



# VATAT

## News

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Education Family ☆ 2013 Volume IV, Issue VIII

## CTE Student Performance and Post Secondary Readiness

By: Kevin Swor, Diboll

*This is the second article of a three-part series.*

### **Career Pathway Verses College Pathway**

What is the primary role of public secondary education in the United States today? Have we lost sight of our purpose? According to Dan Hull we have. "It no longer serves the majority of American young people by helping them make long-range decisions, choose careers, become good citizens, and prepare for higher education. In short, public secondary education in the United States no longer helps the majority of its students prepare to become capable, successful, and personally fulfilled adults." (Hull, 2006, p.1) Since the 1983 report, "A Nation at Risk," public education has come under scrutiny to raise student achievement and the primary way considered to analyze this is testing student growth. Testing was put in place to make schools and teachers more accountable. "Unfortunately, teachers and principals have reacted to this mandate by devoting an inordinate amount of class time to 'teach the test,' rather than exploring teaching strategies that can improve student learning more broadly. Teachers and principals are not to blame for this unfortunate and counterproductive state of affairs. They are under constant pressure to raise test scores. The fault lies with educational leaders and policymakers, who have lacked the vision and courage to reestablish and

maintain an environment that nurtures effective teaching and learning." (Hull, 2006, p. 2) At this point, students are deprived of the complete educational process and will not perform to the best of their ability. As a result, "fewer than two thirds believe that their school has done a good job challenging them academically or preparing them for college. About the same number of students said their senior year would be more meaningful if they could take courses related to the jobs they wanted or if some of their courses could be counted toward college credit." (Hull, 2006, p. 4). Students' senior year should be rewarding, yet challenging. Today many are not serviced once they have completed the mandated test. Graduates will find remediation necessary at the beginning of their postsecondary studies as a result of the lack of educational rigor and career preparation.

The mindset that all students should be prepared for college is not true today. Less than 20 percent of the jobs in America require a college degree, while the rest require certifications or technical skills that can be acquired in high schools or technical schools. All school stakeholders are not aware that many college graduates are not employed. "The economic policy Institute reported in March of 2004 that for the



first time the number of unemployed college graduates surpassed the number of unemployed high school dropouts." (Woodard, 2005, p. 5) Many people realize the importance of career pathways, but they do not understand how it will help student achievement. "When students complete at least four credits in an academic or career/technical major (Career Cluster), those

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## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

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**VATAT CAREERS PAGE**

The VATAT Careers page gives you the most recent list of job opportunities available. On the page you can search for the entire list of job openings, or you can narrow your search by looking for job opportunities in your area. If you know of a job opening that needs to be posted online, please e-mail it in a Word document to karen@vatat.org.

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## CTE Student Performance

*Continued from page 1*

students also meet higher academic achievement goals.” (Woodard, 2005, p. 5) Have you ever asked yourself why do I have to learn this? Students that have selected an interest area will have a reason for staying in school and doing their best. Studies have shown that the completion rate will rise and the dropout rate will lower if students truly understand the benefits. Students will have a higher retention rate of the information presented when the instruction includes a hands-on or application approach. “Analysis of state longitudinal data indicates that, compared to student population in general, CTE students, and specifically, Tech Prep students, have lower dropout rates, enter and complete college programs at higher rates, do very well on standardized tests, and earned higher salaries when they entered the workforce.” (Hull, 2006, p. 146)

There are critics to the career pathways approach and their point should be considered. Critics believe that students must choose a career pathway too early, and while focusing on that pathway they will lose their academic content. Proponents “instead, argue, career pathways are broad and flexible enough to allow students to obtain skills necessary in any given occupation but still encourage adolescents to think about their future and to see the relevance of core academic subjects to a broad career path.” (Beyer & Johnson, 2005, p.113)

Career pathways are not an option at this point. Schools must have full implementation of their models by 2011. The local district does have flexibility in the design of their pathway, but they must meet the local students’ needs in their plan. The state of Texas is requiring all students to have a Texas achievement plan in place. This plan is considered a six-year plan that will carry the students two years into post secondary. Career pathways are here to stay, and I firmly believe that America and its citizens will see the benefits in the near future.

### ***Academic Preparation of Students Entering High School***

Career and technology students have been labeled as slower academic students since the program’s creation. “You must have school principals who view CTE not as a place where you send students for an easy credit, but as a place that adds relevance and meaning to the total high school curriculum and as a method to engage students in a different approach to learning.” (Bottoms, 2006, p. 16) If this is the case, then is public education headed in the right direction or do some officials feel the need to reduce funding? The answer is both. “Additional spending on the programs was warranted, advocates of vocational education argued, because at risk students would be more likely to decide to stay in school if they thought their secondary education was relevant to later labor market outcomes.” (Arum, 1988, p. 130)

According to the author, “Ninth grade is crucial, especially

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## Historic Meeting held at Prairie View A&M University

*Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director*

Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) was founded as the Land-Grant University for African-American students in the days of racial segregation. For many years, it was the only place in Texas for African-American students to become certified agriculture science teachers. Today, PVAMU is home to a diverse student population of many racial and cultural backgrounds.

The agriculture teacher education program at PVAMU has been dormant for several years. Many experts warn of a coming teacher shortage and there is a renewed interest in PVAMU becoming part of the solution to that problem.

On Feb. 22, 2013, a meeting billed as Team Ag Ed Meeting with the Dean was held on the campus. Current teachers, college professors and stakeholders, Texas FFA Executive Director Tom Maynard, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director Aaron Alejandro, TEA representative Ron Whitson and I attended the meeting. Another stakeholder in attendance was FFA Board member and PVAMU alumnus Horace Hodge, who was instrumental in coordinating the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to open a dialogue with the new Dean and Director of Land-Grant Programs in the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences, Dr. Alton B. Johnson, concerning efforts to re-energize their teacher educator program.

Dr. Johnson was enthusiastic about the possibilities of again certifying agriculture educators and developing the curriculum to attract students from all areas and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Interestingly, about 10 percent of all Texas FFA members reside in a five-county area within 50 miles of this campus.

Dr. Johnson and his staff provided information on their scholarship program, which has more than one million dollars in scholarships funds for prospective agriculture and human sciences majors available for the upcoming school year. These applications may be found at [www.pvamu.edu/pvagscholar](http://www.pvamu.edu/pvagscholar). Other concrete suggestions were discussed to get current students and teachers to the campus, as well as possibilities of hosting a variety of FFA and teacher development activities.

For agricultural education to thrive, grow and remain relevant, the teaching and student populations must reflect the diversity of our great state. We need committed educators and engaged students of all races. That is the indisputable reality of the day. Prairie View A&M University is not the only solution to such issues.

There are 11 other teacher educator programs available

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# Historic Meeting held at Prairie View A&M University

*Continued from page 3*

throughout the state. Most have long established programs and do a great job. These universities will shape and mold the future of our profession and will also play an important role in educating a diverse population. The meeting at PVAMU was a great first step in this University taking its place in producing the next generation of agricultural educators.



Current teachers, PVAMU college professors and stakeholders met with Texas Team Ag Ed representatives.

*Photo by Dr. Paul Johnson*

## VATAT News *and the benefits of advertising*

Do you know of a company interested in advertising in the *VATAT News*? It is the perfect opportunity to promote a product or service to more than 4,000 VATAT members, Young Farmers, FFA Alumni, FFA Foundation partners and other agricultural and FFA supporters in Texas. Members use the *VATAT News* to receive important information about agricultural education, ag teachers conference, legislation and much more. Advertising prices are reasonable and it is the only way reach Texas agriculture science teachers in their homes.

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We welcome advertising and hope to foster a lasting relationship with every company who advertises in the *VATAT News*. Please share this information with a company you think would be interested in advertising with us. For information regarding advertising formats, size requirements and deadlines please e-mail Julie Vrazel at [julie@vatat.org](mailto:julie@vatat.org).

### **Agricultural Sustainable Energy Education Network (ASEEN) Program**

#### **Teacher Professional Development Summer Workshop**

ASEEN is a three year project to promote sustainable energy education in K-12 schools by offering educational summer camps (certification will be available) to teachers and provide sufficient information such as related modules, course documents, online resources, etc. Educational materials and training will focus on STEM education as related to sustainable energy.

Benefits:

1. Each participating district will receive \$2,000 - \$2,500 of supplies and equipment.
2. Each participating teacher will receive \$1,250 for attending the training and completing a fall and spring activity. (Participants will be responsible for their own travel expenses.)

Visit the VATAT website for the application and more information.

## CTE Student Performance

*Continued from page 3*

for students at risk of dropping out of high school. It is important that, as we catch them up in academics such as mathematics and language arts/reading, we provide them with some type of career exploratory opportunity.” (Bottoms, 2006, p. 16) Liberals argued that vocational programs did not help working-class students, but served to segregate, cool out, and divert these students from higher educational attainments.” (Arum, 1988, p. 130) In the article, ‘Have Schools Vocational Education and Training Programs been Successful?’ the author stated, “it may, in fact, be that school VET programs are acting more as a sorting agent, providing students with exposure to a greater range of career options than guiding specific career pathways.” (Anlezark et al, 2006, p. 28) Many of the critics blame CTE programs and feel they should be eliminated, but this seems rather strange considering its success. “One of the great ironies in the high school reform debate is that we criticize academic instruction for failing to do what it is supposed to do, while we condemn career and technical education for succeeding in doing what it was designed to do.” (Hoachlander, 2005, p. 2)

### ***Method of Measuring Students Ability on Tests***

“High-stakes testing is a concept that began in 1983 as a direct result of “A Nation at Risk” – report released by the National Commission on Education.” (Elliot, 2007, p. 50)

“Perkins III established the premise that CTE must be accountable for academic achievement as well. The legislation clearly indicates that career and technical education’s success should be measured, in large part, by its contribution to improved achievement levels, as well as higher rates of high school graduation and enrollment in, and completion of, post secondary education.” (Hoachlander, 2005, p. 1)

“We don’t currently have measures that can appropriately assess career and technology’s contributions to academic learning. But it is possible that we are using the wrong metric to evaluate them. So far the only gauges of these efforts’ academic results have been standardized tests. For the most part, they do not measure students’ diagnostic abilities, capacities for bringing interdisciplinary knowledge to bear on complex problems, understanding of systems, or facility in applying abstract knowledge and academic skills to authentic, real-life situations.” (Hoachlander, 2005, p. 3)

“Who is smarter, CTE or other students? The question should actually be, “Is a raw score comparison a fair and accurate measure between the two groups? The answer is: No, career and technical education (CTE) students scored lower than other students in four out of five years during this study on the high-stakes tests. Yet factors other than curriculum choice were found to have a significant influence on the high-stakes test scores. In fact, no statistical difference was found between the two groups.” (Elliott, 2007, p. 50)

*To be continued in the next issue*

## VATAT AWARDS ARE ONLINE

The award applications and procedures are available on the VATAT website. Check out the following award categories and make plans to apply or nominate someone!

Each area is responsible for selecting its VATAT Award recipients and giving the winning nomination forms to the VATAT area executive committee member at your area convention. The executive committee member is responsible for turning in the area award winning nomination forms to Julie Vrazel, Communications Coordinator.

### ***Awards***

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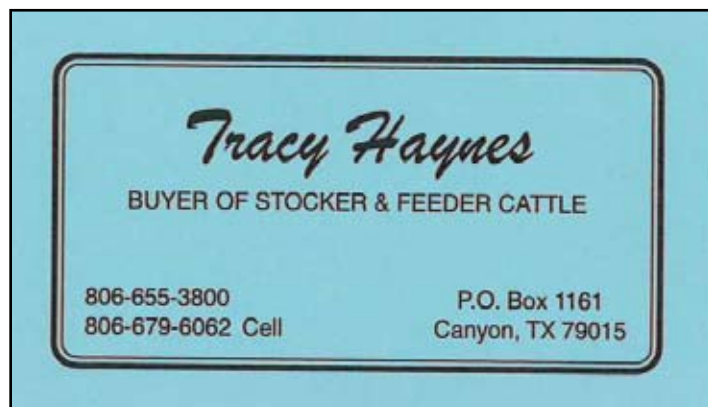
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Teacher Mentor Award

30-Minute Club



# TEACHING WITH PASSION

Story and photos by Julie Vrazel, VATAT Communications Coordinator

Walk into any Texas agriculture classroom and you'll find teachers sharing their knowledge with students through hands-on projects and FFA activities. The passion, leadership and life experiences of teachers impact their influence on the students.

"You can change a student's life by spending time with them and showing that you care," explained Ryan Cummins, agriculture science teacher at Burleson High School.

Cummins, who previously taught at Tomball Memorial High School, has interacted with students of various cultural and socio-economic statuses. "I had several inner-city students, who aren't your normal ag kids, in my classes. Agriculture changed their lives. Four of those inner-city kids are meats and livestock judges at Clarendon Junior College," he said.

Agricultural curriculum offers students the opportunity to tour agricultural facilities and to visit the school farm to get their hands dirty. While learning about genetics and production practices, students are also exposed to leadership, communication and ethical issues faced by agriculturalists.

"I focus on real-world applications in the classroom to help the students understand that what they are learning now will be useful in the future," Hillsboro High School agriculture science teacher Audrey Tolnay said. "Managing time and money with a swine project can teach these students how to budget when they go to college or run their own business."

But agriculture teachers work with numerous individuals, not just students. Developing successful relationships with parents, community leaders and county agents is imperative, because teachers need their support and open lines of communication. It takes more than the

local agricultural programs alone to successfully host events that highlight students on the county, state and national level.

"Maintain a good relationship with the 4-H agent and other community leaders because they provide support for your program, and oftentimes your students are involved in both FFA and 4-H," explained Justin Tomascik, agriculture science teacher at Franklin High School. "Teaching at the same school for several years builds lasting relationships with students and their families, as well as those businesses and industry professionals that you find yourself working with."

Community involvement is key during county shows, fundraisers, award banquets and more.

"In the fall, we held a dinner and auction, and more than 600 people showed up to support our chapter," said Jake Parr, Granbury High School agriculture science teacher. "That event showed me just how supportive the Granbury community is."

Coordinating lessons and activities for all students is a task for any teacher, but agricultural educators are often traveling, leaving some students in the classroom.

"The students that aren't on the road with you are just as important, so it's necessary to prepare lessons with detailed instructions for the substitute," Tomascik said.

The long hours, days spent traveling and time away from family is worthwhile when teachers watch their students accomplish their goals.

"Seeing students succeed in the classroom and helping them get scholarships is the most rewarding feeling," Cummins said. "There's nothing better than seeing your former students pursuing their careers and impacting the future of agriculture."



Ryan Cummins helps Kaci Major, a Burleson FFA member, weigh her pig.



Audrey Tolnay helps students with projects and builds relationships with parents.



Jake Parr (middle) listens as his students give reasons on their pigs.

# VATAT PRE-CONFERENCE CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS

## VATAT Professional Development Conference

July 29-August 2, 2013

Online pre-registration is required for the following workshops through VATAT Online. For more information regarding the Pre-Conference Workshops, please visit [www.vatat.org](http://www.vatat.org) under Conference > Pre-Conference Workshops.

### TRAINING WORKSHOP ON SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2013

#### Clay Target Shooting Program

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$15

### TRAINING WORKSHOPS ON MONDAY, JULY 29, 2013

#### Clay Target Shooting Program

Monday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$15

#### Hunter Education Instructor Workshop:

Monday: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$27 includes a box lunch

#### Private Pesticide Applicators Certification and Exam

Monday: 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$25 includes box lunch

#### Private Pesticide Applicators Re-certification (3 CEU credits)

Monday: 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Workshop Fee: \$25 includes box lunch

#### National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Certification Workshop:

Monday: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$90 includes study materials and box lunch

#### Texas Boater Education Instructor Certification

Monday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$15 includes box lunch

#### Floral Student Certification Overview Hands-on Workshop

Monday: 1:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Workshop fee: \$30

#### Archery in the Schools Program Instructor Training

Monday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$15 includes box lunch

#### OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Outreach Training

Monday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$7 for box lunch (must register to attend)

#### New Teacher Workshop:

Monday: 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Workshop Fee: \$0 includes dinner



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## If You Are Retiring This Year...

Please contact the VATAT office if you are retiring or if you know of someone who is retiring after this year. We strive to keep our records accurate and would also like to honor members who are retiring from teaching agriculture science. Thank you for your help with this matter.

## VATAT Scholarship

The Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association offers VATAT scholarships to members' children upon their graduation from high school. Scholarships are awarded to all eligible applicants as long as VATAT membership requirements are met, and the application meets all scholarship requirements.

Download a scholarship application at [www.vatat.org](http://www.vatat.org) under Association>VATAT Awards & Scholarships. The completed application and supporting materials must be postmarked on or before April 1, 2013, and sent to the VATAT office. Late applications will not be accepted.



# Texas FFA Update

## Agricultural Education and Texas FFA Day at the Capitol

For a day the Texas State Capitol became a classroom as more than 500 Texas FFA members and agricultural educators visited Austin on Feb. 26. The students learned about the state's legislation process, especially as it relates to agriculture, at the annual Agricultural Education and Texas FFA Day at the Capitol, hosted by the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas and Texas FFA.

The event, now in its fourth year, provides a unique opportunity for high school students to learn from various players in the state's legislative process - legislators, staffers, agency personnel and lobbyists.

"We want young people to grow up to be engaged citizens who have a voice in the legislation process, because they understand it," said Texas FFA Executive Director Tom Maynard.

Resolutions regarding the Texas FFA were read

in the Texas House of Representatives and Senate. In addition, members participated in workshops facilitated by Representatives Larry Gonzales and Kyle Kacel. The representatives described the roles of legislators, executive offices and lobbyists, as well as expressed the need for bright, young people in public service.

"Day at the Capitol is a great way for our state leaders to see the true impact of agricultural education and the FFA. It also affords our members the opportunity to see first-hand the legislative process, and how they can affect change in their own communities," explained Texas FFA Leadership Development Coordinator Austin Large.



**Top:** Seguin FFA members met with Rep. John Kuempel.



**Top:** Rep. Kyle Kacel spoke with FFA members during the final workshop.



**Right (L-R):** Lt. Governor David Dewhurst; State FFA Officers Jodi Cockrell, Jackie Lee and Madeline Minchillo; and VATAT Executive Director Barney McClure posed for a picture during the day's activities.








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# Foundation Update

## A teacher's design to teach servant leadership - connection and giving back

*Aaron Alejandro, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director*

Do you like to fish? I sure do. I don't mind catfishing with stink bait or dough, but I really like to bass fish, fly fish, fish our coasts or deep sea fish. The challenge for me is to outsmart the fish. Can I use a rubber worm, spinner bait, fly or crank bait to get the fish to bite? It never fails - I'll go fishing with friends and they catch fish and I don't. Now, any fisherman worth their salt doesn't throw down their pole and give up - heck no! We start developing a plan. It begins with a question like, "What bait are you using?" Then, we look to see where they are throwing their line. Finally, we look at how they present the bait to produce results.

Ever wonder if our children are watching how we "fish" in society, in our community and for our country? The potency of imitation as a component of learning in social situations has been developed by the social learning theorists, and it is undoubtedly a potent factor in developing the social infrastructure in educational settings. Students may model their conduct and attitudes on the teacher or on a leader within the student group - for better or for worse. Students grow up to be teachers, parents or leaders and many haven't changed their "fishing" techniques. As a result, they continue to be frustrated for a lack of catching a break or a successful opportunity.

Recently, I had the privilege of listening to Tony Dunkerley, agriculture science teacher in Henerietta, Texas. He discussed how he connects his freshmen students to the local FFA community and their FFA heritage.

At the beginning of the year, Dunkerley's freshmen enrolled in the Principles of Agriculture class begin reviewing class assignments. One of their first assignments: find a former Henrietta FFA member who has been out of the program for at least five years and interview them, asking the following questions:

- Was taking agriculture classes and participating in the FFA worth your time in high school?
- What did you learn in agriculture classes and the FFA that you still use today?
- Did you have fun while in FFA? What is a favorite memory?

This happens at the first of the year, and the student reports on their respective interviewee. During National FFA Week, the students make an Honor Gift to the Texas FFA Foundation in the interviewee's name. Talk about learning to "fish" - students are learning from their teacher [a person they know, trust, and respect] the power of gratitude and stewardship. The honoree receives an Honor Letter from the Texas FFA Foundation, along with a brief statement from the student discussing the impact of their example.

There are many great examples of Texas FFA members being challenged by their teachers, fellow students and mentors on the importance of keeping our organization strong for future generations, so others can enjoy fishing in our pond of opportunity. Dunkerley's innovative idea empowers our students with a positive example of servant and steward leadership. Just like conservation, this effort ensures we have future leaders who understand, and know how to demonstrate, an attitude of gratitude.



Tony Dunkerley, Henrietta agriculture science teacher, connects current FFA members with the local FFA community and FFA heritage.



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## 2013 STATE FAIR VALIDATION INFORMATION

- *Early Tag Orders:* Tags \$8 - April 1 - April 30, 2013
- *Late Tag Orders:* Tags \$11 - May 1 - May 31, 2013
- *Priority Tag Orders:* orders must be faxed to 512-476-2894. Tags are \$11 per tag, plus \$20 priority postage and handling fee during June 1 - June 7, 2013
- *Validation Deadline:* all swine must be validated on or before June 30, 2013. Validation Chairperson must be present when the animals are validated.
- *Change of ownership:* due in the Texas FFA office on or before June 30, 2013.
- All manila forms, hair envelopes, ethics policies, committee forms and excel spreadsheets are due in the FFA office on or before July 5, 2013. (Manilas, hair envelopes and ethic policies must be in alphabetical order.)
- *Tag alterations:* any change to size, shape, form, or color will void the tag. The tag will be replaced at the stock show and replacement cost will be charged to the individual.
- Ear notch correction and ear tag replacement forms must be faxed to the FFA office (512-476-2894) on or before July 16, 2013.
- Any required validation information not in the FFA office by July 16, 2013 will not be validated.



# Texas FFA Alumni

# Update

## Church Signs

*Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President*

We have all seen the words posted on the signs outside of churches. We see them as we are going to our local church, driving on the road going home or posted on Facebook. They are incredible resources that provide an endless abundance of thought-provoking, inspiring, and sometimes humorous, message. Some hit home; some hit home HARD.

I found some interesting sayings online.

- Don't be like a blister and only show up when the work's all done.
- Forbidden fruit creates many jams.
- Forgive your enemies; it will mess with their mind.
- Get rich quick. Count your blessings!
- Honk if you love Jesus. Text while driving if you want to meet him.
- If humans came from apes, why are there still apes?
- It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
- It's not how you start, it's how you finish that counts.
- Admitting a mistake is not a fault, failing to correct it is.

Have you seen one of these signs and wanted to memorize it, write it down or capture it on your phone? I saw the following coming home from the San Antonio Livestock Show that stated, "Life is not a dress rehearsal. Life is now."

In last month's newsletter I mentioned that "Once a child is in my class, I will always refer to him as 'one of my kids' - even when he is grown" and shared my thoughts on this statement. I received a text from a fellow agriculture science teacher commenting on the article. The teacher said, "Just read the VATAT News. Ur a jerk. Made me reflect too much." I thought to myself, was this compliment or a complaint? Or did it hit home?

"Life is not a dress rehearsal. Life is now." I had the opportunity to attend the 2013 Day at the Capitol with my students recently. I found it enjoyable and educational

(and hope my kids did as well). They had the opportunity to sit in the Senate gallery prior to the Declarations made from the floor honoring the Texas FFA and hear a portion of a Senate committee hearing on mental health problems. Some could not believe what they were hearing, and some were bored. All were educated in the governmental process and how it works. I highly suggest you get your kids involved next year.

Prior to leaving and picking up our t-shirts at the East Entrance, I couldn't help but take my kids to the Peace Officers Memorial on the northeast corner of the Capitol grounds. On this wall is inscribed the name of "one of my kids" - Micheal Ray Eakin ~ End of Watch: Tuesday, September 29, 1998. I had shared Micheal's story with my classes - his life, his FFA career (Past State Officer 92-93), and the senseless way his life was taken. I hope my kids now realize that I care for them. They will always be one of my kids and that "Life is not a dress rehearsal. Life is now."

One last message seen on a church sign read "You're on this planet for a purpose. Find it."

### Alumni News

Are you still having problems submitting your Alumni dues? Have you contacted anyone at the Texas FFA with your dilemma? Why do you not have an Alumni affiliate?

Go to the Texas FFA Alumni website ([www.texasffaalumni.ffanow.org](http://www.texasffaalumni.ffanow.org)) to find out how to charter an Alumni program and the awards, grants, and scholarships available to active programs OR friend us on Facebook.

The deadline for award applications is June 1.



# Texas Young Farmers Update

## From the President's Pen

*Barry Choate, Texas Young Farmers President*

An old gentleman full of wisdom sent this story to me this week, and I want to share it with everyone. Story telling once was a gift that seems to be disappearing in a time of mass communication. A text message or a tweet may get the job done, but many lessons were learned and much wisdom shared by storytelling on the back porch or riding through the pasture. We all need to slow down and tell a story every once in a while.

### My Favorite Animal

Our teacher asked what my favorite animal was. I said, "fried chicken." She told me I wasn't funny. But she couldn't have been right, because everyone else laughed. My parents told me to always tell the truth. I did. Fried chicken is my favorite animal.

I told my dad what happened, and he said my teacher was probably a member of PETA. He said they love animals very much. I do, too - especially chicken, pork and beef. Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal's office. I told him what happened, and he also laughed. Then, he told me not to do it again.

The next day in class my teacher asked me what my favorite **live** animal was. I told her it was a chicken. She asked me why, so I told her it was my favorite animal, because you

could make it into fried chicken. She sent me back to the principal's office. He laughed, and told me not to do it again. I don't understand. My parents taught me to be honest, but my teacher doesn't like it when I am.

Today, my teacher asked me to tell her what famous person I admired most.

I told her, "Colonel Sanders." Guess where I am now...

To be honest with you, Texas Young Farmers has the potential to do great things. We don't need a case of tunnel vision when we get to work on a certain task. The wisdom I took from stories I heard growing up was to take pride in your work, always finish what you start and "talk less and say more." If we will do some of these things and even be brutality honest at times, there is no limit on what we can accomplish.

The National Institute Committee met in Mexia last month and held a planning meeting for San Antonio 2013. We have a great state to showcase and have much interest in the event. I hope Texans will show up and help us with the big crowd we are expecting. This is similar to storytelling. Sometimes you have to slow down and take a look around. You might have missed something.

And if you are wondering, yes, I love fried chicken.



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## Texas Young Farmers Convention Photos



Outgoing Area VI Vice President Joyce Kirby of Mt. Vernon-Salttillo Young Farmer Chapter and Area III Outgoing President Connie Koopmann of the Schulenburg Young Farmer Chapter are pictured above.



Tracy Hammons of the Cumby Young Farmer Chapter was the winner in the Photo Contest - Agriculture at Work.



Lance Hausenfluck of the Bryan Young Farmer Chapter was the winner in the Ag Expressions Essay Contest.



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## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

### April 2013

- 1st - 4th** - STAAR Testing
- 1st** - Swine Tag Order Begins
- 15th** - FFA Chorus, Chronicle, and Ambassador applications due
- 24th** - Deadline for Steer Tag Orders - TAMU

### May 2013

- 3rd** - State CDEs - SHSU
- 4th** - State CDEs - Texas A&M, College Station
- 31st** - Late swine tag order ends - Austin

### June 2013

- 1st** - Public Speaking entry deadline
- 1st - 7th** - State Fair Priority Tags, Fax only - Austin
- 8th - 12th** - State Leadership Conference
- 12th - 14th** - State Degree Check
- 13th** - State Scholarship Selection Interviews
- 18th** - Agriscience fair deadline
- 30th** - Last day to validate swine

Vocational Agriculture  
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 of Texas

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