

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING

2012 autumn

The Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council urges you to vote

Tuesday, November 6

in VERY IMPORTANT federal and state elections — including SQ765.

If you would like our briefing sheet on SQ 765, please email Erin at: Erin.Taylor@okddc.ok.gov.

You can learn about the OK election process in OK at: ok.gov/elections/. Voting is open from 7 am to 7 PM

State law requires all registered voters to prove their identity before voting: You may show any document issued by the United States, the State of Oklahoma, or a federally recognized tribal government if it includes your name, photograph, and an expiration date that is later than the election in which you are voting. The law provides only two exceptions to these requirements:

- ◆ An Oklahoma Identification Card issued to a person who is 65 years old or older is valid as proof of identity for voting even though it does not have an expiration date.
- ◆ The Voter Identification Card issued by the County Election Board is valid as proof of identity even though it does not include a photograph or an expiration date.

The law also requires that your name on your proof of identity must match your name in the Precinct Registry.

Your employer is required to provide you two hours during work hours *as needed* to vote but you are required to negotiate these hours before hand in person or in writing.

For voters living in nursing facilities and institutions, you have the right to vote! There is no provision in state law to allow a voter's next-of-kin to cancel voter registration if the voter is still living.



JOB SEARCH?

If you think you might like to work in disability advocacy or providing services, consider these resources:

- ◆ The Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits has an employment and internship website at: oklahomacenterfor nonprofits.org
- ◆ Disability Scoop is a national clearinghouse on disability-related news that also keeps a state-by-state listing on job openings disabilityscoop.com/jobs.
- ◆ The DDS Provider List is one way to connect with direct service providers and group home employers: okdhs.org/programsandservices/dd
- ◆ LD Online often has at-home employment and internships available at: ldonline.org/about/jobs
- ◆ To find out about jobs at OKDHS, visit: okdhs.org/careers
- ◆ For jobs in k-12 education, you may want to look at: oklahomateachingjobs.org or indeed.com
- ◆ Oklahoma state jobs are listed at: OK.gov/opm/State_Jobs/index.html and don't forget to look at city and county websites for opportunities there, also!

Five 4 Google

From where I SERVE

Rep. Jason Nelson, District 87, talks about the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship (LNHS or HB 3393)



At the August 8th Sooner Success Inter-agency Coordinating Council meeting, Rep. Nelson presented on the new legislation that provides scholarships for children on IEPs to attend some private schools.

of some aspects of this law.

Rep. Nelson feels strongly that LNHS represents protecting parents' ability and right to make the best school decisions for their children: "IEP's tend to be way down on the totem pole in terms of public school district priorities."

Nelson continues: "I'm not blaming school districts. This bill just acknowledges that government can't do it all." When asked by colleagues and critics if private schools could better serve students that need special education, Rep. Nelson offers two considerations. One, "private school classrooms tend to be smaller and that obviously makes a difference in learning outcomes." His second argument is an economic one: private schools only thrive when they have "paying customers." When these schools do not meet the needs of each student, they face immediate financial repercussions and therefore it is in their best interest to work well with any student.

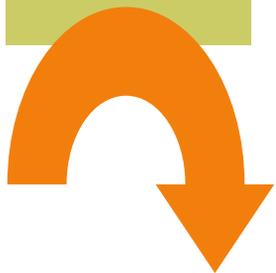
Rep. Nelson feels confident that concerns about the constitutionality of LNHS will quickly be resolved. State financial aid dollars include awards for students choosing private colleges and universities and families making use of DRS funding can choose religiously-affiliated programs. For Rep. Nelson, LNHS is very similar to these.

As a member of the Partners in Policymaking community, how do you feel about LNHS? You can learn more about LNHS including a new documentary at: jasonnelsonok.blogspot.com/

Here is what you need to know:

- LNHS is entirely state funded where up to 97.5% of the funds a school district would have received to educate a child on an IEP can now go to a private school.
- Over 95,000 Oklahoma students are eligible for special education services. To date, approximately 150 families have taken advantage of LNHS.
- Accredited private schools can choose to participate in LNHS and do so by notifying the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Rep. Nelson has worked several years to see this legislation pass. The Oklahoma courts are currently reviewing the constitutionality



Sarah Jane Brain Project

Oklahoma Family Network

People First Language in English & Spanish @ txddc.state.tx.us

WheelerMom.com

DisabilityScoop.com

PARTNERS ~ Meet our 2012-13 Class

28 STUDENTS of which FIVE are MEN WOO-HOO!

SIX are also taking the class as professionals and not self or family advocates

FIVE self-advocates

THREE great mentors: Ashlee Jayne, Adam Ryals and Rick Mikaska

GET IN TOUCH!

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What I Learned at YLF (ODDC's Youth Leadership Forum)

By: Erin
@ PYP

I am WAY too old to be going to summer camp. However, Jen Randle, our amazing Youth Advocacy & Training Coordinator, invited me along during my first year as an ODDC staffer. One of the Council's goals is to increase the number of people with developmental disabilities who reach their educational goals especially youth! Since 2004, the Council has funded an annual **leadership development program for Oklahoma high school juniors and seniors with disabilities**. This week-long forum on a college campus focuses on leadership, assistive technology, independent living, higher education, career development options and the Oklahoma legislative process.

Here are some of the things this "older camper" learned: No one is *ever* too old for a Silly String War. Staying a week in a residence hall and eating cafeteria food with young adult leaders is outlandishly fun! Jen Randle brings in passionate and engaging speakers like LeDerick Horne and Michael Beers. Oklahoma youth, *of all abilities*, have big goals and a vision for the adult lives they want to lead. Everyone wants their picture taken with Lt. Governor Lamb. And, finally, as a parent, I can't want for my kiddo to be old enough to attend YLF!

If you know a entering junior or senior in high school with a disability who would benefit from YLF, please let Jen know! The application process begins NOW and space is limited! Just like Partners, YLF is free for all campers and we can reimburse for travel. Very soon, the Council website (www.okddc.ok.gov) will showcase an amazing, new video highlighting YLF. Please make sure to share this in your community and schools and contact Jen for brochures or school presentations! Jennifer.Randle@okddc.ok.gov or 405.521.4964.



Play WORDS WITH PARTNERS

PENNIES ON THE DOLLAR: is a predetermined formula where a certain portion of each dollar goes to a specified effort. For example, in the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship, up to \$.97 for each dollar a school district would receive to educate a child on an IEP is eligible to pay for private school tuition and fees if parents choose this route.

MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY: Authorizes a trusted individual to make medical decisions for a person who can not articulate their own wishes concerning their health care. Medical powers of attorney (MPA) can have specific limitations placed on them such as an obligation to adhere to a living will. An attorney should be involved in the drawing up of a MPA.

LEND: Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities is an interdisciplinary leadership internship through the Child Study Center at the OU Health Sciences Center. This program is federally funded through the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Each year, approximately one dozen emerging professionals representing fields such as pediatrics, nursing, occupational therapy, audiology and social work are invited to this nine-month class. A family member and self-advocate are also classmates.

SOTA: "State of the art" and a term that can refer to cutting-edge assistive technology.

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Final Thoughts

TRUST yourself as a
parent — you owe that to
yourself.

ADVOCATE for your child
— you owe that to them.

Pattye High, PIP graduate

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities of all sorts are eligible to apply for federal financial aid
FAFSA = Free Application for Federal Student Aid

College students with disabilities may plan to take fewer hours each semester and not have full-time enrollment status. This can impact the amount of their financial aid package. That's why it is very important to meet with a financial aid counselor as soon as a new student has been admitted and request a "reasonable accommodation" to maximize financial aid funding. *All* requests for federal financial aid must be filled out online and you can do so at **FAFSA.GOV** or **OkCollegeStart.org**.

Federal financial aid comes in three forms:

Grants and scholarships do not need to be repaid and are granted on the basis of financial need, academic merit or other factors such as school district or professional affiliation. A Pell Grant is our nation's most common federal aid grant to college students.

Work-study enables college students to take jobs on campus in exchange for tuition, residence hall expenses, etc.

Student loans must always be repaid often over a 10, 15 or 30 year period. If a student borrower has a documented disability at the time of the initial loan application, they are held equally responsible for paying back all loans in a timely fashion. If a person acquires a total and permanent disability (TPD) after a school loan has been processed, the Department of Education will dismiss the loan after appropriate documentation (known as a TPD Discharge). **In addition to your salary being garnished, your Social Security and disability benefits can be cut for failure to pay back a federal college loan.**

Persons working in certain public service fields are also eligible, under certain circumstances, to have their loans forgiven. This is known as the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

3 things to know about federal student loans:

You are not obligated to accept the entire amount of the loan package offered. Be smart and accept only the money you will need. If at all possible, pay off small amounts each month *while still in college* because that compounding interest adds up!

Subsidized loans are awarded on the basis of financial need and they do not accrue interest while you are still in college. Unsubsidized loans immediately begin charging interest and so these types of loans are more expensive for students.

Taking out federal student loans does not affect your SSDI payments. Only earned wages and incomes – not financial assistance programs – impact SSDI.

From the US Department of Education: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require postsecondary institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for a student's disability, so long as they don't constitute undue hardship. Reasonable accommodations must be related to the student's disability. Schools can and should use professional judgment to include in cost of attendance (or make other adjustments to income and assets) expenses related to the student's disability. However, this does not permit the school to count the reduced course load as though it were a full-time load for financial aid purposes. Current regulations determine enrollment status by program and require all students in a program to be subjected to the same definition of full-time status. No exception is allowed for students with disabilities.

For a complete copy of this ODDC Briefing Sheet and those on other topics, please contact Erin Taylor.