

The Administrator

From the Superintendent's Desk

By Michael J. Sieh

Taxpayer

I recently was asked by a taxpayer of the Stanton Community Schools to dedicate this article to property taxes. Since the conversation, I've been thinking about ways to discuss increasing property taxes without painting a gloom and doom picture for property owners. This is nearly an impossible task. However, with this in mind, the intent of this article is not to offend anyone.

When shopping for an automobile, everyone purchases the best vehicle they can afford. Likewise with education, my intent is to provide the best education that this district can afford. Does this mean that we need every whistle and bell of education? Absolutely not, however, the district needs to provide enough so that every student has lucrative offerings and choices.

Schools are funded by two primary sources, property taxes and state aid. State aid is composed of state monies collected from income and sales tax. State aid to schools is determined by using a calculated *need*. This *need* is based upon many factors but primarily focuses on student enrollment. In other words, the more students a district has, the more *need*. State aid is then calculated by subtracting your district's taxing ability from your *need*.

As you can see from this simplified formula, as your district's land valuation increases, your taxing ability also increases. Therefore, state aid automatically adjusts

the following year creating a need for more property taxes.

The mill levy has been very steady over the past years. This is due to increased property valuations. Property tax is figured by multiplying the mill levy by the property valuation divided by 100.

If you were to enter the State Capitol Building, you might hear the legislature talking about the perfect storm. This storm is composed of three parts. The first is federal stimulus money. During this year and next year, the legislature is using federal stimulus money to fund a portion of their obligation of state aid. Shortfalls in income and sales tax over the past several months have caused the legislature to adjust its biennium budget during the special session in November. Stage one of the perfect storm is when the federal stimulus money disappears.

The next two parts of the perfect storm are less predictable. The second stage is a continuance of decreasing state receipts. As the nation's economy starts to rebound, Nebraska economy lags behind the national trend. As you can recall, we were slow to enter the recession and, likewise, we will be slow to rebound from the current recession.

The final part of the storm is when property valuations start to plateau or decrease. Schools will not be able to maintain their current budgets without depleting reserves. Depleting the reserves is the last resort of a district as the district tries to weather the storm.

What are we willing to give up in order to maintain our school district? What courses and/or activities would we give up without losing students to another district through option enrollment? Are we willing to override our tax levy to generate more revenue to support all programs?

I believe that the answers to these questions vary amongst us depending upon if you own property and/or if you have children currently attending school. But I would guess that we all agree that we would like to have a school in our town.

NOW FOR SUGGESTIONS!

If you really want to lower property taxes and maintain a high quality education, then school districts need to start working together and pool their resources. I know that many people would cut down on administrative costs. However, not less but more information

Please see **TAXPAYER**, page 2

The Stanton Community Schools' Board of Education is seeking individuals interested in serving as a director on the Stanton Community Schools Foundation. Interested individuals should inquire and/or submit their name by March 2, 2010 to:

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Reporters

- Dr. Sieh Superintendent
- Dr. Stogdill H.S. Principal
- Mrs. McKeon..... Elementary Principal
- Mrs. Marshall.....Guidance
- Mrs. Paxton.....Life Science
- Mrs. Chilcoat Librarian
- Mrs. Lammers..... Student Council
- Mrs. Holoubek..... School Nurse
- Mylie Otto, Morgan Remm, Gavin Galyen, Jace Monday..... 2nd Grade Students
- Mrs. Waddington.....Prom Sponsor

Events Calendar

March 2 & 4

- P/T Conferences (4:30 - 8 p.m.) - 2:40 p.m. dismissal

March 5

- No School (P/T Comp Day)

March 8

- School Board Meeting (7:00 p.m.)

March 12

- No School (Spring Break)

March 19

- In-service for Staff Improvement Workshop for Staff (K-6: No School, 7-12: 11:35 a.m. dismissal)

March 22

- 3rd Quarter Ends

March 23

- Teacher Inservice for Grades (11:35 a.m. dismissal)

By Mylie Otto and Morgan Remm

Stanton is a cool town,
Nobody's faces are down.
There is a chief,
That caught a thief.
Stanton is small,
And we don't have a mall.
Downtown we have an Arts Place,
We sometimes have a race.
In Stanton we have trees,
But trees don't need keys.
In Stanton, we have a school,
And an awesome pool.
We drive in cars,
You won't get onto Mars.
We have shops,
You can drink some pops.
We have cats.
That chase rats.
People wear clothes,
Presents have bows.

By Kendra Marshall

It's FAFSA Time!

CTBS Testing is will be taking place this month for grades 2 through 11. Grades 2 - 6 will be testing between March 8th and 24th and grades 7 - 11 between March 15th and 24th.

The CTBS test results are used to compare Stanton students to students across the state and the nation. The scores are used by the faculty to make decisions on course objectives and learning goals. As a school, the administration and teachers look at the scores to determine strengths and weaknesses of students and the school curriculum. In other words, these tests are very important to our students and their education, but we have concerns that they are not always taken seriously by all students. Please talk to your child about the importance of the tests and help them prepare for them.

To help children prepare adequately for tests (whether teacher-made or standardized), parents can do several things to provide support and create a positive test-taking experience.

1. The best way to prepare for tests is to study, know the work, and take the right courses.
2. If your child is nervous at test time, ask the teacher for tips on relaxation.
3. Make sure that your child is in school during the testing sessions. Do not plan any doctor or dental appointments on test dates.
4. Make sure that you are aware of your child's performance and that you can help interpret the results

when they become available.

5. Remember to keep well-informed about your child's tests. Know how test results are used, and how they will affect your child's placement in school.
6. If there are major differences between standardized test scores and school grades, find out why.
7. Encourage your child to study over a period of time rather than "cram" the night before.
8. Encourage your child to listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and to ask questions about any directions that are unclear.
9. See that your child gets his/her regular amount of sleep before the tests and is well-rested.
10. Make sure that your child eats his/her usual breakfast on the day of the test. Hunger can detract from a good test performance.
11. Encourage your child to do his/her best.

Local and Stanton Community School Foundation Scholarships will be made available to seniors on March 11th. The deadline for the scholarships will be April 16th. Packets will be given to each senior, and scholarship information will be available on the school website.

TAXPAYER Continued from Page 1-----

is required of each district to submit in a timely matter to higher authorities. With that said, shared administration could be a possibility. I have explored and will continue to explore possibilities. However, schools tend to hold each other at an arms length away.

Next, I would use technology to distribute education across school boundaries. Grants are available for creative thinking. Schools could expand their offering yet lower their instructional costs. Again, this takes at least two districts working closely together.

And finally, I would combine some activities across school boundaries. I believe the district could expand their program offerings

and at the same time reduce costs. The downfall to this option is less opportunity for the less fortunate.

In conclusion, I recently read an article in the *Norfolk Daily News* about an organized meeting concerning the future of the schools of Knox County. I believe that they are on to something. This meeting was organized by concerned taxpayers and led by a teacher from Bloomfield. I believe that they are examining solutions to the current situation and while at the same time looking into the future. In order for meetings of this nature to be successful, the people involved have to give up something to receive something in return.

By Chris Stogdill

Positive Role Models

Are we positive models? Let's break down what a positive model is and then determine if we are.

First, a model, according to the dictionary is "a person or thing regarded as excellent of its kind and worthy of imitation." To clarify the word "worthy" in the definition, I've included the word positive in front of model. Again, according to the dictionary, positive is defined as "constructive and helpful."

From these two definitions, we can easily conclude what a positive model is. I believe that everyone at a given time can be and is a positive model. We must decide what percent of time we truly meet both definitions.

As educators, we must always be positive models. We must treat our students, fellow staff members, and patrons with respect. We must be truly caring and always conscious of the world around us.

Also, parents need to be positive models. The majority of student values and morals come from their parents. Students

tend to act and think like their parents.

Finally, students need to carry out the role as a positive model. Many peers can be affected by a student accepting the role of a positive model.

How does a positive model fit into our school and society? In my opinion, education is our children's best resource. Education should be the top priority of everyone since it is the tool that dictates one's quality of life. After every school year, we hope to have produced the best yield or grown the strongest thoroughbreds.

We can never over emphasize the importance of education. We can instill this into our future by being positive models so our children and their children realize the importance of education.

If we achieve the title as a positive model 100% of the time, we have become true professionals. And in my words and thoughts, a professional is one whose actions and words always promote the good of society through hard work, determination, positive attitude and willingness to move forward.

Student Council Blood Drive

(Lammers) Every day, the American Red Cross Midwest Region Blood Service must collect more than 500 units of blood of all types so there will be enough blood available for accident victims, premature babies, burn victims, leukemia and cancer patients, people with blood diseases and people requiring heart surgery or organ transplant. The Student Council at Stanton High School, along with the American Red Cross, will be conducting a blood drive on **Wednesday, March 10, at the Stanton Middle School Gym.** The hours will be from **8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Before giving blood there are some things to know:

Requirements:

1. Be in good health.
2. Be at least 17 years old (16 year olds may give blood with parent permission).

3. Weigh 110 pounds or more.
4. Know the names of all medications taken during the 30 days prior to donating.
5. Bring identification (Red Cross donor card or driver's license.)
6. No tattoos or non-sterile body piercing in the last 12 months.
7. Have not taken accutane in the last month.

Reminders:

1. Plan one hour and 15 minutes for the entire process.
2. Drink extra non-alcoholic fluids before and after.
3. Eat within 2-3 hours before donating.
4. Get a good night's sleep.

The Student Council is currently in the planning stages of the blood drive. **If you would like to donate blood, please call the Stanton High School office, 439-2250, between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday to make an appointment.**

Students Nominated to Receive the US Achievement Academy National Science Awards

(Paxton) The following students have been nominated to receive the United States Achievement Academy National Science Awards: Justin Aaberg, Dacia Beyke, Jacob Bohac, Justin Bowers, Derek Bremer, Anita Brown, Cody Carlson, Miranda Clausen, Zach Doffin, Caden Doggett, Edward Dozler, Alyssa Estes, Allison Flood, Brianna Frickenstein, Caleb Goeken, Zadia Hirschman, Taylor Kleinschmidt, Patrick Kosmacek, Anthony Nelson, Grant Nordby, Nancy Seeman, Rachel Shafer, Dasi Sieh, Kevin Thor, Rebecca Unger, Samantha Unger, Jacob Vogel, Ashley Waggoner, and Michael Wright.

Each one has shown an outstanding performance in a life or physical science for the 2009 - 2010 school year. The USAA Standards for selection are academics, science skills and aptitude, attitude and cooperative spirit, leadership, dependability, citizenship, desire to learn and improve, enthusiasm, and responsibility. Along with other students across the country, these Stanton Middle School and High School students will be recognized with their biographical listings in the USAA National Awards Yearbook. Each student is eligible for scholarship grants that are valued up to \$1,500.

Annual Book Fair Coming to the Elementary

(Chilcoat) The elementary school's annual book fair is in full swing this first week of March. The fair opened with a preview day on February 26th with grades K-6 coming in to take a look at what is available. The fair is now open this week, March 1-March 9. It will be open each day after school and during parent-teacher conferences so as to allow more parents the opportunity to see what is available.

The Scholastic Book Company is well known for its books for school age children: *Dora the Explorer*, *Froggy*, *Captain Underpants*, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. It is always interesting to see what the popular item will be each year. Last year it was *High School Musical* and *The Book of World Records*. Posters, journals, bookmarks and other items will be offered for purchase in addition to the many award winning books available.

Remember, books make great gifts at an affordable price.

We will also be doing the "One For Books" program again this year. For every dollar donated to our library fund Scholastic Books donates a book to a children's charity such as Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, Kids in Distressed Situations, and the National Center for Family Literacy.

A letter and book pamphlet has been sent home with students to let parents know about the fair so as to allow for planning. Classes are scheduled to attend during their regular library times. The 5th and 6th grades will also be attending. The fair will be open until 8:00pm on March 2nd and 4th. It will be open until 4:00 on March 1st, 3rd and 8th. Parents are welcome to join their children during the day and everyone is welcome to come after school.

Come join the fun!

By Gavin Galyen and Jace Monday

Stanton is so small,
It isn't very tall.
Emmett's is a grocery store,
It's so quiet in there, it's not a bore.
At Hairs the Latest you can get a haircut,
Yesterday I saw a mutt.
I go to the Stanton Pool, it's so much fun,

I love swimming and diving with everyone.
We went to the First Nebraska Bank,
We hoped to get enough money to buy a tank.
Since Stanton is so small,
You won't even need to call.

March is National Nutrition Month! Children's Snacks: 10 Tips for Healthier Snacking

Snacking is a major pastime for many kids - and that's not necessarily a bad thing. Snacking can help your child curb hunger throughout the day, as well as provide energy and important nutrients. But the quality of the snacks is key. Consider these 10 tips for healthier children's (and adult's) snacks.

1. **Keep junk food out of the house.** Your child won't clamor for cookies or candy bars if you don't keep them on hand. Instead, set a good example by snacking on healthy foods yourself.
2. **Go for the grain.** Whole-grain snacks - such as whole-grain pretzels or tortillas and high-fiber whole-grain cereals - can give your child energy with some staying power.
3. **Mix and match.** Serve baby carrots or other raw veggies with low-fat ranch dressing. Dip graham cracker sticks or fresh fruit in fat-free yogurt. Top celery, apples, or bananas with peanut butter.
4. **Broaden the menu.** Offer out-of-the-usual fare, such as pineapple, cranberries, red or yellow peppers, mangoes, tangelos, or roasted soy nuts.
5. **Revisit breakfast.** Many breakfast foods - such as low sugar, whole-grain cereals and whole grain toast - make great afternoon snacks. Likewise, a small serving of last night's casserole could double as an after-school snack.
6. **Sweeten it up.** Healthy children's snacks don't need to be bland. To satisfy your child's sweet tooth, offer low-

or fat-free pudding, frozen yogurt or frozen fruit bars. Or use skim milk, fat-free yogurt and fresh fruit to make your own smoothies.

7. **Have fun.** Use a cookie cutter to make shapes out of low-fat cheese slices, whole-grain bread or whole-grain tortillas. Eat diced fruit with chopsticks or make fruit kebabs. Make a tower out of whole-grain crackers, spell words with pretzel sticks, or make funny faces on a plate using different types of fruit.
 8. **Promote independence.** Keep a selection of ready-to-eat veggies in the refrigerator. Leave fresh fruit in a bowl on the counter. Store low-sugar, whole-grain cereal and fruit canned or packaged in its own juice in an easily accessible cabinet.
 9. **Don't be fooled by labeling gimmicks.** Foods marked low-fat or fat-free can still be high in calories. Likewise, foods touted as cholesterol-free can still be high in fat, saturated fat and sugar. Check nutrition labels to find out the whole story.
 10. **Designate a snacking zone.** Restrict snacking to the kitchen. You'll save your child countless calories from mindless munching in front of the TV. If your child needs to snack on the go, offer string cheese, yogurt sticks, cereal bars, or other drip-free items.
- Teaching your child to make healthy snack choices now will set the stage for a lifetime of healthy snacking. Start today!

Mrs. Waddington Announces Prom Guidelines

- Prom will be March 27, 2010.
- Students can arrive between 5:30 and 6:30. No one will be allowed in after 6:30 unless they have personally made arrangements with Mrs. Waddington.
- The meal will begin at 6:00.
- Grand March and coronation will begin at 7:00pm.
- Parents are allowed to come at 7:00. We ask that parents sit in the bleachers during the grand march and coronation. There will be an opportunity for pictures after the grand march.
- Students bring your picture envelopes filled out and have payment ready to give to Van Allen. Envelopes will be available in the office the week before prom.
- All dates not Juniors or Seniors of Stanton High School must be signed up in the office or they will not be allowed inside.

By Mary McKeon

Kindergarten Entrance Age

Starting school is a significant milestone in every child's life. Surprisingly, the kindergarten entrance age requirement is left to each state's discretion, so a child in Nebraska may not start kindergarten at the same age as a child in Alabama. The majority of states (37 states in all) require that the kindergarten entrance age of 5 must be reached before October 16, with most of these states requiring that students be 5 before September 1. Eight states, including New York and California, have a later kindergarten entrance age requirement, which for some states can go to January 1. Five states (Colorado, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) leave the kindergarten entrance age requirement to the discretion of the school district. These differences raise the question of how important a child's age when entering school is.

Early in February of this year, the Legislature's Education Committee met in regards to LB 1006. LB 1006 would move the date by which a student must be 5 years old in order to enter kindergarten or

the beginner grade from October 15th to July 31st beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. Mary Yilk, elementary principal at Doniphan-Trumbull Public School addressed the committee in support of the bill. This would allow students coming into kindergarten to all be 5 years old. I do support this bill as well.

Expectations of kindergarten students have changed from years past. The state has created standards and kindergarteners are expected to be proficient in those standards so they are ready to tackle first grade standards. Below are some good questions parents should ask. *Kindergarten Readiness Checklist and Is your child ready for school?*

- 1) Can my child listen to instructions and then follow them? Children need these skills to function in class, to keep up with the teacher and their peers.
- 2) Is my child able to put on his/her coat, go to the bathroom, button shirts,

pants, coats, and zip up zippers by themselves? Children need to be somewhat self-sufficient by school age.

- 3) Can my child recite the alphabet and count? Most kindergarten teachers assume the children have a least a rudimentary familiarity with the ABC's and numbers.
- 4) Can my child hold a pencil? Cut with a scissors? These fine motor skills are needed to begin work on writing and to keep up with classroom projects.
- 5) Does the child show an interest in books? Can the child tell a story based on pictures in the book? This is the sign that language development is on par with others.
- 6) Is the child curious and receptive to learning new things? If a child's curiosity is

stronger than his fear of the unfamiliar, school will be easier.

- 7) Does the child get along with other children? Does the child know how to share and know how to take turns? Children will be interacting with other children all day long at school so social skills are very important.
- 8) Can the child work together in group settings? The ability to compromise and join in a consensus with other children is part of the emotional competence that is needed to be successful.
- 9) Can my child separate from parents without being upset?
- 10) Does my child understand that actions have both causes and effect?
- 11) Does my child recognize authority?

Important Dates:

ACT Test DateApril 10 (Registration Deadline March 5th)
 Local and Foundation Scholarships Deadline.....April 16

Stanton, NE 68779
 Postal Patron

Nonprofit Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Stanton, NE 68779
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