

## DECEMBER 2006

Welcome to *KAIRS Today* 2006-07.

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. Each issue will also be available on the KAIRS Web site at <http://www.kairs.org/>.

Our goal is to keep you informed about legislative, regulatory and national news, and educational issues. Please look for this between the 20th and 25th of each month. Contact Corey Reese, editor, with questions or concerns – [crkairs@yahoo.com](mailto:crkairs@yahoo.com).

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All!

### THE DECEMBER ISSUE:

1. ANNUAL MEETING – “KAIRS - Schools of Transformation”
2. REGISTER TODAY FOR THE KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING
3. NEW KSDE COORDINATOR AIMS TO ASSIST NON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
4. PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE – KANSAS COMMISSION RESIGNS
5. IMPORTANT 2005-06 KAIRS DATES
6. KAIRS 2005-06 OFFICERS

### ANNUAL MEETING – “KAIRS - Schools of Transformation”

It's time to register for the KAIRS Annual Meeting in Topeka! The meeting is scheduled for February 12 and 13 with the theme of “KAIRS - Schools of Transformation.” The meeting is a highlight of our year with thought-provoking speakers, worthwhile interchanges between professional peers, an opportunity to honor our outstanding educators and time for building professional relationships with other educators throughout the state.

This year the theme of our Annual Meeting is “KAIRS - Schools of Transformation. The focus of the conference will be to identify how our schools are part of the educational challenges of the 21st Century. Sessions will cover topics that include school mission, accountability and communications.

Additionally accreditation options for private schools in the state will be

addressed in a round table discussion. Different accreditation agencies will be represented.

Our Keynote Speaker will be Philip P. Kerstetter, Ph.D., President and CEO, of Kansas Wesleyan University, He will discuss the impact of faith-based institutions of learning.

Dr. Kerstetter was appointed the seventeenth president of Kansas Wesleyan University in 2002. His career in public and private higher education spans more than 30 years. His previous appointments include the Executive Associate to the President at Thiel College – located in rural northwestern Pennsylvania, and several positions at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania including Director of Institutional Research and Planning and Dean of Education.

He received his Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; his Master of Education in College Counseling from the University of Delaware, and his Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education Administration from Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C.

Staci Warren, the new Coordinator of Educational Alternatives for the Kansas Department of Education, will also be a guest on the program. Ms. Warren will participate in a give-and-take session with the membership. (See the article below that introduces Ms. Warren)

Ms. Warren holds a bachelor of science in elementary education and a master of science in elementary education and reading from Pittsburg State University. She also completed an Administration Certification from Washburn University.

The meeting will follow much of its traditional format with check-in beginning at 9 a.m. on Monday, February 12. The State of KAIRS address begins at (?). The vendor exhibit hall will be open for viewing, beginning at 11:15.

After exhibits and lunch, Dr. Kerstetter will deliver his keynote address at 1 p.m. The afternoon will feature additional sessions. The Hall of Fame Banquet follows at 6:30 p.m.

The Hall of Fame Banquet on Monday evening will feature the presentation of the 2007 KAIRS Distinguished Teachers. If you haven't attended one of these inspirational banquets, plan to do so this year.

Tuesday, February 13, will begin with breakfast and the annual business meeting. Roundtable discussions and a legislative forum with a Kansas School board member will complete our meeting.

The two days - February 12 and 13 - will be filled with knowledgeable speakers, good fellowship and spirited dialogue. You won't want to miss it. Send in your registration today!

### **REGISTER TODAY FOR THE KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING**

The Executive Committee has been putting together another terrific Annual Meeting in Topeka. Registration forms are attached to this newsletter in pdf format. (Please reply ASAP if you cannot open your attachment.) Please contact Shelli Kadel, Annual Meeting Co-Secretary, at [kadelshelli@juno.com](mailto:kadelshelli@juno.com) with questions.

Two important dates:

Monday, January 16, Final date hotel rooms are being held at the Topeka Ramada Inn. Please call 800-432-2424 to make your reservation.

Wednesday, January 25, All meeting registration forms due back to Shelli Kadel.

### **NEW KSDE COORDINATOR AIMS TO ASSIST NON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Last summer, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) underwent an internal reorganization and in the process created the Division for School Innovations. At that time, Staci Warren, who was serving as a reading consultant at the KSDE, was hired as the Coordinator of Educational Alternatives.

As noted in last month's KAIRS Today, one of Ms. Warren's responsibilities is to serve as a liaison between KAIRS and the KSDE. Her responsibilities also extend well beyond her relationship with KAIRS and include assisting charter and virtual schools as well.

"My duties are diverse. They include working with charter, virtual, private, parochial and other accredited non public schools. One of my goals when I first came to KSDE was to help bridge communication and assist the accredited non public schools," Ms. Warren said.

Ms. Warren comes to her position at the KSDE with a wealth of educational administrative experience. Most recently, she was the principal Sacred Heart School, Topeka, 2000 – 2006, and principal of Holy Name School, Topeka, 1995 – 2000. Prior to this, she was a Title I Coordinator for the Topeka Public Schools where she worked with 26 elementary schools, administration and staff, ensured that federal and state

regulations were followed, and maintained a \$3 million budget.

She holds a bachelor of science in elementary education and a master of science in elementary education and reading from Pittsburg State University. She also completed an Administration Certification from Washburn University.

“My experience, I believe, has given me a more rounded view of education. What matters most in what we do, are the children of our state,” she said. “My aim is to provide information and be readily accessible to anyone who needs questions answered.”

Ms. Warren indicated that the new Division of School Innovations, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Larry Englebrick, has three separate “teams.” These include Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Improvement and Support Teams (IST) and Research and Evaluation (R&E).

She explained, “Our world is changing and to keep up with it, we need to become or strengthen our communities of learners. Learners are the teachers and administrators as well as students.”

Kansas educators may find that they have more direct interaction with the first two of the three teams. As one of its responsibilities, the PLC will work with the regional service centers to assist districts in creating opportunities for professionals to come together and create more innovative approaches in education. The IST has the specific responsibility of assisting schools or districts that have not met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years.

According to the KDSE website, the Research and Evaluation Team will assist the State Board of Education, State Department of Education, legislature, and public with planning, research, evaluation, and assessments.

Ms. Warren will be a featured guest at the KAIRS February Annual meeting in Topeka. “I am on the program at the KAIRS conference in February at a listening session. I invite anyone who has ideas, concerns or comments to attend and share them with me. I may not have the answer right then, but I will find the answer and reply once I obtain it. Maybe KAIRS and other organizations can assist me in how we can complement one another and work together.”

## **PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE**

### **Kansas Commissioner of Education Resigns**

*From the Kansas State Department of Education:*

TOPEKA, November 22, 2006 The State Board of Education has accepted, with regret, the resignation of Commissioner Bob L. Corkins. Corkins' resignation is effective at the end of business today.

Corkins was appointed by the Kansas State Board of Education in October 2005. During his tenure as commissioner, Corkins oversaw the reorganization of the Agency to help Kansas schools better address the challenges they face under the No Child Left Behind legislation. Corkins worked with agency staff and educators throughout the state to design and implement new assessment tests. He also successfully secured funding from the legislature to implement a database system over a three-year period that will fully integrate state database systems.

State Board Chairman Dr. Steve Abrams called Corkins' service this past year "exemplary." "He has done a great job," Abrams said.

In resigning from his position, Corkins thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as Commissioner of Education. He made the following statement;

"My gratitude for the opportunity you've given me this past year is profound," Corkins wrote in his resignation letter to the Board. "I have approached every day with a solemn respect for the duties of this role. Many substantial decisions were required during my term and I have not had a moment's regret over any. Much of my confidence has been due to sound counsel from my colleagues at the Agency and to the positive influence of Chairman Abrams' wisdom. I sincerely wish everyone well."

In accepting Corkins' resignation, the Board also voted to give Corkins a 30-day severance package and appointed Deputy Commissioner Dale Dennis to serve as Interim Commissioner until a new commissioner is named. The Board expects to begin the search early next year.

*From Interim Commissioner, Dale Dennis:*

"KSDE serves as the administrative arm of the Kansas State Board of Education. As such, our focus is on improving student learning and serving the public through enhanced customer service. The staff at KSDE provides leadership, technical assistance, and quality assurance to improve student performance and is committed to closing the achievement gap. It is our goal to equip all Kansas students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in the twenty-first century."

*From the Lawrence Journal World, November 22, 2006:*

As commissioner, he (Corkins) led a reorganization of the department, creating a School Innovation Division, and has continued to support increasing the number of charter schools, which are freed from some state regulations to encourage innovation.

### **IMPORTANT 2006-07 KAIRS DATES**

Feb 12-13: Annual Meeting, Topeka

April 12: General Meeting – Andy Thompkins Speaker, Topeka

### **KAIRS 2006-07 OFFICERS**

President: Nick Compagnone, Salina Catholic Diocese

Vice President: Pam Nummela, Bethany Lutheran School, Overland Park

Secretary: Bill Dieckhoff, Holy Cross Lutheran School, Wichita

Treasurer: David Swank, Trinity Academy, Wichita

Annual Meeting Secretary: Shelli Kadel, Wichita Friends School