

April 2006

Welcome to KAIRS Today.

This is the monthly electronic newsletter of the Kansas Association of Religious and Independent Schools (KAIRS). KAIRS TODAY is sent as a service to KAIRS members across Kansas.

Our goal is to keep you informed about legislative, regulatory and national news, and educational issues. Contact Corey Reese, editor, with questions or concerns – crkairs@yahoo.com.

APRIL ISSUE:

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MINUTES OF KAIRS SPRING MEETING

The Spring general membership meeting was held on April 12 in Topeka at the Lutheran – Missouri Synod District offices. The meeting centered primarily on KAIRS public policy and our new Funding Principles. Our thanks to Karen Norton who provided the notes from the meeting.

April 12, 2006

Members in attendance: Jane Limback, Jim Bradshaw, Terry Tilson, Pamela Nummela, Jan Floeke, Boyd Beck, Nick Compagnone, Bob Voboril, Cindy Patton, Karen Norton

Guests: John Craig (ACSI), Tom Adams

The meeting was called to order by Karen Norton. Terry Tilson gave the opening prayer.

Minutes for the last meeting were not available.

It was moved by Terry Tilson and seconded by Jim Bradshaw to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion approved.

Public Relations:

Discussion was held regarding the proposal by Corey Reese for her ongoing work with KAIRS. It was moved by Bob Voboril and seconded by Jim Bradshaw to accept Corey's proposal. Motion approved.

Convention:

Discussion was held regarding the convention. The date for the convention will be February 12, 13, and it was decided to hold the convention at the Ramada Inn.

Association of Christian Schools International Representative details private commission working with Texas and Oklahoma for accreditation. John Craig, District representative for ACSI, gave a presentation about how private schools are accredited in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. In both states, a private school commission works with the state departments to provide accreditation for its schools. In Texas, it is an agreement with the State Commissioner; in Oklahoma, the commission is established by law. Discussion was held about the possibility of KAIRS moving this agenda forward. It was determined that we have three choices:

change state law, get the State Board to acknowledge us as a commission, or become the accrediting body ourselves.

KSHSAA

We discussed the committee that KSHSAA has convened regarding recruiting among private and public schools. We are encouraged that the conversation is occurring.

Public Policy Agenda

Bob Voboril took the floor to discuss our Public Policy agenda and Funding Principles. We discussed the mission of KAIRS, and we determined:

1. we all want quality education
2. we want to work on common issues
3. we want to cooperate
4. we want productive relationships with each other and with the State Department.

We discussed our Core Values and we decided that we need to revisit our mission and state our Core Values.

Funding Principles

We discussed our Funding Principles,(see copy below). To the second one, it was decided to change it to read “We are not willing to alter our standards or our admission requirements in order to gain financial assistance for our families,” and we decided to add one more:

All schools should comply with federal, state, and local statues regarding employment, non-discrimination, civil rights, and health and safety.

We then examined the three basic ways our schools could earn funds:

1. Vouchers
2. Tax credits for parents
3. Corporate and parental tax credits

We determined that for most of us a voucher system would not be advantageous, as it would probably require that many of us change our admission requirements. Tax credits for parents would make our middle-income parents happy, but it would not increase the school's coffers. Corporate tax credits hold considerable promise as a way for all schools to increase their income.

In order for us to even approach the State, we must know who we are and for what we are hoping. We decided that each group (ACSI Schools, Independent Schools, Salina Diocese, Wichita Diocese, Lutheran Schools) should develop both a strategic plan and a public relations plan. In the fall, the executive committee will then discuss these issues and work on a plan for going to the State.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Norton

KAIRS CORE FUNDING PRINCIPLES

DRAFT 4-13-06

Families should have educational freedom – that is, the right to choose the school that is best for their child regardless of income or residence.

1. The first responsibility for funding non-public schools lies with the organization that sponsors the school; not the federal or the state government.
2. We are not willing to alter our mission, our admission requirements, our core values, or our standards in order to gain financial assistance from the government.
3. KAIRS schools should comply with federal, state, and local requirements that currently apply to private schools, including those related to civil rights, non-discrimination, student health and safety, and background checks for employees. However, state regulations become unfair when they force non-public schools to comply with requirements for public education without public funding.
4. Funding for education should follow the child just as it does at the post-secondary education level and in most other countries. Funding should vary with family financial need, with priority given to families of modest means and middle-income. The new system of massive court-ordered financial assistance to public education threatens the balance of school funding so drastically that some of our schools may not be able to compete fairly for teachers, students, resources, or (especially) for families of modest means.
5. Each KAIRS school needs to tell its story better to its constituents and to those who make funding decisions.
6. Each KAIRS school needs to work toward endowments and other third-source funding to reduce per-pupil tuition so that they

can serve a broader base of students.

7. The State of Kansas needs to use tax policy to provide tax credits for contributions to education by individuals and corporations.

RESOLUTION: that KAIRS develop a strategic plan to implement these core principles.

ADOPTED: February 7, 2006

IMPORTANT 2005-06 KAIRS DATES

February 12 - 13, 2007 KAIRS Annual Meeting - Topeka

KAIRS 2005-06 OFFICERS

President: Karen Norton, The Independent School, Wichita

Vice President: Nick Compagnone, Salina Catholic Diocese

Secretary: Bill Dieckhoff, Holy Cross Lutheran School, Wichita

Treasurer: David Swank, Trinity Academy, Wichita

Annual Meeting Co-Secretaries: Shelli Kadel, Wichita Friends School & Nick Compagnone, Salina Catholic Diocese