

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

What a reminder last week was about the fast approaching start of winter. While most of that snow has disappeared there is a forecast of more to come this week. Maybe we will have a White Christmas!

This week we will be starting our Winter Vacation—a time to enjoy family and friends, to look back on all the memories (good and bad) of the current year, and to look forward with anticipation to the excitement and promise of a new year. As a district we enjoyed many successes and experienced some disappointments. Through it all, we have continued to work to improve and not be satisfied with where we are.

Part of what goes into providing a quality education and continuing to improve is having the necessary funding to support the programs that help each student have the opportunity to succeed. That funding is in danger of eroding to the point that providing some of the programs that we have put in place in recent years will no longer be possible. It is past the point of better regulating the thermostats, copying on both sides of the paper, delaying purchases, etc. being able to offset the reductions in state aid. It is to the point of needing to look at cutting programs, reducing classes, enlarging class sizes, reducing hours of work, reducing days of school, etc. to absorb the size of cuts that are projected. See the table below. We will be making some decisions that we won't like making and we will be making some decisions that will have a negative impact on our students' education.

Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP)

| | <u>Started</u> | <u>Decrease</u> | <u>Ended</u> | <u>Our Reduction</u> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Last Year – 08/09 | \$4,433 | -\$153 | \$4,280 | \$ 119,340 |
| This Year (So Far) – 09/10 | \$4,218 | -\$206 | \$4,012 | \$ 161,298 |
| Next Year (Projected) – 10/11 | \$4,012 | -\$252 | \$3,760 | \$ 214,855 |
| Following Year (Projected) – 11/12 | \$3,760 | -\$672 | \$3,088 | \$ 572,947 |
| Total Projected Reduction – 09/12 | | | | \$1,068,440 |

It's not only the amount of state aid cuts that is causing problems but it is also the delay in the monthly state aid payments that causes problems. In November school districts received their state aid with the first half coming on November 6 and the second half on December 3. The first half of the December state aid came on December 7 and we are being told now that the second half will not come until sometime in January. Payments for January and February are also likely to be late in coming. For some districts this has created such a cash flow problem that they are not able to make their payroll without some extra assistance from the state and/or breaking some of the cash basis laws. As this trend of late state aid payments continue there will be more districts in that same shape. We are okay for this month and probably for a few more. Because of this last budget cut and late state aid payments, districts that had built up their Contingency Reserve fund to help them in the next few years are already dipping into them.

A startling comment by Rep. Jason Watkins, R-Wichita who was the vice-chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and has since resigned his position, I'm afraid, echoes the sentiment of the legislative leadership. His comment was, "Apparently, we have yet to get to the bone of excess spending in government. Because we continue to cut and we continue to cut and those agencies stay open." It's as though they want state agencies to close. Agencies may be staying open but services are being cut way back. The Highway Patrol has a maximum number of miles they can drive; the Juvenile Justice Authority has reduced the programs that it offers; the restaurants, hotels/motels, bars, schools will no longer be inspected for sanitary food preparation conditions as they have in the past; KDOT is cutting back on the way it clears/maintains the roads during; all agencies are short staffed; the parole department has been told they may be closed; the court system has reduced the hours it operates; just to name a few of the ways that agencies have been impacted.

It also is disheartening to hear one of the State Board of Education members, Dr. Walt Chappell, saying that school districts don't need any more money since when the year started districts collectively had \$175 million dollars in emergency reserves and millions more in other operating funds. It is too bad that he doesn't even understand the budgeting process and the laws that govern how our funds can be spent. The emergency reserves he is talking about includes the Contingency Reserve fund that districts have been trying to build up to help soften the reductions in state funding that we, as well as legislators, have known since 2006 are coming. The other funds would include Capital Outlay and Bond & Interest that by law cannot be spent for anything other than what the mill levy is assessed for.

Even though the budget news is discouraging you can be assured that we will do all that we can with the resources that we have to continue to provide a quality education for our students. Thank you for your continued trust and confidence in the Ell-Saline USD 307 school district. I wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN FEDERAL GRANT

Last year, Ell-Saline High School was one of eight schools selected for participation in a three year federal grant program for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, violence and other destructive behaviors and decisions among teens. Four schools were selected from the Salina area and four schools were chosen from the Hays area. The grant focuses primarily on freshmen and sophomores.

The program consists of three phases with integrated classroom instruction being the first phase. A curriculum program called, "Too Good For Drugs" is being used. Ten detailed lessons are being incorporated into the health and physical education instruction through Mr. King. These lessons deal not just with the effects of drug and alcohol abuse, but cover destructive decisions and the positive results of leadership skills.

Two infusion teachers were also selected to participate in the program. Ms. Scuitte is incorporating these positive decision-making skills into her freshmen English discussions. As students read and discuss literary works, they analyze the impact of poor decisions made by characters and observe the positive results of good leadership skills. Mr. Roche is leading similar discussions among the sophomores through his World History class.

A second phase of the program is the drunk driving simulator. Mr. Alan Bachelor from the Smoky Hill Educational Service Center brought computerized equipment, complete with the gas pedal and steering wheel for students to play with. The screen shows city driving conditions with stop lights, pedestrians, and heavy traffic. After driving under normal conditions, students were then given goggles to simulate driving while under the influence of a few alcoholic drinks. It really slowed reaction time and made it difficult to see those pedestrians entering the streets. Just as challenging for students was trying to walk and pick up objects while wearing the simulator goggles.

A third and very important aspect of the program is the Natural Helpers team. Survey results among all freshmen and sophomores indicated that over 80% of our students confide in fellow students whom they trust when they have a problem. They talk over their problems with other students even before sharing with parents, teachers, coaches or other adults. With this information, we can see the importance of training students to be good listeners and helpers.

All freshmen and sophomores were asked to list two students from our high school whom they felt comfortable talking to and sharing their concerns. From those listed, sixteen students were selected to comprise our Natural Helpers team. Those students have received two days of intensive training through the Educational Service Center to improve listening skills, learn questions to ask, and explore referral options when needed.

Students selected for the Natural Helpers team at Ell-Saline for this school year include: Kaleb Whitehair, Kyla Christensen, Dylan Nelson and Taylor Albers from the freshmen class. Sophomores include Jessica Brockway, Jamie Henry, Whitney Albers, Torey Goddard, Shane Wesley, Bethany Bell, Tyler Cates, and Patch Miller. Three juniors and one senior were also selected by our underclassmen. They include Bailey Base, Mariah Jones, Amanda Reed, and Eric Nelson. On April 12, these students will be traveling to Hays to join teams from western Kansas in a wrap-up discussion. They will also be participating in the leadership training ropes course at Fort Hays State University.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

As we bring 2009 to a close and gear up for 2010 I wanted to share a few important dates and bits of information with you. Since the start of the school year, things haven't slowed down and there is still much to be done.

FINANCIAL AID NIGHT: On Thursday, January 7, Michelle Jensen, Financial Aid Director at Kansas Wesleyan University will be here to visit with all seniors and their parents concerning the application process for college financial aid. Specifically she will be discussing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) process and answering any questions concerning the completion of this process. The meeting will be held in the library at Ell-Saline High School from 7:00 until 8:00. This is a very informative meeting for any student and their parents who plan to attend any further education beyond high school. This would include vocational technical schools, beauty academies and community colleges as well as universities.

SENIORS: I have been working with many of our seniors coordinating college visits and completing applications for admission and scholarship applications. Second semester is the time to start finalizing some of those plans. Let me know if I can help make any arrangements for another college visit, send your transcripts to a college or help with any of the application processes. Parents, feel free to contact the Guidance Office with ANY questions concerning that next step for your student.

DUAL CREDIT CLASSES: We are so excited!! After years of work and many meetings, we have finally received permission to work with area community colleges to offer college level dual credit classes right here in our building. Starting second semester, students will have the opportunity to take Public Speaking, English Composition II, Music Appreciation, and Psychology for college credit. These classes are being offered through Cloud County Community College and Hutchinson Community College. In addition to getting a jump start on college credits, there are tremendous cost savings to dual credit classes. The tuition cost at CCCC is \$85.00 per credit hour while HCC charges \$60.00 per credit. This is a considerable savings when you consider most of our State universities cost about \$200. per credit. In addition to the tuition cost, you save money on the cost of books. Our school supplies the text books for dual credit classes. At college, you pay for the book yourself. That expense varies from \$75 to \$150 per book. We are hoping to have even more of these classes available starting next fall.

January

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Guess What?

Inauguration Day for the President is every fourth year.

This tradition began on January 20, 1937.

No School 1

Happy 2010

Home-Made Pizza
Toss Salad
Pineapple Chunks
Pudding
Milk

Country Steak 5
Mashed Potatoes
& Gravy
Green Beans
Crisp Apple Slices
Dinner Roll, Milk

Bean & Beef 6
Burrito or Taco
Salsa
Whole Grain Corn
Apple Sauce
Bread Stick, Milk

Rib Sandwich 7
Tater Tots
Pickle Slices
Baked Beans
Orange Slices
Milk

Beef Ravioli 8
Tossed Salad
Diced Peaches
Garlic Bread
Ch Chip Cookie
Milk

Chicken Strips 11
Oven Fries
Broccoli & Cheese
Banana
Bread stick
Milk

Salisbury Steak 12
Mashed Potatoes
Brown Gravy
Sweet Peas
Orange Fluff
Dinner Roll, Milk

Chili Dog 13
W/ Cheese
Dill Spears
Baby Carrots
Orange Slices
Strawberry Milk

Cheesy 14
Hamburger Helper
Green Beans
Crisp Apple Slices
Banana Cake
Milk

Chicken Sandwich 15
Lettuce & Tomato
Tater Tots
Cucumber Slices
Fruit Cocktail
Milk

No School 18
Teacher In
Service

Chicken & Noodles 19
Mashed Potatoes
Green Beans
Dinner Roll
Orange Slices
Milk

Tony's Pizza 20
Tossed Salad
Pineapple Chunks
Wacky Cake
Strawberry Milk

Chicken Fajita 21
Lettuce, Tomato
Salsa
Spanish Rice
Apple Sauce
Bread Stick, Milk

Hot Ham Cheese 22
Tri Tater
Fresh Broccoli
Fresh Grapes
Ice Cream Cup
Milk

Kansas School 25
Hamburger on Bun
Lettuce & Tomato
Oven Fries
Mandarin Oranges
Cookie Bar, Milk

Lunch Week- 26
Chicken Nuggets
Potatoes & Gravy
Fresh Broccoli
Whole Wheat Roll
Tropical Fruit, Milk

Double Dare Ya- 27
Italian Spaghetti
w/ meat sauce
Garden Spinach
Salad
Garlic Bread
Peaches, Milk

Try Something - 28
Taco Salad
Whole Grain Chips
Salsa
Refried Beans
Cinnamon Puffs
Pineapple, Milk

New to You! 29
Macaroni & Cheese
Little Smokes
Seasoned Peas
Fresh Baby Carrots
Bread Stick
Apple Slices, Milk

Double Dare!

Kansas School Lunch Week!
January 25th-29th 2010
We are challenging Students
to try something new. When
students learn to taste new
foods, they have more choices
for smart eating throughout
their lives.

**WE DOUBLE DARE YOU TO
TRY NEW FOODS AT HOME!**
-Try and Try again. It may take
up to 10 times before they like
something new. Be patient
and let your child choose what
and how much to eat.

-Eat together as much as
possible. Let your kids see
you enjoying different foods
and they will follow.

-Cook together. Trying new
foods is more fun when they
help shop or cook.

-Get creative with meals and
keep dinner talk fun.

School News

School Breakfast & Lunch
for 19 days in January.
Elementary-
Breakfast \$24.70
Lunch \$40.85

MS/HS-
Breakfast \$26.60
Lunch \$43.70
Reduced-
Breakfast \$5.70
Lunch \$7.60





On Monday January 4, 2010

From 5-8 pm,

20% of all sales of the night

At Burger King on South 9th Street

will be donated

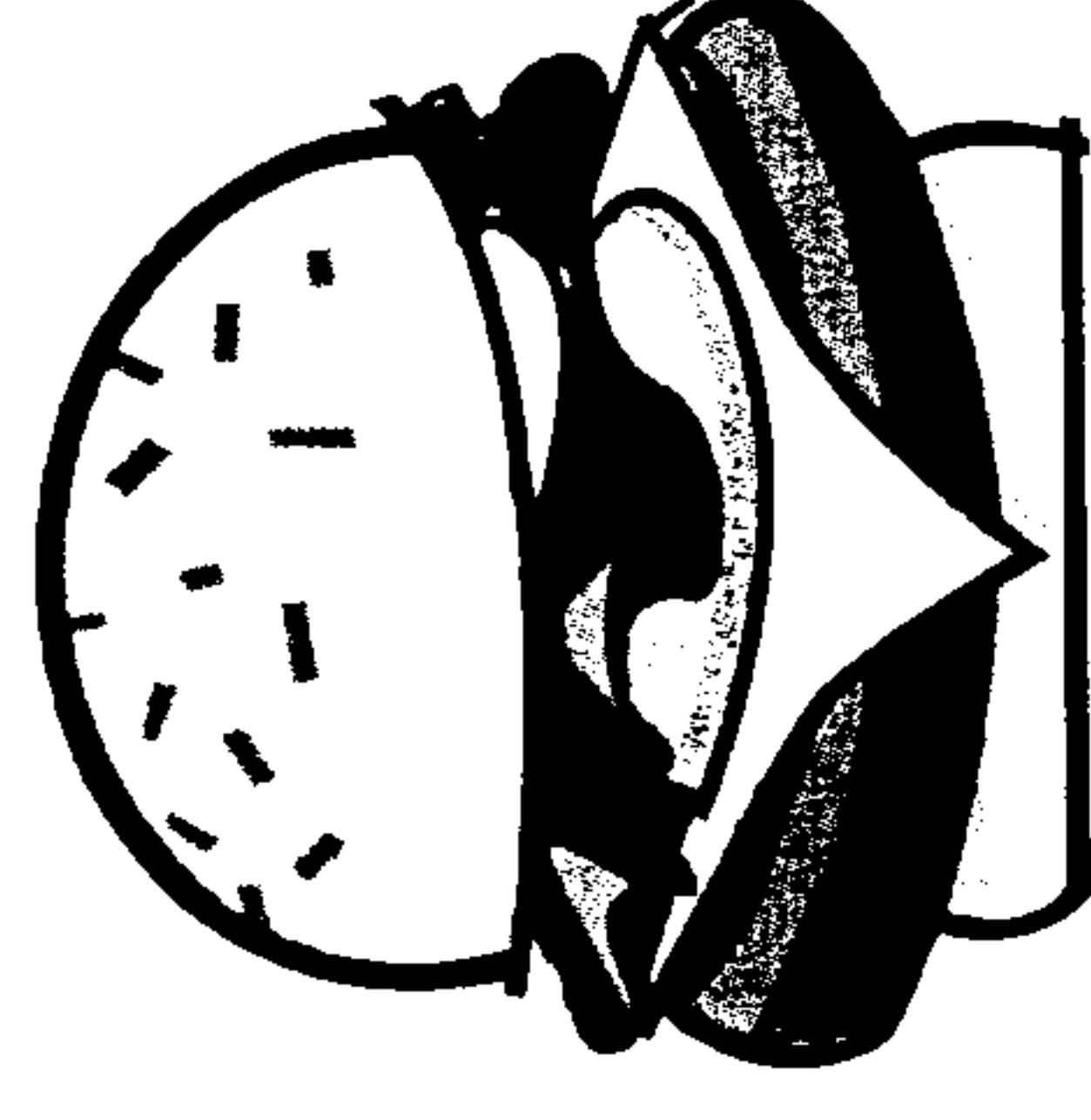
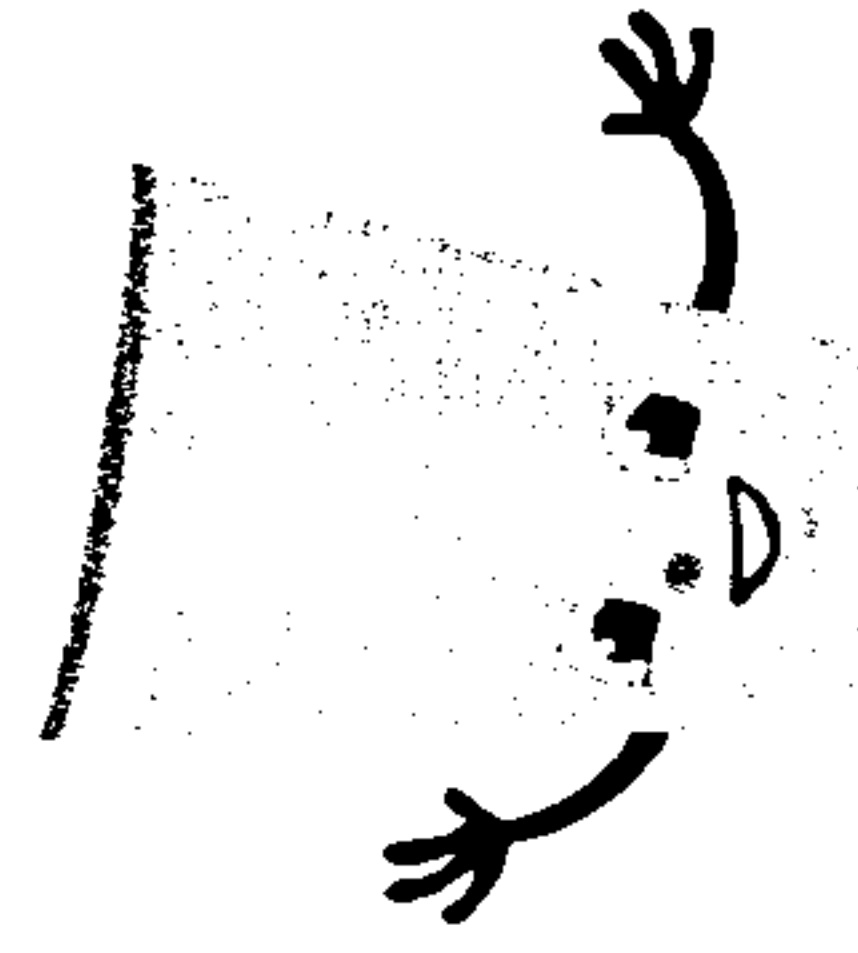
To your 2010 EII Saline After Prom!

Come eat and enjoy helping make our

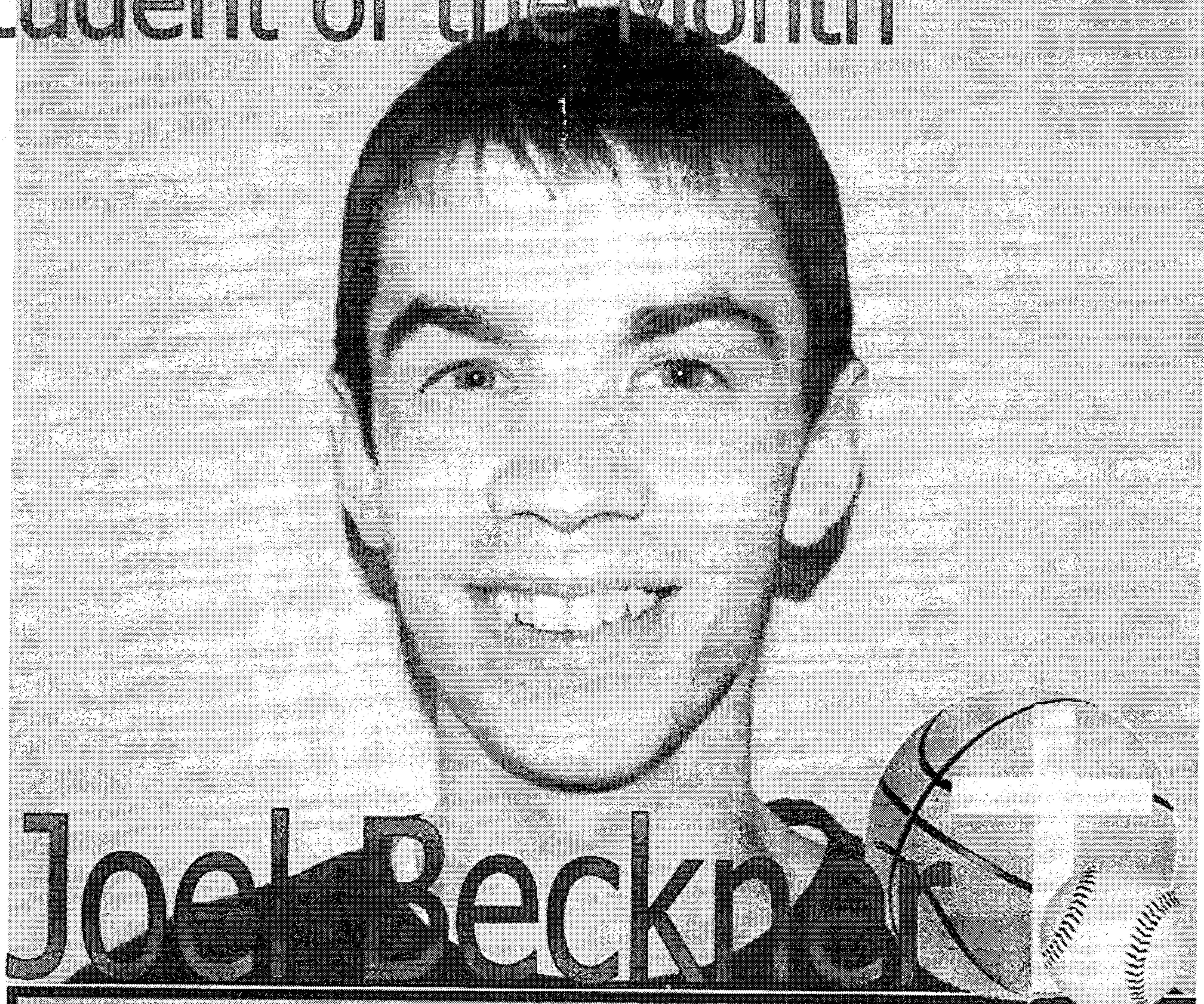
2010 EII Saline After Prom

A safe and memorable event

for our students!



December Student of the Month



Joel Beckner

The Ell-Saline High School student of the month for December is senior Joel Beckner. Joel is the son of Ken and Brenda Beckner and he currently has a 3.75 GPA. Joel has participated in basketball and baseball for two years, cross country for 1 year, and is also a member of FFA. Outside of school, on Saturday nights, Joel helps with a new church called Venue of Salina. His hobbies include participating in his church youth group and playing basketball and baseball. Joel plans on attending College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri, majoring in physical education, and receiving a minor in youth ministry or missions.

December

Student of the Month



Sarah Schulte

The Ell-Saline Middle School student of the month for December is eighth grader Sarah Schulte. She is the daughter of Cheire and Tim Schulte and her siblings include Hannah, Ethan, and Bethany. Sarah is involved in the PALS program and currently plays the clarinet in the Ell-Saline band. Outside of school, Sarah takes part in providing Christmas gifts for children on the angel tree. Her hobbies include reading, creating jewelry, and swimming competitively. In the future, Sarah hopes to be either an author or an editor.



SMOKY HILL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Ell-Saline

Parents as Teachers

Parent Educator: Aimee McDaniel 785-825-9185

Family Time

By: Rondi Hillstrom Davis

When you pick up any magazine, it's easy to find an abundance of articles to help you organize your life. Most offer tips for cleaning out the closets, shuffling the papers on the desk, finding ways to organize the kid's toys.

But, here's a different twist. We'd like to help you organize your time to find some precious, extra moments to spend with your family.

Many parents are frantic because there doesn't seem to be enough hours in a day to manage their work, home life, and kid's activities. They're frustrated when they see others who seem to do it all. The number one question parents ask us is, "How can I find more quality time to spend with my kids?"

Stay focused on what's really important.

Do you waste valuable time? Clear the clutter in your life. Do you buy lots of toys and gifts to compensate for your lack of family time? What your kids really want is you, not the latest, greatest toy.

How much time is wasted cleaning up the clutter? If the junk has taken over, pitch it.

How much time do you spend carpooling? Do you really need to sign your kids up for another after school dance lesson? Is your cell phone off? Or, are you wasting your time on endless phone conversations while running your kids from one activity to another?

Do you eat dinner together as a family? Are phone calls and other interruptions allowed during dinner? Is the television off?

Let everyone help. Do members of your family share in the household chores and responsibilities? Even the youngest children can help by making their beds, putting away toys, and setting the table. Insist that each task is done before moving on to another activity.

Set small goals and be specific.

Resolutions are made with enthusiasm. But, very often they're forgotten in a month. Making a resolution for the entire year is difficult to keep. Saying that you want to spend more time with your family is too vague. But, promising to spend 1/2 hour each night reading aloud with your children is much more achievable. Start with small goals. They're easier to accomplish. No one can give you more than 24 hours in a day. But, it's your choice in how you choose to spend that time. Even an extra 10 minutes a day is a worthwhile goal. Once you see the benefits, you'll be motivated to set additional goals.

About the Author: Rondi Hillstrom Davis is the co-author of the award-winning book *Together: Creating Family Traditions*. To check out her website that's jam packed with family ideas, visit <http://www.togetherparenting.com>

PLAYGROUPS

Smoky Hill Learning Center

830 S 9th - Salina

January 12th 10-11:00 am (free play)

January 26th 10-11:00 am (messy art)

January 27th 6-7:00 pm (messy art)

Playgroups provide a wonderful opportunity for children and parents to play together. Activities are designed for infants and toddlers. Older siblings are welcome to attend with you!

For more info contact Aimee @ 785-825-9185.

ENROLL IN

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

PAT is a FREE program for soon-to-be parents and parents with children up to three years of age. PAT offers personal visits, playgroups, community resources and developmental screenings to families living in the Ell-Saline school district.

Call 785-825-9185 to enroll in PAT.

Spaces are limited!



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*U.S. Cellular® is Calling All Communities:
vote for your school and help it be one of ten to win \$100,000.*

We believe educating our kids has never been more of a priority. That's why we're out to support the cause by giving schools money to use towards whatever they feel is important. Big, small, public, private, primary, middle and high schools—they're all eligible.

What you can do is simple. Come into any U.S. Cellular® store from 11/13/09 through 1/15/10 and get a code to use online to vote for your school. The ten schools with the most votes will receive \$100,000 each. That's a total of \$1,000,000 in support of education.

So what are you waiting for? Show your school spirit by going to U.S. Cellular and voting. After all, we can't think of a better cause.

**Visit uscellular.com to find a store near you
where you can get your voting code.**

**THINK OF ALL *your*
SCHOOL COULD *do*
WITH \$100,000.**



U.S. Cellular® is Calling All Communities.
Vote for your favorite school to share \$1 million.

*Voting code on back



believe in something better