



For Immediate Release

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Hanna teachers choose independent representation in state's fifth union decertification

The trend away from teachers unions continued on Tuesday when Hanna teachers unanimously elected the Professional Educators of Hanna (PEH), an independent teachers association, to represent teachers. The Hanna election was the fifth teachers union decertification in Oklahoma since Bridge Creek Public School teachers pioneered the movement in 2005.

PEH will eliminate the confrontational collective bargaining tactics typical of unions in favor of the Collaborative Communication Model supported by the Professional Oklahoma Educators (POE), a statewide independent professional association serving more than 4,000 teachers across the state. POE Executive Director Ginger Tinney co-wrote the model in response to teachers' concerns with the union's collective bargaining methods.

"Many teachers feel left out of discussions regarding their own employment," Tinney explained. "But it doesn't have to be that way. The success of Collaborative Communication over the past four years proves that the entire school community can benefit from bringing these meetings into the light."

Tinney said she expects the decertification trend to continue as "more and more educators choose independence, collaboration and professionalism over the divisive models of the past."

According to Tinney, the model is all about team work. "Teachers want to be a part of this process," Tinney said. "We need a system that allows them to stay informed and involved so that they can work with school administration to make the best choices for students. The Collaborative Communication Model offers that."

POE has experienced a more than 30 percent leap in membership during the current school year alone. Tinney attributes the growth to an increased demand from teachers for greater professionalism and higher accountability in their association.

"Many educators are not content with the union, and they're making a change," Tinney said. "Professional Oklahoma Educators provides superior protections and incredible benefits to teachers at less than half the cost of the union, and without compromising the values that Oklahoma teachers hold dear."

PEH will be recognized as the official representative for Hanna teachers at the next school board meeting, required to be held within 14 days of the election. Officers of the Hanna group are Larry Watts, President, Lynn Scrutchfield, Vice President and Johnna Skinner, Secretary/Treasurer.

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