

Dear Editor:

I read in the Nov. 28, 2013, edition of the Wauneta Breeze about how Wauneta-Palisade Schools used \$13,216 in grant money to purchase iPads “for every high school student and teacher.” The article went on to mention that the superintendent said the grant money paid for “approximately 90 percent” of these devices.

The students were quoted as being “very excited.” I’m glad they were excited. Yet that excitement is rather like children being excited that they get candy for dessert. While candy is delicious, it does not contribute any significant nutrition.

Similarly, while iPads are fun, in my opinion, they do not contribute significantly to education, to actual learning. I believe it is this exact focus, a focus on high-tech devices rather than real learning, that has contributed to U.S. students’ rankings where we have slipped internationally from 24th to 29th place in science, with similar results in math, and an equally appalling 10th place to 20th place in reading.

We in Wauneta are in a position to do something about this.

When my last letter to the editor was printed in the Breeze, a letter where I commented on our not-so-great test scores at Wauneta-Palisade Schools, I received overwhelming positive feedback all over town.

In that letter I mentioned that I had called the superintendent of our schools and offered my services to help bring up these low test scores. Test scores are an area I know something about.

When I taught GED at the fifth-ranked junior college in the nation, I used a textbook and an old-fashioned chalkboard, and my results were that I had exactly twice as many students pass the test as my colleague who used programmed texts (those books that presented material,

Writer: Focus on high-tech devices rather than real learning, has contributed to U.S. students' rankings

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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asked questions, and gave answers on the next page, a useless tool that was abandoned decades ago) and computers.

I never got a phone call back from the school. Call me old-fashioned, but along with good old-fashioned teaching that brings good old-fashioned learning, I believe in the common-courtesy practice of returning phone calls.

Thank you,

Patricia Holder

Wauneta