

# Oklahoma School of Science, Mathematics accepting applications

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USA TODAY NETWORK

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics (OSSM) announced today that it is accepting applications for its Class of 2024 (the 2022-23 academic year). OSSM, which enrolls high school juniors and seniors from all 77 counties in Oklahoma with no cost for tuition, room or board, anticipates a class of about 85-90 students and expects to receive more than 150 applications. Admission criteria for high school sophomores includes high school grades/transcripts and academic goals, teacher and counselor recommendations, and ACT scores. Students also interview with faculty, staff and alumni.

For the 2021-22 school year, OSSM enrolled 72 new juniors, 39 males and 33 females. The median grade point average (GPA) was 3.98.

"OSSM provides the finest college preparation for Oklahoma's high-achieving high school students," said Bill Kuehl, dean of admissions and registrar. "An OSSM education connects a rigorous science and math-based curriculum with personalized education, utilizing a small student to teacher ratio and small lab size to impact students. This experience successfully opens doors for college scholarships and college admissions, as it serves to prepare students for life-changing careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Many of our alumni go on to their chosen profession, with several working on important issues like COVID-19 vaccines and cures to cancer."

OSSM is ranked No. 20 on Niche.com's List of Top 100 Public High Schools in the United States. Currently, there are 19, 984 public high schools that are evaluated for inclusion on this list. The next highest ranked public high school in Oklahoma is Jenks at No. 905.

OSSM is also the 2022 Best Public High School and the Best High School for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Oklahoma. Niche.com is a leading school ranking organization headquartered in Pittsburgh. Ranking factors include state test scores, college readiness, graduation rates, SAT/ACT scores, teacher quality, and high school ratings from students and parents.

Nationally ranked as a top public high school in the United States, OSSM provides a college-level, academically advanced curriculum in science and mathematics to juniors and seniors across Oklahoma. Created through legislative action in 1983, OSSM started first as a two-year residential public high school serving all Oklahoma schools. It also has five satellite locations plus a virtual program. The school also hosts statewide math contests and day workshops for middle school students and residential summer academies and conducts teacher professional development and outreach activities for students of varying ages. For more information, visit [www.ossm.edu](http://www.ossm.edu) or call (405) 521-6436.

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**1 OKLAHOMA CITY  
Parole board chairman quits; Stitt names replacement**

Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board Chairman **Adam Luck**, who has consistently voted to spare the lives of death row inmates, announced Friday he is resigning at the request of the governor.

Luck wrote in his resignation letter that he was stepping down immediately so Gov. **Kevin Stitt** could appoint someone more aligned with his support for the death penalty.

"When I began service on this board there was a moratorium on executions in the state of Oklahoma," Luck wrote. "As we resumed executions in October I came to the conclusion that guided my votes during the five clemency hearings our board conducted. I understand these beliefs differ from yours and while I could continue my service I wish to honor your request and allow you to appoint an individual more aligned with your position."

A former member of the Board of Corrections, Luck had been a member of the board for three years.

**Stitt** announced Friday his appointment of **Edward Konieczny** to the board.

"I am excited to welcome Edward to state service as a member of the Pardon and Parole Board," Stitt said. "He is an inspiring leader with a servant's heart, and I am confident in his ability to make and own responsibility for critical decisions."

Konieczny served as the bishop, chief executive officer and president of the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma from 2007 to January of 2021. He provided executive management and oversight of all Episcopal Institutional and Affiliates in the state. His experience in criminal justice includes service as a police officer from 1975 to 1992 in California. He holds degrees in both administration of justice and criminal justice.

Konieczny received a Master of Divinity from Church Divinity School of the Pacific and his Doctor of Ministry from Seabury Western Theological Seminary.

—Staff report

**1 OKLAHOMA CITY  
Wells to test for contamination**

Planned drilling of test wells in Bryan County should reveal whether any contamination is present in soils, according to a release Friday by Oklahoma Environmental



**Around the STATE**

Services.

The environmental site assessment project – awarded by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission – was launched on Jan. 10. OES will test soil samples taken from 15 locations where underground petroleum storage tanks have been used but which are now considered permanently closed.

"Definitively being able to tell an owner if their land has or doesn't have contaminants is very beneficial," OES Treasurer **Cherise Bowens** said. "That information could mean they work with the state to remediate the land, often at no cost, or that the land doesn't present a future liability to a prospective buyer."

Through an Environmental Protection Agency grant program, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission garnered funds to pay for OES to drill shallow soil borings, 5 five or 20 feet deep at the locations in Bryan County. Most of the drilling locations are in the Durant area. The same investigations eventually will be conducted in all Oklahoma counties.

—Staff report

**1 OKLAHOMA CITY  
Forum set on criminal justice reform**

Oklahoma City University's third annual criminal justice reform conference has been set for Jan. 21.

"Oklahoma Forward: Expanding the Focus of Criminal Justice Reform" is scheduled to be held virtually from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Panel participants and the keynote speaker will appear in person. However, guests and other attendees will be livestreamed. Academic credits will be earned by those who attend.

According to a release, the conference will focus on two areas of reform currently in the national discussion. Morning panelists will be led by moderator **Andrea Miller** of the Oklahoma Innocence Project and Oklahoma City University School of Law. They'll discuss conviction integrity units in Oklahoma. Keynote speaker will be **Brendan Cox**, director of policing strategies at LEAD National Support Bureau. He is a retired former chief of police who assists cities across

the United States in creating, managing and operating law enforcement-assisted diversion programs.

The second half of the conference will feature a two-part panel presentation. The first discussion, entitled "It's Time to LEAD: Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion," will be moderated by **Tina Brown**, a criminal justice reform program officer. The second discussion will engage perspectives and opinions of local law enforcement officers and will be moderated by **Tim Tardibono**, executive director of the Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Advisory Council.

To find out more, send email to **Loretta Radford**, legal director of the Center for Criminal Justice at OCU, at lfradford@okcu.edu or call 405-208-5333.

—Staff report

**2 WEATHERFORD  
OK physician to speak at SWOSU**

Dr. **Noor Jihan Abdul-Haqq** will be the featured speaker during Martin Luther King, Jr. Week observances at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Abdul-Haqq will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the General Thomas P. Stafford Building.

A board-certified pediatrician from Oklahoma City, she is a graduate of the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics and graduated from Spelman College with a degree in biochemistry. Her medical school and residency training were completed through Morehouse School of Medicine.

Abdul-Haqq has done medical work in Barbados, Dominican Republic and Mexico. She opened Peace of Mind Pediatrics in September 2015 to serve the community that she grew up in. She opened a second location in the spring of 2021. She serves as a mentor for high school and college students and has assisted other physicians with starting their own practices. In September 2020, she helped open the Clara Community Health Center in OKC, which is a free clinic for the uninsured. She and her husband are the proud parents to three children.

—Staff report