

"The Cat's Tale"

December 2014

As the semester winds down and we reflect on the first half of the school year, we have many accomplishments to be proud of. Our students and teachers are working hard, and we're looking forward to a successful and positive second semester.

Each year there are many bills filed at the capital concerning education. It seems that the proverbial "education football" is always being kicked back and forth by politicians with their own views and agendas. This year will undoubtedly be the same. There are issues that we should all be aware of including consolidation, funding, and local control.

I am very concerned that there have been interim studies concerning the consolidation of administrative costs. This is first step other states have taken before shutting down schools. Without a strong leader at the helm a school will have no protection from this fate. There should be great concern that our schools that are already underfunded will have more unfunded mandates placed on them. One might look at a small school and think consolidation would be a possibility. Before that happens we should consider the social impact for the community and the students they serve. Moreover, we should consider the economical impact of losing the center of a community and the long term impact that would have on the state.

The erosion of the tax base that funds schools is also a great concern. Everyone appreciates lower taxes but we also enjoy the services they provide. It will be a challenge for those proposing tax cuts to find alternate methods of funding important services. I would challenge the legislators to find the alternate methods before eroding a tax base that is already insufficient to serve our children.

Another great concern for school funding is the fall off of oil and gas prices. Our legislators have put a good many of our eggs in the gross production, "oil and gas", basket. Anyone who has lived in Oklahoma for any amount of time knows that the oil and gas business is volatile and the revenues produced from this production are ever changing. Our legislators are gambling heavily that the fluctuation we have consistently seen in this area will not happen. Those who ignore the mistakes of the past are bound to repeat them in the future.

Like many others, I was very sad to hear of the issues in the Oklahoma City Douglas vs. Locust Grove football playoff game. Mistakes happen in every game. This is a rare occurrence where the mistake happened in a playoff game and also at the end of the game where it was so very visible and relevant to the outcome. I feel for all of those involved. Having played, I feel for the players who were hurt by the injustice of being improperly penalized. Having coached I feel for the men and women who put so much of their time and energy into their kids. Having officiated I feel for the officials as well. I never wanted to get a call wrong especially when it impacted a game so heavily. In the end, life is not always fair and we have to learn to deal with issues like this. Hopefully all who were involved will learn from this event and learn from the experience.

Our construction of safe room/classrooms is progressing nicely. We are on schedule and on budget. The high school rooms should be complete by the end of winter. The elementary rooms should be shortly behind them. The agriculture classroom will not be far behind that. All is going well and we are happy with the progress. We look forward to the opening of these needed facilities.

Madill School will be on break from December 19th thru January 6. Our staff will report back on January 5th for in-service and training and our students will report back on January 6th.

We want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Follow me on Twitter at [jon tuck@Jtuckj](#)

It's a great day to be a WILDCAT!

Yours in Education,

Mr. Tuck