



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You

Osiyo -

The Cherokee Nation is proud to provide additional financial assistance to public schools in northeast Oklahoma, especially during this era of declining budgets across the state. Last week, we issued more than \$444,000 to public school districts in the Cherokee Nation's 14 counties. We sent 107 school districts a one-time award of \$4,150. The money, allocated by the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council from the tribe's Motor Vehicle Tax fund, will help students in the constantly evolving areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics programming.

Our hope is this help will ensure our children get the education they deserve. The Oklahoma State Legislature has routinely failed our communities and our children by severely underfunding our public school districts year in and year out. Cherokee Nation, which already contributed more than \$5 million to public education this year, has taken the lead in filling the gap so that our youth are prepared for a better and brighter future. STEM education must continue to be a priority in Oklahoma for children in K-12. We need more funding in these core subjects so that we remain competitive in the future. Comprehensive STEM courses are the only way we can ensure a competitive workforce is prepared for the modern, global economy. Now more than ever, Cherokee Nation's role as a partner to public education is critical to northeast Oklahoma.

Each school district will determine the best use of the financial assistance. We know some school administrators plan to purchase science lab equipment or math tutoring software. Others will use it for Robotics programs, and some will purchase computers and printers. I know our partners in public education will be creative and utilize the funding to enhance STEM activities for students.

In our effort to provide more opportunities for schools, we have contracted with a lifelong educator from Pryor to assist schools within the Cherokee Nation as they develop STEM curriculum and programs. Frances Head, wife of former Cherokee Nation Secretary of State Charles Head, is passionate

about our youth and their education. Her experience and expertise are available to the 107 school districts in our 14-county jurisdiction. Our hope is to assist schools in STEM development as they navigate trying to do more with less state money. This will benefit both Cherokee and non-Cherokee students as they pursue their educational dreams.

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