Opinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Changing model offers optimism in student testing

State testing has for some time left something to be desired. Complaints that teachers have to "teach to the test" and the emphasis placed on massive testing have been commonplace.

Yet few critics have offered solutions beyond a philosophical change in measuring education goals, and little has been said about the exact testing method, even if No Child Left Behind were to be abandoned.

Surprisingly enough, the University of Kansas may be the one to take a first step down that path. The school received a \$22 million federal grant – the biggest in its history – to conduct research into altering state assessments for students with special needs. And KU Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little said the hope is to effect change for testing beyond special education populations to all students.

The university plans to work with 11 states to develop a new model for standardized tests for special education students.

KU's researchers hope to have a new testing system ready for special education students for the 2014-15 school year. If that is successful, they hope to extend their work to testing methods for all students.

Breaking away from one big test – and all the angst that goes into it – and creating smaller tests that could actually be guided by teachers' lessons is one idea for change, and one they hope would remove the compulsion to "teach to the test." That sounds like a good place to start. No one is at their best

every day; if a student is having a bad day on state assessment day, his scores go out the window. Assessing students over time may give a more realistic picture of where they stand.

And realistic is the one thing No Child Left Behind has not always accomplished.

- The Hutchinson News, via the Associated Press

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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124

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WHO KNEW JUAN WILLIAMS WAS A CARD-Carrying Member... OF THE VAST RIGHT-WING CONSPIRACY!

Villains not so villainous after all

Conservatives never seem to grow tired of chastising the "faceless bureaucrats" whose stifling regulations are hurting small businesses and the American economy as a whole.

They argue that these "czars" have no business meddling in the affairs of businessmen. The mere act of appointing such people is a blow to freedom and liberty that should be protested by all patriotic Americans. But who are these villainous creatures shamelessly intruding into the everyday lives of Americans and what big government regulatory agencies are they working for?

Margaret Hamburg is one of these villainous creatures. Hamburg currently heads the Food and Drug Administration. According to John B. Judis of the New Republic, Hamburg is renowned for her work while health commissioner of New York City in the 1990s. During her stint as commissioner she developed a program for controlling tuberculosis that led to a substantial decline in the disease.

Another appointed czar is William Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Fugate previously worked as head of emergency management in Florida during the state's numerous hurricanes. If there is someone more appropriate to head this agency, I haven't heard of him.

One way conservatives have undermined regulatory agencies over the years is by ex-



Andy Heintz

 Wildcat Ramblings

guing the costs of the regulations outweigh the benefits. This agency was first given this powerful role during President Ronald Reagan's administration. John B. Judis writes that the conservative version of the cost-benefit analyses is flawed because it stressed the costs of regulation while not subjecting the costs of deregulation to the same cost-benefit scrutiny.

This flawed formula was made glaringly evident during President George H.W. Bush's presidency. Judis writes that James McRae, acting head of the office during Bush senior's presidency, argued that enacting regulations on chemicals that had been harming workers' health would hurt the very workers the regulations were supposed to protect.

"If government regulations force firms out of business or into overseas production employment, employment of American workers will be reduced, making workers less healthy by reducing their income," McRae said.

The opposition to regulatory agencies is panding a unit of government known as the strong among the public because there are office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. many self-made small business owners who is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. This agency is capable of killing or delaying have legitimate worries about having to bear He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, rules proposed by a regulatory agency by ar- the costs of new government regulations.

Since small businesses are the life blood of the American economy, regulations shouldn't be based on a one-size-fits-all ideology that imposes on small businesses the same regulations applying to multinational corporations.

Hiring people to head agencies who have ties to the industries they are supposed to scrutinize has helped conservatives weaken regulations over the years. One of the more notorious examples was President Ronald Reagan's appointment of Edwin G. Foulke Jr. to head the Occupational Safety and Health Adminis-

Judis writes that Foulke is a longtime foe of the agency who had advised companies on how to block union organization. This is like hiring Michael Vick to crack down on dog fighting.

In a perfect world, companies wouldn't need to be regulated because moral ethics would prevent them from putting workers' health at risk or persuading people to buy homes they can't afford. But the past several years have shown us that we don't live in such a world. While some big companies have adhered to moral considerations and do not deserve to be cast as villains, many others have not. This is why regulatory agencies have a crucial role in constraining the power of corporations so they don't put the profits of shareholders over the health and safety of their own employees.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, sports and opinion writing.

Halloween traditions keep evil away

Fleeting figures slink through the darkness. Overhead, witches astride long black brooms crisscross the full, silver moon. Ghouls, goblins and fairies claw and scratch their way out of the deep, dark underworld. The air crawls with anticipation. It's Halloween.

Ever wonder how this creepy tradition start-

Halloween dates back to the Celtics, 5,000 years B.C. The Celtics believed on this day the for the carved turnip of the Old World. After fairy mounds in Ireland opened and fairies and other supernatural beings from the underworld came up into their world.

Celtics who believe their world was being invaded. They attempted to keep these creatures helped expel the darkness.

The villagers built huge bonfires. They took all the first fruits and first-born sons and sacrificed them - in an attempt to ward off evil

Black cats are one Halloween tradition alive today. These creatures are associated with Faust who sold his soul to the devil for knowledge and power.

A pumpkin or jack-o'-lantern is also a solid staple of Halloween. Jack-o'-lanterns also date

back to the Irish and Scotch. The pumpkin was the American replacement



John Schlageck

Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

the Scotch and Irish sailed to this country, they carved a pumpkin instead.

Faces on the pumpkin were designed to No doubt this was a time of anxiety for the keep spirits and other grotesque images from their door. A candle inside the jack-o'-lantern

> Orange and black remain the colors associated with Halloween. These same colors have long been linked with the dead.

> Unbleached beeswax was used for candles surrounding caskets during the Middle Ages. The candles had an orangish buff color and of course black was always draped across the casket or hearse.

> Blackness always conjures a deep fear in the human imagination. Darkness and evil are synonymous.



stick was a sign of a woman during primitive times. Naturally when women were branded witches, people believed they flew away by jumping on their brooms. The Irish believed fairies, who came out

As for witches and broomsticks, the broom-

of their mounds at Halloween, played pranks on the people who lived above ground. When the Irish came to this country they decided to emulate the fairies by going around and putting carriages on barns and turning over out-Dressing in costumes and going into the

night has its roots in dressing up in animal skins and fertility rights. This tradition is also connected with the dark side and later adopted into the Halloween custom.

While the faces and costumes associated with Halloween continue to change, many of the customs remain the same. And while interpretation depends on the individual, the underlying theme remains the same – keep the evil spirits at bay.

Good luck and Happy Halloween.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.



Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley





