

Opinion



A Kansas Viewpoint

A practical look at better schools

First District Congressman Jerry Moran, hardly a supporter of the No Child Left Behind law, has introduced legislation to ease the unrealistic burdens attached to what otherwise could have been a pretty good piece of legislation.

His Practicality in Education Act will utilize, what he calls, common sense ideas to make No Child Left Behind more realistic and effective. Congress is set to examine No Child and potentially reauthorize it this year.

Many educators across the land look at No Child Left Behind as an anchor around their necks.

It seemingly leaves little time for teaching, thanks to over-regulation.

“We must not take the joy and passion out of this noble profession by requiring things that are simply not possible,” he said.

His Practicality in Education Act takes a closer look at No Child, by employing a common sense approach to make this federal program more realistic and manageable.

Republican Congressman Moran voted against No Child when it became law in 2001.

His reason was simple: he feared it would place unnecessary restrictions on Kansas schools and increase costs to the state’s taxpayers, Falling through the cracks would be the absence of corresponding improvement in the quality of education the students receive.

Since its passage, he has had numerous discussions with students, teachers, administrators, state officials and Department of Education officials to determine what measures are needed to fix some of the unintended consequences.

Dale Dennis, who has been serving as Interim Commissioner of Education, added this comment: “It is important the No Child Left Behind legislation be updated to make it more equitable and fair for all children and to reduce the paper shuffling for our teachers and administration.

The Practicality in Education Act places special emphasis on individual student progress and gives a more accurate picture of improvements and problem areas.

It also allows schools identified as failing one additional year to improve before being labeled a failing school.

It also provides states with the flexibility to consider special education and rural teachers who teach multiple academic subjects as “highly-qualified” in all subject areas if they meet certain requirements.

This is said to be particularly important in rural Kansas, where flexibility is needed in hiring school professionals who often teach several subjects and find it difficult to become certified in all areas.

Additionally, this legislation includes special considerations for English-limited speaking and special education students. Rep. Moran is as passionate about “fixing” the No Child Act, as advocates are that the act is doing as intended.

We side in with Congressman Moran on this one.
—Tom Dreiling, *The Norton Telegram*

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

John Van Nostrand - Publisher
jvannostrand@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcx@nwkansas.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkansas.com

Kristi Powell - Advertising Sales
kpowell@nwkansas.com

Emily Wederski - Advertising Sales
ewederski@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping, Ad Building
japplegate@nwkansas.com

Everett Robert - Circulation, Classifieds
erobert@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Judy McKnight, Jim Jackson, DeLisa Allen, David Erickson, Betty Morris, and Dana Huthansel

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.



Food for thought

I'm living proof that you can teach an old Kat new tricks.

My two children are turning out to be wonderful cooks, both of which have taught their mom new things about cooking.

For the past several years I've lost the desire to cook anything that takes too long, but that's changing. Not that things my children are teaching me takes long to prepare, but it takes time to think about preparing it. That alone is brain taxing.

For instance, my son taught me the fine art of fresh garlic. What once I kept away from like the plague, garlic and I are now close buddies. Yes, those pesky little dried up looking bulbs used to intimidate me. Having learned how to work with them, they are a snap and joy to cook with. Here's one of my favorites:

First, snap the bulbs apart, storing them in a glass container in the refrigerator. Next, find a recipe which calls for fresh garlic and peel away the dried grassy-like covering from one or two bulbs.

Holding the bulb between the thumb and index finger, use a very sharp knife and cut the little critter up in thin slices and then dice them up until finely chopped.

Place this mess in a skillet with a couple dabs



Jan Katz Ackerman

• From Where I stand

of real butter, not the artificial chemical-filled stuff purported as butter, and turn on the heat. When the butter melts and starts to sizzle around the freshly sliced and diced garlic, grind some black pepper over the concoction. Once all nice and sizzling, place four fresh chicken breasts into the skillet and cook until done.

While the chicken is cooking, cook something organic to go with it. That's where my daughter comes into this picture. She's taught me about shopping for organic items, which complement fresh garlic recipes her brother has shared with me.

It's not hard to find organic food items, especially in the Colby area since there's a great health food store, The Health Cottage and Wal-Mart offers a nice line of organic foods, drinks, and salad dressings.

So, as you can see, this old Kat has learned some new tricks in the area of cooking. Not that I'll host a huge party soon, but at least cooking is now worth my time.

Speaking of food, for some reason Sonic commercials really make me giggle. Take for instance the couple where the gal seems to have a one-liner for everything her husband says.

Not that everything he says has to do with food, but she's always got a tongue-in-cheek comment for everything he says. Wish I was that quick on my feet, or in the instance of the commercials, the seat, due to the fact they are portrayed at a Sonic.

And then there's the two guys who kind of remind me of how guys looked in the 1960s when my older brother was in high school. You know, the white socks showing below the pant leg and topped by penny loafers.

Those two guys make me giggle, especially in the commercial about taking a vacation by just eating certain foods. I don't know how someone could think foods could invoke a vacation-like feeling, but hey, I'm up for a vacation so I think I'll stop by Sonic next time I'm in Colby. Wonder where the menu will take me?

— Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter for the Colby Free Press

The question is how many

Worried about the town fading away?

A quick count along one street Monday produced three young mothers out for a stroll.

One had quite a burden: a baby in a backpack, a toddler in a stroller and an older child walking. When she had to bend over to lift the toddler out of the stroller — guess he wanted to walk — it looked like work.

The next gal was pushing a single in a stroller, but the third had a double pram, fully loaded.

That's not exactly a scientific survey, but we'd guess there's still be students for the schools a decade or two from now. The question is how many.

For the baseball fans, what can I say?

The Rocks — and that's a pretty good name for this team — let another one get away, while the Royals managed to look like a team on the upswing on Sunday.

It's not that the Rockies didn't make it interesting, tying the game twice, but they squandered several chances to put the game away, leaving the bases loaded at least twice.

They have a capable lineup, with two of the National League's top-10 hitters in Todd Helton and Matt Holiday, and plenty of others capable of hitting 300 (who aren't). But they lack power and seldom hit in the clutch.

It's not like the days of Don Baylor's Blake



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

Street Bombers. You have to ask yourself, did the team shoot itself in the feet by dampening the balls and moving away from home-run power? It's sure not as much fun these days, and with just 25,000 fans for a Sunday game rather than the 50,000 close friends of yore, the difference shows.

Sunday turned into a loooooong day as the Rockies tied the game in the ninth and again in the 10th, with the game going more than 4 1/2 hours. The 10-5 final score was deceptive; until the 12th, both teams were in it, but neither could put it away. By the time the Royals surged ahead, both were out of bench players and pitchers.

I still think any day at the ballpark is a good one.

But as we were rolling into Oberlin at 11 p.m., after nine hours on the road and five in the ballpark, Cynthia might have questioned that.

With harvest still more than a month away, it's

way too soon to predict. Still, it's hard to recall a nicer-looking wheat crop this time in May.

Most fields are dense with tillers and big four-row heads of grain ready to fill. Many may need a little rain, but we had some last week and the forecast for more is good.

A lot of people noticed that Sappa Creek dried up east of town when the city cut its sewage flow over to the new lagoon system south of the creek. As far east as the old dam at Sappa Lake, nothing but sand lines the bottom.

One city official alleged the project engineer said it might take a few months for the new ponds to spill, filling the creek again. That said, we asked a lawyer, who estimated that, given the vastly larger surface area of the new system, the lagoons might never spill enough to make the creek run.

Now, who would you believe? The engineer or the lawyer?

There is still some water in ponds below the dam, by the way, but they seem to be drying up. You have to wonder what the backers of a wetland at the park are going to fill it with. The effect on fish and animals living in the creek remains to be seen.

Stay tuned.

— Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers including the Colby Free Press

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce

Tinsley

