

# THE ROCKET

Rockcastle County High School

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## SBDM researches alternative to current grade policy

BY NATALEE TAYLOR

Report cards.

We all hate it when the end of the nine weeks rolls around, scared to see what grades we have received: A, B, C, D...and the possibility of that dreadful F.

However, a suggestion by Site Based Decision Making Council Member Ms. Connie Riddle could change the way grades are issued at RCHS.

Currently, grades are issued every nine weeks, four times a year. This could be changed so grades are issued only twice a year, every 18 weeks.

Ms. Riddle got this idea from her niece who teaches at Corbin High School. Ms. Riddle said that this was the way that Corbin High School was set up.

"It gives 18 weeks to pass the class, so the first 9 weeks would be time to adjust to their teachers," says Ms. Riddle.

Before the SBDM can make any decisions regarding the change, RCHS Guidance Counselors Janice Miller and Dale Whitaker will have to contact other schools to see how this method could benefit RCHS.

Ms. Miller believes that this method would be a good advantage for the teachers and students of RCHS.

"It would give the students more time to pass that class."

She also feels this method could be beneficial by eliminating problems with students' schedules.

There are several other factors that must be considered.

There are some classes that last only one nine weeks each semester. For example, health, P.E. and the practical living classes are only scheduled for nine weeks.

If approved, this policy would not go in effect until the next school year.

What do you think?  
Let us know in a letter  
to the editor!

## Rockcastle families wait for news

*What many families can only imagine, many others are experiencing*

BY COURTNEY ALEXANDER

Nearly two months have passed since the tragic terrorist attacks on September 11. Two months of heart-wrenching stories of lives lost, memorial services, anthrax threats, and the unsuccessful capture of Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and his followers.

As most Americans sit at home and watch for news of the U.S. airstrikes in Afghanistan, many are saying goodbye to loved ones who

have been called by the military to defend the freedom Americans so fiercely possess.

Several from Rockcastle are on high alert, if not serving actively already. The fear of leaving home for an unknown amount of time is certainly not a comforting feeling for those families. There are so many families and communities directly affected by the United States' declaration of war—here are

two of those stories.

Kris Taylor, son of RCHS JROTC instructor Sgt. Major Keith Taylor and his wife Jenny (also employed at RCHS), is on high alert. Taylor, a sergeant with the U.S. Army, is currently stationed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.

Sergeant Taylor has served in the army for the past four years, and his term was supposed to end this past July 2001. However, Taylor opted to serve until March because his fiancée is from Hawaii, so he was on active duty during the attacks.

According to Ms. Taylor, Sergeant Taylor is guarding various entrances in Hawaii for 16-18 hours daily—on top of his regular duties.

"He wants to go fight if his unit is called to go," she said.

Ms. Taylor is concerned for all the soldiers and their families, and would like for Kris to come home as any mother would. After talking with her son, Ms. Taylor described the atmosphere in Hawaii as very tense, much like it is all over the U.S. But everyone has faith in President Bush and this country.

"Remember all the military and their families in your prayers," urged Ms. Jenny. The Taylor family, who moved 16 times during Sgt. Major Taylor's 23 years of military service, know firsthand the trying situations many military families face.

So as the Taylors wait for news of their son, who's in limbo at the present time, another Rockcastle County family waits for news of their son's future.

RCHS senior and JROTC member Josh Whicker's brother Jason is a member of the Kentucky National Guard. Jason, who is in the infantry, is also currently on high alert and all his gear is set to go at the base in London if he's called to fight. Traditionally, the infantry is the first to go.

However, according to Josh, the chances of his brother going overseas are pretty slim. First the active army is called to fight, then the reserves, and lastly the national guard, since the it's the Guard's job



Kris Taylor



Jason Whicker

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## Rockets trail Hounds by 8

BY CASSIE SMITH

The Rockcastle Rockets have dominated the field of sports for several years. However, the recent CATS scores show the Rock trailing behind competitors in the class room.

According to the Commonwealth Accountability Test System, RCHS is ranked ninth among neighboring schools. The Corbin Red Hounds, our big rivals, are ranked number one.

Obviously, CATS scores are very important, but also very confusing. What is CATS, exactly? What is it used for? Who does it effect?

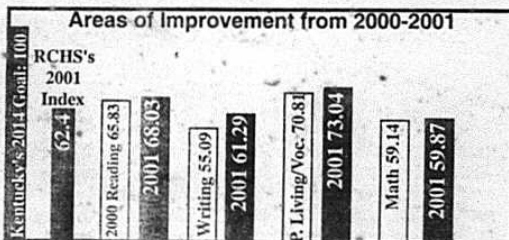
The CATS testing is used to assess teaching skills and student learning. All student scores are combined to calculate the school's score, or the accountability index.

The accountability index is a combination of the academic index (areas of study plus CTBS scores) and the nonacademic index (attendance, dropout rate, etc.) The accountability index is calculated after two testing periods which equals one testing cycle.

"Our scores are decent," says RCHS Principal John Hale, "but they're not as good as they could be."

Our score from the last testing period was 62.4. This placed us in the state's fiftieth percentile.

Of the final score, subjects such as Math, Science, and Social Studies are the most emphasized, making each accountable for 14.25% of the final score. Writing follows at 11.4%, and subjects such as Arts and Humanities and Practical Liv-



ing weigh in at 7.13% of the final score. So, where did our scores drop?

Math and science dropped, with science scores falling four points from the previous testing period. Ms. Harmon, head of the Science Department, says that the Science Department is disappointed.

Social Studies scores fell six points. According to Mrs. Coleman, head of the Social Studies Department, one thing that may have effected the scores is the fact

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