

October 20, 2009

TO: SQE Superintendents
(Please copy and forward to the appropriate teachers)

FROM: Val DeFever, SQE Essay Contest Coordinator

SUBJECT: 2009-2010 SQE Essay Contest Information

The SQE Board of Directors met recently and decided to coordinate our statewide essay contest on a rural education topic with the National Rural Education essay event that will be held next spring. However, the SQE portion of the contest is due by Tuesday, November 24, 2009 when all entries must be received by Val DeFever at PO Box 644, Independence, KS 67301. Winners for each group will be announced at the SQE Annual Meeting/Issues Caucus Breakfast on December 5th, 2009 in Overland Park (in conjunction with the KASB Convention). SQE winners will receive plaques and scholarship checks at their local district and then they will be entered in the National Rural Education 2010 Essay Contest in May, 2010.

All SQE member districts are encouraged to submit their top five entries for the following levels:

- Grades 3-5 250 words
- Grades 6-8 500 words
- Grades 9-12 500 words

Each student entry should include a cover page that contains:

- Student's name
- Address
- Phone number
- Grade level
- Name of school
- Address and phone number of school
- Full name of the teacher

The essay topic is: **Rural Schools and Communities are Unique and Diverse**

The following prompt can be used to help students write their essays.

- Think about what makes your school special and explain how your school is unique and important to your education and future.

SQE Winners Recognition

- 1st Place \$200 scholarship and honorary plaque
- 2nd Place \$100 scholarship and honorary plaque
- 3rd Place \$50 scholarship and honorary plaque

All essays submitted to SQE will receive a Certificate of Award.

Contest Rules:

1. Any student currently enrolled in a SQE member district school in grades 3-12 is eligible to submit an essay. Each attendance center in a district may submit a maximum of five (5) essays per grade level. (It is assumed that if an attendance center has more than five essays completed by students at any grade level, the attendance center will screen the essays and submit the top 5 essays for each grade level).
2. Division I essays (grades 3-5) must be 250 words, typewritten and double-spaced. Division II essays (grades 6-8) must be 500 words, typewritten and double-spaced. Division III essays (grades 9-12) must be 500 words, typewritten and double-spaced.
3. Essays will be judged based on ideas, content, organization and conventions.
4. Entries must have a cover page with the student's information (name, address, phone number, grade level, name of school, address and phone number of school and full name of the teacher).
5. None of this information can be included in the text of the essay.
6. It should be understood that students who enter do so as individuals and are not officially representing their schools.
7. There are no entry blanks. Send the original completed essays directly to Val DeFever at PO Box 644, Independence, KS 67301. The essays must be postmarked on or before November 24, 2009. The original copy will become property of Schools for Quality Education, Inc. and will not be returned to the participants. For more information, call 620-870-9698 (cell) or 620-331-3363.

The National Rural Education Association's Writing Composition Rubric for 2009 is included so you will know how the essays will be judged at the national level. These guidelines will remain the same for the 2010 NREA Essay Contest. Students may want to pay close attention to the information included.