued escalating teacher activism to the national level had become a necessary, strategic, next step.

In addition to supporting and reinforcing the OEA’s existing measures, the NEA established five relocation centers to help Oklahoma teachers find jobs in other states. The NEA also stepped up negative publicity against the state. Nationwide, newspapers ran articles highlighting the NEA’s action.⁷ “Teachers told not to take jobs,” declares a Hagerstown, MD paper; “Oklahoma schools placed on blacklist,” states the *Miami Herald*. On June 11, WTOP-TV, a Washington DC CBS affiliate, aired a story on Oklahoma’s sanctions (“Effects of NEA sanctions on Oklahoma,” 1965).

Resolution

When OEA/NEA educator-activists stood firm on sanctions, signs of progress slowly began to materialize. By week five of sanction implementation, buoyed by projections of increased state revenues, legislators considered a nearly \$30 million boost to Oklahoma’s educational funding—an amount one reporter described as “the greatest [school] funding increase in history” (Culver, 1965, p. 1). Notably, the projected revenue increase stemmed from existing tax structures rather than new taxes, so Bellmon would not oppose it on strict ideological grounds. Despite

this promising development, however, teachers kept up the pressure. In the eighth week of sanctions, at its national convention, the NEA reinforced its support for Oklahoma teachers, unanimously adopting a resolution pledging full support for their fight against the state's "steadily deteriorating school conditions" (Curriuan, 1965, p. 8).

In week ten, legislators sent Governor Bellmon a far-reaching new school code which he signed into law. The code dramatically restructured Oklahoma's school-spending calculus, shifting state funding to a per-pupil, rather than per-district, basis. The new code also guaranteed teachers an immediate \$380 salary increase ("State school code signed," 1965), with even more state money going to districts that approved local school levies.⁸ Representative Lonnie Abbot (D), chair of the House Education Committee, called the code "a new era for school finances" ("Sanctions vote gets delayed," 1965). Even Governor Bellmon would later reflect on the code as "without question the greatest advance ever made for common [i.e., public] schools in Oklahoma" (Bellmon, 1965, p. 6).

In the eleventh week of sanctions—on the final day of the legislative session—Bellmon signed the landmark school appropriation bill into law. Driven by teacher activism and professional organization support, the 1965 legislative session produced the greatest fiscal gains for Oklahoma's public schools since statehood, increasing educational appropriations by over 30% from the previous biennium.⁹ The \$29 million increase marked a stark reversal from the prior session, when Bellmon had vetoed a teacher pay raise with a cost estimated at just \$10 million. While Oklahoma's legislature and Governor had now responded to educators' demands, it remained to be seen whether the electorate would follow suit by approving a corresponding state question to secure additional educational funds.

State Question 430 (SQ430) provided Oklahoma voters the opportunity to increase local levies in support of public schools and teacher salaries. The NEA maintained sanctions for another nine weeks, awaiting the results of this special election; the issue passed by a wide margin.¹⁰ When voters returned to the polls two weeks later to determine their local district millages, many school districts saw substantial increases in funding. More importantly, however, both the statewide appropriations and the local levies demonstrated that Oklahomans were finally committed to improving the "subminimal" conditions of their state's schools. Once the results of the school levy votes were clear, the NEA announced on September 24 that conditions had improved to the point where sanctions could be lifted.

Discussion and Conclusion

Sixty years after Oklahoma's 1960s teacher revolts, by recounting these events we propose there are implications for the revolt's immediate aftermath as well as enduring lessons for the present. Evidence shows sanctions ultimately delivered a significant win for Oklahoma's teachers

in 1965, and we posit today's educators might draw both inspiration and motivation from this historic episode.

In the immediate aftermath of sanctions, some questioned whether sanctions were worth the animosity they provoked, particularly towards teachers and the OEA. Editors, journalists, and political leaders across the state characterized the sanctions as “ill advised,” “unnecessary,” a “black eye,” a “slap in the face,” and damaging to the state's reputation, since accusations that Oklahoma received were “the kind of bad name that takes years to erase” (“Goodbye sanctions,” 1965, p. 6; Sullivan, 1965, p. 3; “Two leaders still smarting over sanctions,” 1965, p. 3; Woodcock, 1965, p. 12). We instead think that while sanctions did indeed bring negative attention to Oklahoma, it was not the sanctions themselves but rather the longstanding “subminimal” conditions of Oklahoma's public schools that warranted such action and national attention. Sanctions did not create the crisis, rather sanctions exposed the crisis to the broader public—and, in doing so, generated political momentum needed for meaningful change. Importantly, sanctions were not the OEA's and NEA's initial course of action, they were a measure of last resort, deployed only after repeated legislative attempts to resolve the crisis had been exhausted. At each juncture, teachers faced a choice: acquiesce to existing conditions or escalate their activism. We argue that without sustained escalation, it is unlikely educators would have benefited from changes to school code that enabled the dramatic funding increases enacted in 1965.

Though the new revenues fueling the increase were generated from existing tax structures rather than new taxes, history also suggests that teacher activism provided an impetus for finding those revenues; that is to say that if teachers had not revolted, and sanctions had not been invoked, teacher salaries would have remained subminimal, as would overall school funding. The OEA/NEA sanctions forced legislators, voters, and even the state's tax assessors to make education *their* issue, and Oklahoma's number-one appropriations issue.¹¹ Sanctions ultimately served as a strategic tool for exercising collective political power to produce impressive gains for teacher salaries and Oklahoma's public-school infrastructure.

Although not all teacher demands were met—most notable was the failure to enact a statewide teacher-salary schedule—teachers still achieved substantial gains. The increases in appropriations and local levies resulted in significant salary improvement for many teachers, in some cases surpassing the amounts proposed in the vetoed 1963 pay raise bill (SB146), the legislation that initially ignited the revolt. On balance, the 1965 pressures enacted by sanctions yielded unprecedented fiscal improvements for Oklahoma's public schools and teachers.

Additionally, the Oklahoma teachers' revolt of 1963–1965 offers today's teachers a precedent. This revolt and its aftermath helped sustain—if not

establish—a professional legacy of educational activism in the Sooner State from which today’s teachers can draw both inspiration and resolve. These teachers’ experience reveals a persistent truth: formal political institutions—governors, legislators, even the electorate—rarely deliver educational gains spontaneously. Education’s allies may be intermittent and unreliable; and accordingly, teachers must be prepared to engage in organized agitation and self-advocacy for their students, their schools, and their profession, perhaps for prolonged periods. While professional association sanctions proved an effective strategy in 1965, sanctions may not be appropriate for every political moment. Each generation of teachers must discern the forms of activism suited to their context; what remains constant, however, is the necessity of teacher activism itself.

Importantly, this teacher revolt evidences that Oklahoma teachers possess a legacy of collective resistance and organized action. In the 1960s they fought for fair pay, adequate resources, and more-humane working conditions. Today’s teachers, facing renewed challenges in a familiar landscape, can find inspiration for their own movement by remembering and considering that legacy. In so doing, today’s teachers preserve not just a memory of resistance but continue a living tradition of teachers’ educational advocacy.

Endnotes

- ¹ These statements refer exclusively to Bellmon’s 1963–1967 gubernatorial term. Bellmon would later serve a second term as Oklahoma’s Governor from 1987–1991.
- ² SB146 passed the Senate (38–3) on a Saturday (April 27, 1963) and the House with a “whopping majority” (Duncan, 1963, p. 1) (111–6) on the following Tuesday (April 30) (Hall, 1963). On Monday, May 6, it was vetoed by the Governor.
- ³ Per Hall’s (1963) reporting, a veto override would have required fewer supporting votes than the bill’s passage. Specifically, an override would need 33 votes in the Senate and 90 votes in the House (it passed with 38 and 111 respectively). Though beyond the scope of this paper, a lingering question is why, given SB146’s overwhelming legislative support, Senator Hamilton could not subsequently muster enough votes to override the Governor’s veto. We speculate that many legislators may have initially cast a “yes” vote to signal their pro-education stance but were then later (silently) relieved that the Governor’s veto checked the bill’s fiscal impropriety, and they did

not want to overturn his decision. This aspect of the phenomenon remains open for further research.

- ⁴ At the time, Oklahoma's biennial legislature met for roughly six months every two years so would not convene again until January 5, 1965.
- ⁵ Per Oklahoma's Constitution, Article 5 (Legislative Department), Section V-3, Veto power: "The veto power of the Governor shall not extend to measures voted on by the people" (OK Const., 2019, p. 28).
- ⁶ SQ425 of April 27, 1965: 171,123 (37%) "yes" to 293,278 (63%) "no" (Oklahoma 1965 ballot measures, n.d.).
- ⁷ A few of many national headlines include: from the AP, "Oklahoma is blacklisted for school deficiencies," (1965), *Spokane Chronicle*, p. 1; "Oklahoma schools placed on blacklist," May 12, 1965; *Miami Herald*, p. 5-A. From UPI: "NEA Raps Oklahoma Schools," May 12, 1965, *Independent* (Long Beach, CA), p. 1; "NEA puts sanctions on Oklahoma schools," May 11, 1965; *The Press Democrat* (Santa Rosa, CA), p. 11; "NEA invokes sanctions against Oklahoma," May 12, 1965, *The Daily Inter Lake* (Kalispell, MT), p. 3.
- ⁸ "Oklahoma's new school code puts state aid on a per pupil basis for the first time and offers a \$25 per pupil per year incentive bonus to all school districts voting the full 5-mill levy. The first \$15 of that money has been earmarked for teachers' salaries and the second \$5 for additional teacher pay or for hiring new teachers to reduce classroom load" ("Sanctions vote gets delayed," 1965).
- ⁹ From \$98 million in 1963 to \$127 million in 1965.
- ¹⁰ SQ430 of September 14, 1965: 68% in favor (125,779), 32% against (59,535). Of note, this was the smallest number of favorable votes, in terms of actual numbers, of any of the education related questions (Oklahoma 1965 ballot measures, n.d.).
- ¹¹ Education would have been Oklahoma's overall top issue except for a 1965 judicial scandal in which three state Justices were forced from office (Burke, 2023).

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