

**April 2007**  
**Welcome to *KAIRS Today* 2007.**

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 26th of each month. Contact Corey Reese, editor, with questions or concerns – [crkairs@yahoo.com](mailto:crkairs@yahoo.com).

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**STRATEGIC PLANNING HELPS ACCOMPLISH SCHOOLS VISION**  
*Former Kansas Commissioner of Education offers practical insights.*

Strategic planning differs from long-range planning in that it challenges a school or school system to take a broader view of where it is going, how will it get there, and how it will know if it is successful in accomplishing its goals. According to Dr. Andy Tompkins, this is a process that can establish guiding principals for schools to use as benchmarks of success.

Andy Tompkins, Ed.D. associate professor in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Kansas School of Education, and former Kansas Commissioner of Education, elaborated on this topic at the KAIRS General Membership meeting on April 16.

This aspect of planning encompasses more than the needs of the upcoming year or two, although those needs are often folded into the process as it develops, Dr. Tompkins said. It involves the mission, vision and values of a school, and also includes the context of a school's particular situation.

He told the group that strategic planning could be called the "wouldn't it be great

if” or “preferred future” of a school. “There’s a distinction between the mission and the vision of our schools. The mission is ‘why we exist.’ The vision is ‘what we want to become,’” he explained. “To reach this you have to begin to think beyond just what needs to happen in the classroom this year and next. It’s a broader view.”

He continued, “You will probably want to include an environmental scan or a ‘situational assessment.’ I like to think of it as, ‘What is happening inside and outside of organization? What are the trends such as housing or diversity of our population?’ Consulting organizations sometimes characterize this as a school’s SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.”

While many schools bring in outside consulting groups, Dr. Tompkins indicated that the schools themselves could do strategic planning. He suggested, however, that sometimes a school would need an outside facilitator for various aspects of meetings and planning sessions.

He outlined a three-to-five month strategic planning process he’s used successfully when working with school districts. He suggested that this time frame is helpful to keep momentum going.

They began with an initial meeting with the board where a plan (initially developed by a principal or superintendent) was discussed that included four to six main priorities. That plan was then taken to focus groups of various constituencies – teachers, parents, and community members, etc. Surveys could also be used. That data was then collected, processed and taken back to the board for re-evaluation. At this point, some of the goals were changed, based on feedback.

A leadership team – that would include the principal or superintendent, along with the staff that would be involved in executing these changes - then took the data and added “meat” to the skeleton of the plan. Goals, and objectives were added. This report was taken back again to the board for refinement.

Finally, an operational plan was created with resources, timelines, assignment of tasks, and a list of activities. Additionally, success had to be defined – and not simply as the accomplishment of a task. Did it accomplish the over-arching goal?

Dr. Tompkins cautioned that successful strategic planning is done from the “top-down” and would be strongly dependent on the leadership of principals and superintendents. “Are you in agreement that you need to do this? This process has to come from the CEO/head-of-school/superintendent. You can’t get large scale, complex change from bottom-up practices, but beware of the trap of everything coming from the top-down. If you don’t have sufficient bottom-up involvement, you start losing the creativity and momentum of what’s possible.”

“As a principal, you have the best view of every classroom in the building,” he said. “You have a better over-all view of best practices than anyone in the school. Look at the bigger picture and then engage from the bottom-up.”

Dr. Tompkins concluded, “I don’t recommend that you do this when you’re in crises. You need to ask yourself if you are ready to tackle something that’s broader than just what you need to accomplish in the short term.”

For additional reading on the subject, Dr. Tompkins recommended one of his favorite resources on change: Michael Fullan. He also provided references from a (1995) book by William J. Cook, entitled, Strategic Planning for America's Schools. For further professional development in this area, Dr. Tompkins also suggested reviewing marketing ideas from other non-profit organizations, and even contacting universities and asking for reference advice from the campus librarian.

Dr. Tompkins also mentioned a consulting group, with which he is familiar:  
The Cambridge Group, Inc.  
5795 Carmichael Parkway Montgomery, AL 36117  
<http://www.colonialcambridge.com>

## **APRIL 16 MEETING DISCUSSIONS**

### **Accreditation**

This is an on-going topic of primary concern to KAIRS members. As an organization, KAIRS will continue to pursue options for alternative accreditation.

Nick said that in a recent meeting of the Superintendents of the Kansas Catholic dioceses, there was also exploration of this issue. A district accreditation with North Central was proposed as an option.

### **Colleges/Universities as KAIRS Members**

In his report to KAIRS members at the April 16 meeting, Nick reiterated that expanding KAIRS’ base is important. Dr. Philip Kerstetter has submitted a letter to KAIRS requesting that Kansas Wesleyan University become a member of the organization. Currently, KAIRS does not have college or university members. This would require a change in the by-laws of KAIRS.

In talking with other state organizations – and specifically Wisconsin – colleges have been given “Associate membership” status. The by-laws from the Milwaukee-based group could serve as a model for our adjustments. They have agreed to send those by-laws to Nick for review.

Possible ideas for expanding KAIRS membership to this group would include a separate meeting for associate members, who would then attend the Annual meeting with all members. Fee structure was discussed, with the suggestion of a

flat fee for associate members.

Positive aspects would include the assistance of these colleges in redesigning high schools. Student teacher relationships would also be beneficial for teacher recruitment. A closer relationship might also assist colleges in recruiting more students for their colleges and universities. These new members would also have links posted to their institution on the KAIRS website.

A recruitment committee has been formed; Pam Nummela and Terry Tilson will head up the effort. Once the by-laws are changed and approved, future plans include sending invitations and informative KAIRS brochure to all private Kansas colleges to invite them to attend the fall meetings.

### **Early Childhood Education Centers Membership in KAIRS**

The issue of inviting early childhood centers as associate members was also discussed. A list of centers with state licenses could be obtained and centers invited to attend meetings was mentioned. Topic will continue to be pursued through the 2007-08 year.

### **Technology Update**

Bob D'Andrea, Technical Coordinator for the Salina Diocese, reported on the database project he is currently working on with the KAIRS Web master – Leo Johns. The idea is be able to create the KAIRS census and membership directory in a format where members could go on line and input the data, which is stored on the Salina server.

One avenue involved members of the Powerschool system where data could be submitted. DreamWeaver is a software program for customizing the reports. Bob is pursuing these options and may have to obtain new software. He indicated that he and Leo are approximately one month from being operational.

### **General Membership Meetings Broadcasted Via Internet**

The Smoky Valley Virtual Charter School Director, Marla Elmquist, has generously created a permanent meeting room for KAIRS meetings via the Internet. The April 16 meeting was available to all members and Corey Reese, KAIRS Public Relations Director, attended via this new technology. In the upcoming year, other state associations will be invited to attend via the web. CAPE president, Joe McTighe, has expressed interest in attending. KAIRS members are also encouraged to take advantage of this technology for future meetings.

### **Distance Learning**

Bob also reported that the Smoky Valley Virtual Charter School is increasing its distance learning offerings in the upcoming year. Latin, chess, biology, chemistry and physics will all available via the Internet.

## **Topics from Annual Meeting**

Costs of meeting were up and the executive committee is reviewing reasons for expenses exceeding revenue. Vendors were very generous in their gifts/free prizes and will receive additional positive publicity in next year's meeting.

### Ideas for 2008 Annual Meeting

- Possible Theme: Marketing to Different Generations
- Invite New Commissioner
- Section by Lobbyist Mike Farmer, Catholic Conference lobbyist
- Networking with other State Organizations: what are they doing in public policy; strategic planning?

## **KAIRS PRESIDENT ATTENDS ANNUAL CAPE MEETING**

The annual meeting of the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) met in Washington, DC on April 14-16. Dr. Nick Compagnone, KAIRS President, attended and presented a report at the April KAIRS meeting. Following are some of the highlights:

Dr. Nick indicated that the CAPE meeting concentrated on public policy, the vision for private schools nationwide and the issues within the federal department of education. In regard to the Title programs –appropriation bills are being prepared, with several areas have been cut or eliminated. One in particular – enhanced education through technology has been totally eliminated.

### **Federal Funding**

The meeting with the US Department of Education officials discussed government programs that affect private schools. Most federal funds have been diverted to Title I. Title I services will also include secondary schools next year.

The No Child Left Behind Act is up for re-authorization. Most of the legislators suggested that the program would be re-authorized. The main issue is if there will be any modifications.

### **Early Childhood Programs**

In the CAPE network report, most activities in other states have been focusing on Early Childhood programs. Many state governors have endorsed universal preschool programs. This may have some repercussions if the state of Kansas proceeds with an Early Childhood Program. Will existing programs be included?

### **Vision of Schools in the Future**

School change was discussed. All 50 states have stated that they would like to fund full-day Kindergarten and universal pre-schools. This will vary from state to state if they will be public or private. Florida has both and provides funding. This is currently one of the biggest initiatives in education.

## **Restructuring our High Schools**

A study from The National Center on Education and the Economy's (NCEE) New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, entitled Tough Choices or Tough Times, is an innovative look at restructuring our high schools. (See note below regarding this study.) The executive summary is available at [www.skillscommission.org](http://www.skillscommission.org).

The discussion about this report centered on beginning with preschools and teaching core subjects through grade 10. Upon completion of 10th grade, a board examination would be administered that would determine the student's track over the next two years. The examination can be retaken more than once during those post-10th grade years. It is similar to the traditional European model.

Representatives of the CATO institute, and the Heritage Foundation attended the meeting and also discussed what is necessary to make US secondary schools more competitive to compete in the global marketplace. It was noted that language is also important and that our schools should be teaching Chinese.

A major thrust of the meeting addressed the need for strategic planning. The Independent School organization is releasing a new study that indicated a large percentage of private school clientele indicated that if everything was equal, they would go to the public school over the private school.

### **Recruitment for State Education Organizations**

Other state organizations have started to contact preschool and daycare centers to increase membership in their organizations. There are various ways to contact the academically oriented centers and a list from the state licensing office is one way to accomplish this.

### **KAIRS WEBSITE NEWS**

Our Web designer, Leo Johns, has recently developed a KAIRS Blog. We're currently working on having this up by the end of the month, and we will be providing an update when it is "live."

Additionally, Bob D'Andrea, Technology Consultant for Salina Schools, will be working with Mr. Johns to link our website to a server so that members can enter census and directory information. We will alert the membership when this is ready for data input.

### **JOIN THE KAIRS WEB LOG TO DISCUSS NEW EDUCATION STUDY – BEGINNING MAY 1.**

We encourage our members to download the executive summary of the NCEE's New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce study, Tough Choices or Tough Times at [www.skillscommission.org](http://www.skillscommission.org) and to participate in Blog entries

beginning May 1. The report proposes sweeping changes and it would be interesting as an organization to discuss the topic on-line!

### IMPORTANT 2007 KAIRS DATES

Proposed for 07 – 08

August 28: Executive Committee - 10 a.m. – Catholic offices in Wichita

General Meetings

October 2 - 10 a.m.

November 13 - 10 a.m.

April 8, 2008 - 10 a.m.

Annual Meeting

February 11 & 12, 2008

Distinguished Teacher Nominations Dates

Catholics – Contact Dioceses superintendents

Lutherans – Submit nominations to Pam Nummela by November 2

ACSI Schools & Independent School (includes Seventh Day Adventists)–

Nominations to Shelli – November 2

December 3 – All submissions due to KAIRS/Shelli

Hall of Fame Nominations

December 1 – to Nick Compagnone

### KAIRS 2006-07 OFFICERS

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