



Reporter

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SCHOOLS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION, INC.

The Values of Student Entrepreneurship in Rural Kansas Schools Division I Winning Essay

Eddie Shaffer
USD #366 — Yates Center

When you are a teenager in high school there aren't many ways to make money. Basically, there are only two ways. You can get a job with a low starting salary and work your way up or start your own business.

In most small towns, there are not many job opportunities for teenagers. So, you have to think of other things that you can do to make money. Where I live there are few kids that mow lawns, and since I liked to mow, I decided to mow other peoples' lawns for a reasonable price. As I started to gain more customers and money, I started putting half of what I earned in my savings account for later use. Even in a small town, mowing is a hard job with many risks and expectations. Also, many people can't afford to pay someone to mow their lawn every time it is needed.

A friend of mine in 4-H started his entrepreneurship by raising and selling pigs. Before he started raising pigs himself, everyone in the swine project had to travel out of town to buy their pigs. So, he bought several pigs and artificially inseminated them until he got a good quantity of pigs. He would then pick the best of these and show them. After his pigs

(Continued on page 2)

*Val DeFever, Essay
Contest Chairperson and
Eddie Shaffer, USD 366
- Yates Center*

Congratulations SQE Essay Contest Winners

Winners have been announced for this year's Schools for Quality Education Essay Contest. Val DeFever, chairperson for the contest, reported that winners were selected from entries that were submitted from SQE member school districts throughout the state. "The Value of Student Entrepreneurship in Rural Kansas Schools" was the title for this year's essays. Scholarship checks and plaques were presented to these winners at the joint SQE and 28th Annual Rural and Small Schools Banquet on February 24, 2008. Thanks to all schools submitting entries. Please announce these winners to your participating students.

Division I **10th - 12th Grades**

- 1st** — Eddie Shaffer
USD #366 — Yates Center
- 2nd** — Lance Davis
USD #366 — Yates Center
- 3rd** — Michael Bettega
USD #366 — Yates Center

Division II **7th - 9th Grades**

- 1st** — Landon Becker
USD #272 — Waconda
- 2nd** — Brandon Smith
USD #272 — Waconda
- 3rd** — Karson Zeltwanger
USD #429 — Troy

(Continued from page 1)

won grand or reserve champion several times, word began to get around that he had good quality pigs. He kept getting more and more pigs and started holding auctions for 4-Hers to come and buy pigs for their projects. As his pigs' quality increased, people began to pay more and more money for them. When he graduated from high school, he sold all of his pigs to 4-Hers and other pig owners for really high prices. In starting this entrepreneurship he made a lot of money and helped the community out as well.

Whether it's mowing lawns or selling pigs, student entrepreneurship can help your community a great deal. So, help your community. Start your own business.



The Value of Student Entrepreneurship in Rural Kansas Schools Division II Winning Essay

Landon Becker
USD #272 - Waconda

I have a dream some day of being an entrepreneur in my local community. I want to become a diesel mechanic. I would like to start out small and build my way up. My father has his own business of a car dealer, and he has been very successful in our small town

There are a lot of trucking companies in our town already and no place to get their trucks worked on. So there is a big need for a diesel mechanic in our town. My new business would be filling the need in our town.

I like living in a small town and going to school in a small town because you get a lot more individual help and the teachers know you better. Living in a small town is awesome because you know everybody and the cost of living is cheaper. Living in a small town more people trust you and they're all willing to bring work to you.

Val DeFever, Essay Contest
Chairperson, and Landon Becker,
USD #272 - Waconda

Congratulations to Rural Education Award Winners

Awards were presented from the College of Education and the Center for Rural Education and Small Schools at Kansas State University by Dr. Teresa Miller, Chairperson and G. Kent Stewart at the 28th Annual Rural and Small Schools Banquet on February 24, 2008 to the following individuals for outstanding contributions to rural education and small schools in Kansas.

Kansas Rural Education Outstanding Administrator Awards

Brian Harris
Superintendent
USD #442 Nemaha Valley
and
Beth Reust
Superintendent
USD #270 Plainville

Kansas Rural Education
Exemplary Practice Award
School-Based Mentoring Program
USD 320 Wamego

Kansas Rural Education
Service Award
Stacy Kramer and Larry Kuckelman
for
Keep Improving District Schools (KIDS)
Public Planning Group (PPG)
Seneca, KS



G. Kent Stewart, College of Education, Kansas State University and Brian Harris, Superintendent, USD 442-Nemaha Valley



G. Kent Stewart, College of Education, Kansas State University and Beth Reust, Superintendent, USD #270 - Plainville



G. Kent Stewart, College of Education, Kansas State University, Larry Kuckelman and Stacy Kramer, Seneca, KS



Kathileen McPeak, Susan Symons, Charlyn Clauson and Superintendent Doug Conwell, USD #320 - Wamego



Public Relations Message



Nationally known public education proponent, Gerald Bracey, was the opening speaker for the National Rural Education Association when they held their national convention in Oklahoma City, November 2007. His theme "From Sputnik to Leaders and Laggards -Criticism vs. Reality in American Public Education" cautioned rural educators "how to avoid being technologically snookered". Bracey told the audience that his presentation depressed him, because it was focused on the relentless criticism of our public schools. But often this criticism demonstrated how facts are only partially presented or misrepresented to make our schools look less effective and at times downright worthless.

Glaring examples included manipulation of science information and data from the Center for Disease Control in an attempt to convince the public there is no global warming threat. Bracey gave many more examples of efforts to project a lazy, under performing, low expectations educational system. He stressed that those who can make you believe absurdities can influence misguided decision-making.

Bracey talked about the 1982 "A Nation at Risk" report. While pointing out that in 1969 only 34% of the American population had completed high school, he indicated that a mere two years after a "Nation at Risk" that number had risen to 74%. Bracey questioned whether initial findings of the report were truly accurate since the increase in graduation was so great.

Digging back even further in history, Dr. Bracey talked about the end of the Second World War. Calling this a tense time, one of "Duck and Cover", due to the threat of another atomic bomb attack, our country was very concerned about having the educated manpower to compete against the Russians. It was realized that this manpower would need to be provided by our colleges. In Oct 4, 1957, as American and Russian scientists were together celebrating the geophysical year in Washington, D.C., word came that the Russians had launched the Sputnik satellite. Although reactions to the Russian accomplishment varied it also created a doctrine of "free space", meaning it belonged to everyone. This freed the U.S. to use technology President Eisenhower wanted to use to set up a system of spy satellites and paved the way for the U.S. space program that led to putting the first man on the moon.

More recently the Americans have witnessed public education being belittled, berated and consistently misrepresented by partial facts mismatched to project generalized statements of doom. Bracey cited numerous examples to drive his point home.

- Changes in the success rate on the national SAT tests scared people, but the reality is our test scores reflect that an increasingly more diverse population is taking the SAT.

- Statements indicate that there has been a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17 year olds as measured by national assessments of science. Such statements would lead the public to believe there is a universal failure in science education, when only the science test scores of 17 year olds is being recognized. When one looks at trend lines this general statement is not proven in any way.
- In a comparison among high school students in the U.S. and Romania it would seem the U.S. students are failing miserably, until you look at the differences between the Romanian and U.S. schools. With a comparison of the TIMSS curriculum it becomes apparent our country is doing much better.

However, Bracey is not inclined to soft-soap the U.S. educational weaknesses. In his comments at the National Rural Education Conference he stated, "The measure of our educational short-comings are stark indeed. Most 4th and 8th graders are not proficient in either reading or math. It is unconscionable to me that there is not a single state in the country where a majority of 4th and 8th graders are proficient in math and reading". But recognizing that U.S. achievement levels are exceedingly hard, he asserts that if Swedish students took NAEP, only 33% would be proficient even though they shine on TIMSS.

To support a more positive view of education in our country Bracey pointed to the World Economic Forum where we ranked #1 in competitiveness despite actions of the recent administration. He stressed there are many personal qualities not measured by tests that are more predictive of success in life. Two that come to mind are creativity and critical thinking.

In closing, Gerald Bracey talked about Japan with its' small people, small country, small cars. He then displayed a picture demonstrating their high level of efficiency-growing watermelons in boxes to create square watermelons. With a similar level of American efficiency he thinks this is what our kids brains will look like. His caution is that adopting a Japanese approach to education could have this unintended consequence.

*Val DeFever
Public Relations Representative*



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