

# Opinion

## A Kansas Viewpoint



### Is new division needed for Kansas?

**From the Lawrence Journal-World**  
Like just about everything he does, Kansas Education Commissioner Bob Corkins' decision to create a new division in the department and hire two new deputy commissioners is stirring controversy.

First, according to Kansas Board of Education member Sue Gamble, it is unheard of for the commissioner to announce the hirings and reorganization plans before they are approved by the board. Second, according to Board Member Bill Wagnon, the establishment of a new School Innovation Division would add unnecessary bureaucracy and costs to the department's operation.

Both seem like legitimate complaints that should concern Corkins, who was hired by and works for the State Board of Education. It seems only appropriate to get board approval before reorganizing the department, hiring key people and creating a new top-level position.

Does the education department really need a new School Innovation Division? Corkins said the division would look for successful school programs and determine whether similar programs could be used in other schools. It seems that every division of the education department already would be doing that job in their particular area — in a way that would be more efficient and constructive than channeling such efforts through a separate division.

There also are concerns about what other department functions might have to be cut back to provide funding for the new division.

Wagnon and Gamble are right that these are questions that should have been discussed with and resolved by the state board before they were announced by Corkins. However, the reality at this point is that Corkins really has almost no reason to concern himself with the criticisms of Wagnon and Gamble. Although the two board members frequently find themselves at odds with Corkins, the commissioner has a solid majority of support on the board that will support most plans he pursues.

The public's confidence, however, may be shaken once again by the continuing controversy surrounding Corkins and the state board.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail [jvannostrand@nwkansan.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansan.com) or [pdecker@nwkansan.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansan.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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## Remember why it's your day, dads

"Well my daddy he was just a stranger, lived in a hotel downtown. When I was a kid he was just somebody, Somebody I'd see around..."

Now down below and pullin' on my shirt got some kids of my own. Well if I had one wish in this God forsaken world, kids it'd be that your mistakes would be your own Yeah, your sins would be your own."

— from the 2005 Bruce Springsteen song "Long Time Comin'"



**John Van Nostrand**

### Line in the Dust

All you dads out there, don't let Father's Day on Sunday go to your head.

Don't get strangled by the new tie, let the aroma from the steaks on the new barbecue grill zap your brain or get too lazy taking a nap on the hammock just because it is your day.

If you are put on a pedestal Sunday, that's great, but remember why you were put there.

Moms get more attention through Mother's Day than dads do on Father's Day. A greeting card company once set up shop in a prison and far more cards were taken for mom than dad. More long distance telephone calls are made on mom's day than dad's day.

But a father's influence still cannot, and should not, be forgotten.

There is a connection between a father-daughter relationship and the kind of man the daughter eventually marries. If the father shows mom, a solid, respectful, honest, involved relationship, the daughter will want the same qualities in her husband because that is what she thinks marriage is all about.

Finding time for dad to forget his job is also important. Since having my own kids, I've noticed the relationship between a father's work and their children.

At some banquets I've been to men have been honored for doing something since the creation of dirt. During the obligatory acceptance speech, there is always the comment of having the kids either playing, napping or eating in the office while dad is at work.

Even though those situations can be romanticized, I have a hard time oohing and awwing over the recipient because of that. Did the kids ever really get to know their father because his

job always got in the way?

During my adolescent years, I went with my father on his route sales job. At the same time, my friends were either tinkering in the garage or playing golf with their fathers. Moments like that with my father were few, but I give him some credit. He occasionally broke away to take my brother and I to college football games. Those are good memories.

I understood and appreciated how my father was providing for the family. Kids need more than new shoes and three meals a day. Fathers must use the time they have to build relationships with their children.

Fathers may realize the position they are in too.

I once wrote a story about a truck driver. We were zipping down Interstate 35 in southern Minnesota in the middle of a frozen January night and he was bummed because his job made him miss his son's first pin in wrestling. He didn't care the trailer load behind him was worth bajillions. He wanted to be at that wrestling meet — but knew he had to still provide for his son. It's a tough thing to balance.

I'm trying to be there for my children too, even on Father's Day.

John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.

## Your turn

### Poor example of a hospital board

**Charles Cook Colby**  
I have lived in Colby for 83 years and I have never quite seen such a poor example of a hos-

pital board doing what they did to a local doctor who has worked and saved a lot of lives in his 28 to 30 years of doctoring in Colby.

I don't see how those people on the hospital

board can ever look at themselves in the mirror.

I personally feel like the people of Colby owe Dr. Hildyard a big apology.

## Nothing more exciting than dirty laundry

**Frank Jurek Colby**  
I have read articles in this paper before and would sigh and think why would they put that in the paper?

Now it's happened to me.

I'm referring to the article about my son published in the Monday, June 12 paper. First the kid is a minor, second Eric hasn't had a court date yet. Third, there's only enough information in the article to make it sound as bad as possible.

The way I heard it is Eric left a message on Mr. Boell's phone recorder. Eric was reciting lyrics to a song that had played in Mr. Boell's class the previous day. Mr. Rocky Robbins heard of it and decided to pursue punishment for his prank. Eric

got a three-day suspension, plus the felony charges filed against him.

In the first meeting we had with the school officials, Eric denied making the call because he was shocked Mr. Boell and Mr. Robbins were making such a big deal of the situation. Now Eric's parents must defend their 17-year-old son on felony charges over a school prank.

Earlier in the year I read an article in the school newspaper. Mr. Robbins was quoted as saying that they had a record for school suspensions. And he predicted there would be many more. What kind of goal is that for a high school principal? Aren't you responsible for keeping kids in school?

Also, I have a copy of a letter from Mr. Kirk

Nielsen to Andrea Wyrick stating he wants to pursue charges on Eric because he is fed up with students harassing and hurting school teachers. Well, if you know Eric, you know he does not threaten people. But he may have to be punished for having a sense of humor and not thinking ahead of how people may react to it.

Also, I'm surprised that this newspaper had room to put this article in the paper. When my kids and other kids in the area raced motocross I would write up articles and drop them off at the newspaper. They said they would get the articles in when they had space. Of six articles I wrote, I only saw two get printed.

Nothing more exciting than dirty laundry.

### About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

