

## CSCOPE offers better structure for improvement

It is with enthusiasm that we look at the developments that have taken place in the Ennis Independent School District's efforts to improve this year.

Perhaps the biggest is the adoption of the CSCOPE curriculum management program, which puts forward the glittering promise of a unified program that teaches with continuity from grade to grade. That is a simple concept, surely, but difficult in practice for any number of reasons to truly achieve in a complete way.

Training teachers now on the ins and outs of the system is wise. While we believe in the shift, it is certain to require some time for teachers to get used to it.

We're unmistakably for improvement of schooling in general, and that can mean better classroom instruction, better top-down management and all areas in between.

*Our Point of View*

Effectively trading a single paid position's salary for a program subscription that can solve a number of educational woes if applied correctly seems fair. In our opinion, it seems like a pretty good deal.

CSCOPE offers teachers a guided path for instruction from grade to grade that can save students and teachers alike a mountain of time. Consider how much effort at the start of each school year goes into re-teaching (or perhaps teaching for the first time) material that is ideally covered in a prior grade. All of us surely remember that from our time in the public school system, and that is where a curriculum alignment can regain us all time. That doesn't mean there won't be refresher units for complex concepts, but the points won't need to be belabored if the system works as it should.

It can be argued that putting teachers on a "set of rails" to guide their work in critical instruction areas might be too restrictive and ultimately hurtful. While we believe in the need to have flexibility for a teacher's passions to come through in their work, having clearly defined instructional roadmaps going from grade to grade to grade will give the district vital alignment that can help improve the overall learning experience for students. Ultimately, that's our biggest concern.



## Setting record straight on SCHIP

I have dedicated my time in Congress to improving the lives of the people in the 6th District — especially children.

From helping raise money for projects like the Boys and Girls Club's new home in Navarro County to expanding health care coverage to low-income kids across the country, I want to make sure the future of our country gets the care and attention that they need.

In 1997, I supported giving underprivileged children the medical treatment they needed by creating the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). This was a bipartisan effort between a Republican Congress and a Democratic president.

Ten years later, right before the program was going to lapse, I took charge. Myself and U.S. Rep. Nathan Deal (who is now Governor of Georgia) fought to keep the program in check. Some wanted to expand this kids program to include adults. Using the framework I laid out with my colleagues, we made sure the money and help went to those children who needed it most.

The program was successful,

but two years later a new law signed by President Obama allowed it to grow — eventually opening the door to more waste, fraud and abuse.

It not only made sure low-income kids got coverage, but set up a bonus program that relaxed the eligibility requirements and paid states extra money for every new child enrolled — whether they truly need the help or not. Examples of these weakened rules included:

- Eliminating an assets test in SCHIP
- Tossing out the in-person interview requirement

The government's Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which oversees SCHIP, recently estimated that there are more than \$15 billion in improper payments in the Medicaid program associated with eligibility review errors. That waste of taxpayer money is only exacerbated by the creation of the performance bonus payments and the loosening of the eligibility qualifications. SCHIP is susceptible to the same kind of fraud.

I believe we must do everything we can to ensure the integrity of programs like this to

ensure that kids who really need these services get the necessary care; that starts by requiring that eligibility reviews are done well and consistently.

Last week I tried to fix this healthcare slush fund set up by the President by introducing an amendment which would simply stop those bonus payments from continuing.

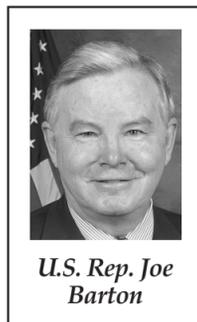
This makes sure there are no longer federal incentives to decrease the integrity of SCHIP and instead ensure that only those that are truly in need receive help through this critical program.

This would save taxpayers \$400 million within the next year, without taking away any money from programs that directly improve the health and wellness of vulnerable children.

Let me reiterate that: My amendment does not take a dime from any child eligible for SCHIP. It stops fraudsters from lining their pockets with money that is not theirs.

I am dedicated to helping those who need it most, but if we don't cut waste, fraud and abuse from our social programs, these safety nets will collapse leaving everyone vulnerable.

*U.S. Rep. Joe Barton represents the Sixth Congressional District and lives in Ennis.*



U.S. Rep. Joe Barton



## WRITE TO US!

The Ennis Daily News encourages readers to submit letters to the editor about local issues that interest them.

All submissions should include the writer's name, city of residence and daytime phone number for verification.

Anonymous letters will not be published and the editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of any letter.

You can mail your letter to Ennis Daily News, PO Box 100, Ennis, 75120; fax it to us at 972-875-9747; email us at editor@ennisdailynews.com or you can bring it by the office located at 213 N. Dallas St.

The opinions expressed by our readers may not necessarily reflect the position of the Ennis Daily News.

## May is perfect for Texas tourism

May is a great month to reflect on how tourism affects our state and Ennis! That is why we at the City of Ennis Convention and Visitors Bureau are also celebrating National Tourism Week from May 5-13. With the upcoming events at the Texas Motorplex (Super Chevy Show on May 12) and the National Polka Festival on May 25-27. Ennis will be alive again with visitors as they seek the tastes, sight, and sounds of these exciting events. What a great time it will be for all!

Many of you may have noticed a lot of new faces in town in April. The streets were brimming with visitors as they shop, ate, and then took a country drive on the Ennis Blue-bonnet Trail.

With the influx of these visitors hopefully came an increase in sales for the entire city from the specialty shops

downtown to the restaurants and convenience stores. Visitors came from all over the state, across the United States, and even from other countries. It was a pleasure meeting these visitors and watching them enjoy our charming city. A special thanks to all of our super volunteers that supported our tourism efforts during the Ennis Blue-bonnet Trails.

In celebration of the Texas (and National) Travel and Tourism Week, the Ennis Railroad and Cultural Heritage Museum will host a free open house on Saturday, May 12 from 10 am-4 pm.

We invite everyone to come see this great asset to our community and to experience the colorful history of the railroad and our heritage. Take advantage of this day to bring your family, friends and relatives to

the museum and enjoy a fun family day.

Also, in celebration of Texas and National Travel and Tourism Week, we would like to invite you to "Be a Tourist in your own Town!" Take a tour of the Ennis Railroad and Cultural Heritage Museum, catch a play or musical at the Ennis Public Theatre, enjoy the drag races at the Texas Motorplex, camp, fish and swim at Lake Bardwell and enjoy our beautiful parks. You just have to use a little imagination. Remember to visit us during Texas Travel and Tourism Week or anytime at the Ennis Convention and Visitors Bureau at 002 East Ennis Ave.

In our visitor center, we have a lot of brochures on attractions and things to do all over the great state of Texas so we invite you to come take a look. Hope to see you soon.

*Gina Rokas is the director of tourism for the city of Ennis Convention and Visitors Bureau.*



Gina Rokas

## The Ennis Daily News



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