

Letter to the Editor  
of the Trojournal

Submitted by Bob Goodwin

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Jessica Conway on her well written article in the March 2, Trojournal, titled "Schools Shouldn't Bribe for Scores." Her objections to President Bush's, "No Child Left Behind Act," (NCLB) are also held by many educators in Kansas. I, however, don't agree with her conclusions.

In her article Jessica takes issue with the fact that the expectation of (NCLB) is for all students to reach proficiency by the year 2014. She claims this is "preposterous and dangerous." I disagree with her assumptions because I think it is a noble expectation which we should challenge ourselves to attempt to attain. I don't believe we should leave any student behind simply because they don't learn things as quickly or easily as their counterparts in school. I am hopeful that all students can learn and I believe we can show that they are learning through appropriately administered and monitored assessment.

There is also a logical reason for the administration and staff to offer a reward for those students who try to reach proficiency on the state assessments. Currently, students who take the assessments receive nothing for doing well on them. Unlike their classes in school they don't get an A grade for a job well done, they get nothing.

When we looked around the state at high schools that were scoring well on the state assessments we came across a plan that was being used at Lincoln High School in Lincoln, Kansas a community not far from Southeast of Saline. They have outscored students at SES and we wondered why because we simply don't think their students are inherently smarter than are our students.

We learned that the educators in Lincoln had devised a plan through which their students would be rewarded for doing well on the assessments. It was relatively simple and straight forward; it allowed the students to get out of school three days early if they did well on the test. It didn't cost a lot of money to enact and the students responded very well to the opportunity.

We appreciate our students at SES and we want to provide them with an incentive to do well on the state assessment. They won't look bad if they don't do well on the test, but their school certainly will. An A on the grade card is appropriate for a job well done in a class at SES. Call it a bribe if you will, but I don't think it is any more of a bribe than an offer of a few days off for the students who score well on the state assessments. Thank you.