

# The legislature needs to stick to the plan

We should know soon whether Gov. Sam Brownback will buy into a compromise plan to equalize money available to Kansas schools passed over the weekend by the Legislature, but for several reasons, we hope he gets out his veto pen.

Members of both houses struggled last week with school finance bills designed to meet objections raised by the state Supreme Court to the way the state's present formula was working. Basically, the court said poorer districts were at a disadvantage because they could not raise as much money as more wealthy districts, those with a higher assessed valuation.

In the House, members toyed with a plan that would have taken money to pay for a \$141 million plan out of transportation and online classroom aid districts now get. In the end, however, they decided just to solve the problem at hand and the resulting bill passed 91-31 with many Democrats joining the Republican majority.

In the Senate, however, a willful majority decided this was an opportunity to effect some major changes in education policy, inserting provisions in its bill to end the tenure now offered to teachers after they complete three years on the job and ban spending state money to implement the state-written "Common Core" curriculum standards.

In a compromise reached over the weekend, the House agreed to the change in teacher tenure while the Senate dropped the ban on Common Core. The bill would solve the equality issue by boosting state aid to poorer districts, though details were sparse.

There are two things wrong with this approach: First, it complicates the situation by introducing unrelated, controversial issues into what should be a clean fix of the equality problem cited by the court. Debate on the plan will focus on tenure, rather than the need to make all districts equal.

The second is an ethical issue: The tenure change has been plopped into the bill at literally the last minute of the session, with no committee hearing, no debate, no time for either side to have a say. This is the worst kind of legislation, something that ought to be banned by the state Constitution, but unfortunately, is all too common.

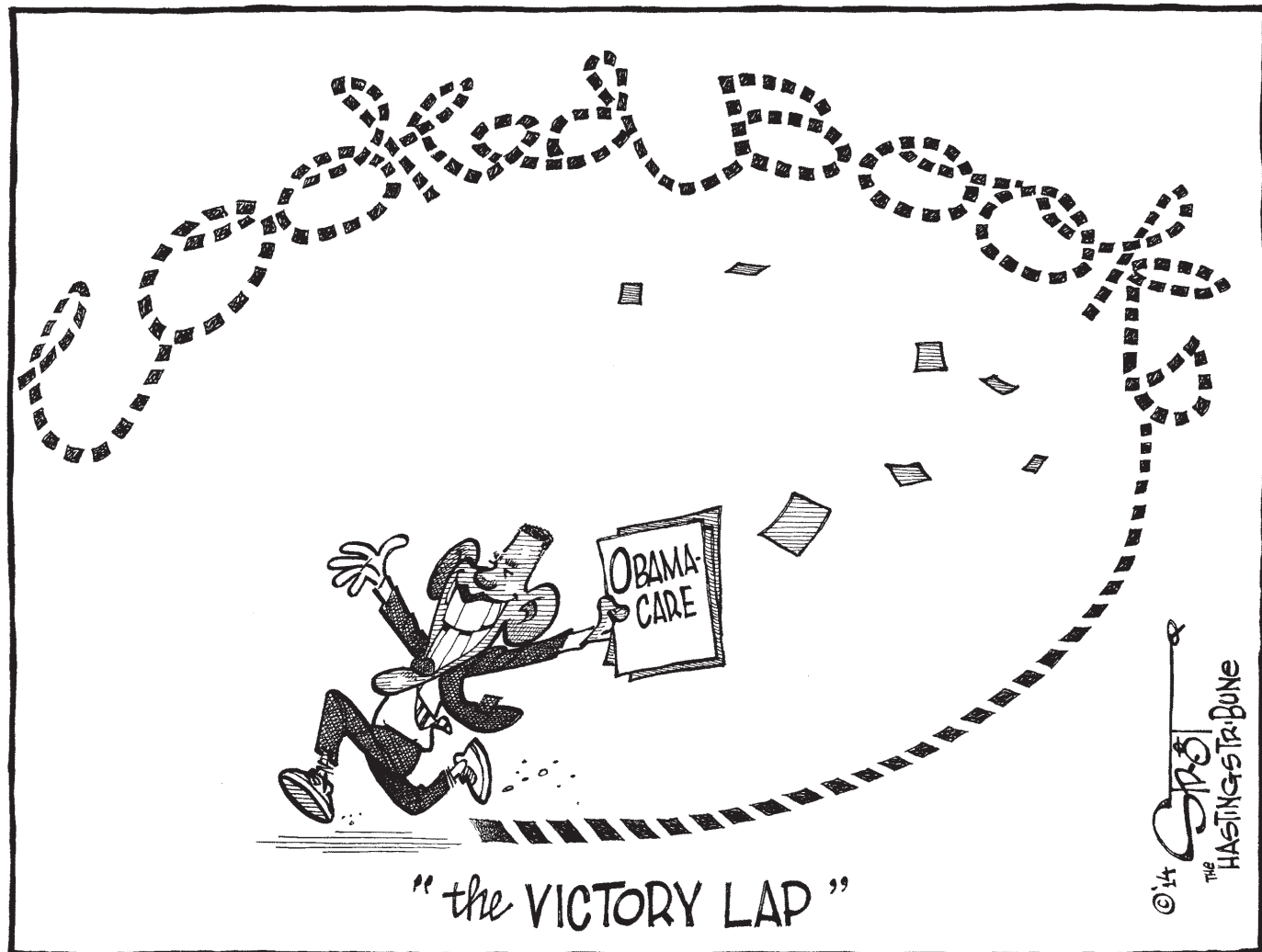
For both reasons, the Legislature should stick with something close to the House plan. The time to debate Common Core, tenure and other issues — things that provoke passion on both sides of the aisle — would be in an interim study committee and next year, at the beginning of a full session.

It's in no one's interest to ram something like this through without a full review of all the pros and cons, without providing teachers with some kind of protection from arbitrary dismissal and without achieving some kind of consensus. Total agreement is not possible, but this kind of legislative slam-dunk is reprehensible.

Let's leave the reforms for reasonable consideration. A lot of people believe change is necessary, but this is not the way to accomplish it, without hearing all sides and considering all arguments.

Veto this bill, governor, and ask the Legislature to stick to the issue at hand.

— Steve Haynes



# Out of the minds and mouths of babes

Is it just me, or are kids getting smarter these days?

We are friends of a young couple with a precocious 5-year old boy. Dad and Mom both have agricultural backgrounds and have agricultural occupations. As such, they have always been able to take their son with them to work. And, they have never talked "baby talk" to him. They talk to him like they would talk to anyone, with one exception. Both parents sprinkle in a lot of, "Good job, Buddy," or, "Way to go, honey." Always positive. Always encouraging words.

The dad shared this story with us. He had taken his son with him while he went to move some cattle. A cow/calf pair needed to be loaded in a trailer. To move the cow from the corral into a holding pen, the dad put a rope on the calf and pulled him along into the smaller pen with the momma cow following. Then he pulled the calf along into the trailer. After much struggle, both cow and calf were loaded. The 5-year old said, "Dad, if you'd just put the calf in the trailer in the first place, we could've been gone a long time ago. Maybe you better let me do the thinkin' around here from now on."

This little boy adores his father. One night, while sitting on his lap, the boy rubbed his father's bushy beard and

## Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



said, "Dad, I think you need a trim."

"Oh, you do," said the dad, "How come?"

"Cause you got a lotta grey showing," came the truthful answer.

Speaking with a lot of pride, the dad bragged about how his son only has to see how something is done once. He told of when his son was 3-years old and spending the day with his grandfather who was moving machinery. (A major benefit of being a farm kid is getting to spend lots of time with your grandparents) Grandpa was trying to attach a piece of machinery to a tractor and the pin would not drop through the hitch. He stepped over to his pickup to get a bigger hammer, leaving his grandson by the hitch. When he turned around, the boy had the cotter-pin through the hitch and the machinery hooked up.

Technology is no mystery to him either. He totally understands his dad's

new SmartPhone. To the point where he has to show his dad how to find all the apps and how to slide the screens forward.

These parents realize their son is gifted. But they aren't going to pigeon-hole him into doing what they do. The dad said, "He's going to be able to do whatever he wants to do."

As parents and grandparents, we think our kids/grandkids are the brightest, the most athletic, the most popular, the "mostest" at everything. And that's the way it should be. A lot of a child's success is the confidence he has in his parents' pride in him. Knowing that even if he doesn't win the purple ribbon, his family will still think he's special.

-ob-

Did you hear about the guy who was going fishing and bragged to his wife that he was going to catch supper?

He was on the lake all day without a single bite. Nothing to show for his efforts. On the way home he stopped by the market and told the guy behind the fresh fish counter, "Hey, throw me six of your biggest fish."

"Throw them to you?" asked the vendor, "Are you sure?"

"Yes," said the husband. "I may not be much of a fisherman, but I'm not a liar."

# Film shows that there is an art to farming

As the lights dimmed and the images flickered on the screen, the movie audience stepped into the lives of young farmers and ranchers as they took on the tasks of running their families' operations. No wannabe Bogarts or Bacalls, just honest-to-goodness people who work the land.

The opening scene wasn't on a sprawling lot somewhere outside of Hollywood. Instead James Moll filmed Farmland on farms and ranches from California to Pennsylvania.

Props included live cattle, hogs, chickens and vegetables, and acres of corn as far as the eye could see. Nothing staged, just everyday events on typical working farms and ranches across the country.

The private screening of Farmland in Kansas City April 1 was a joint effort between the <https://www.facebook.com/raisingkansas> Kansas Farm Food Connection, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Agricultural-Business-Council-of-Kansas-City/307248845724> Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City and U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance.

After the film aired, one movie goer commented on its authenticity.

The film is real, she said. These people brought the audience into their lives and showed them how farmers and ranchers work at a job like everyone else, although it may not be your

## Insight

John Schlageck



typical eight to five. In this case, the farmers and ranchers work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Another viewer said Farmland addressed many of the issues consumers and the general public wants to know — the film hit on everything.

It included stories about genetically modified food, organic, natural and traditional farming, no-till farming, a one-woman, first-generation vegetable farmer, multi-generational farms, use of hormones in cattle and hogs and chicken in large-scale facilities.

The farmers and ranchers wanted viewers to know they offer any kind of food the public is looking for, Lynne Hinrichsen, a former urbanite from Detroit who now works in Topeka, said after the showing. They're giving customers a choice.

"I came away understanding these young producers are similar to the people who make cars where I grew up," Hinrichsen said. "While auto workers make slightly different products with different designs, ultimately the vehi-

cles they make are used for transportation. Farmers and ranchers provide us with our food. They're all people."

Osage County farmer/stockman Raylen Phelon called Farmland an inspirational movie that tells the truth about agriculture with no hype.

"The farmers and ranchers in this movie were just like me when I started out 30 years ago," Phelon says. "They're down-to-earth people who shared their hopes, fears and dreams."

Phelon said the film lets consumers know farmers and ranchers care about the land, the animals, the grain, fruits and vegetables they produce.

"These young farm and ranch families knew what they were talking about and audiences will see this once they see their story," he said.

In addition to the authenticity of Farmland, movie goers walked out of the theater with a sense of pride about the men, women and children who provide food for people of this state, country and world to eat.

Several viewers expressed the same feelings that coursed through my veins as Farmland unfolded before my eyes and ears:

"These are my people, my roots; this is who I am and where I came from."

If you would like to have the movie shown in your town, go to <http://www.farmlandfilm.com/>www.farmlandfilm.com.

Dear Editor,

On March 28, 2014, the Lenora Jubilee hosted the Harlem Ambassadors professional show basketball team for a night of high-flying slam dunks, hilarious comedy, and feel-good family entertainment.

The Harlem Ambassadors would like to extend a special thank you to event organizers Maggie Basgall and Scott Sproul who planned and promoted the game. The NWKS Jubilee Jammers proved to be an energetic and enthusiastic challenging team and we thank all of the players for their good sportsmanship. The event would not have been possible without the support and generosity of local community sponsors, the Lenora Jubilee members, and the event volunteers.

The Harlem Ambassadors thank the community of Norton for its warm hospitality and look forward to returning to Norton in the future!

Best regards,

Dale Moss

Harlem Ambassadors President



Call Dana for your next ad.  
785 - 877 - 3361!

# THE NORTON TELEGRAM

OFFICE HOURS:  
8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.  
8 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday  
Phone: (785) 877-3361  
Fax: (785) 877-3732

## STAFF

Dana Paxton..... General Manager  
Advertising Director  
dpaxton@nwkansas.com  
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports  
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com  
Michael Stephens..... Reporter  
Managing Editor  
mstephens@nwkansas.com  
Shylo Paxton..... Society Editor  
spaxton@nwkansas.com  
Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production  
Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager

E-mail:  
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd  
Publishers, 1970-2002



Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:  
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave.

