

## ***KAIRS Today April 2009***

### **Welcome!**

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

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### **APRIL 15 KAIRS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

All KAIRS members are welcome to attend the April 15 Executive Committee Meeting at 10 am in Wichita. The meeting will cover the stimulus package in which federal funds for certain educational programs have increased. A follow up plan regarding future communication with the State Board of Education regarding alternate accreditation will also be addressed.

KAIRS members can utilize a new webinar software program for the meeting in order to attend virtually. It is easy to use, so please reply to Corey Reese at [crkairs@yahoo.com](mailto:crkairs@yahoo.com) so the instructions can be sent to your email address.

### **KAIRS PRESIDENT ATTENDS CAPE MEETING IN DC – FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING DISCUSSED**

KAIRS President, Dr. Nick Compagnone traveled to Washington DC to attend the Council for Private Education (CAPE) meeting in March. He provided the following summary of his meeting. KAIRS is the Kansas representative to CAPE. *(Please see the organization description at the end of the article.)*

Much of the meeting in Washington D.C focused on the stimulus package in which federal funds for certain educational programs have increased. Half of the programs authorized, however, do not apply to private elementary and secondary schools.

There are several Federal programs that allow participation of students enrolled in private schools. These programs include Title1 Part A, IDEA, Part B and Educational Technology.

Federal programs are funded through the SEA (State Educational Agency), which is sent to local school districts. School districts allocate the funding for private schools that reside in the district's boundaries.

Funds are allocated based on demographics of the district including students that are enrolled in private schools. Local Education Authorities (LEA) must share the information concerning allocation of funds and how these funds are going to be spent with private school administrators. According to the U.S. Department of Education there must be meaningful consultation between the LEA and the private school administrator. Services rendered must be "equitable". The consultation process decides where services will be rendered.

Normally, federal funds are not found in the general budget of private schools, as the funds are to go through the local district. However, if there is a need for professional development, federal funds can assist with that activity as a supplemental to the operation to the school. This could be also said about the purchase of library books or technology. Library books or computers purchased through federal funds become the property of the local school district.

IDEA allows for services for special education. Services are provided by the local school districts. Depending on funding these services may be limited.

In addition to the discussion of the federal funds, each CAPE state representative shared information concerning available state funding. State funding differs from state to state. Options include vouchers, reimbursement for student services, transportation, textbooks and tax credits. There is a good resource available published by the U.S. Department of Education entitled *Education Options in the States*. The publication cites state programs that provide financial assistance for attendance at private elementary and secondary schools. This publication can be found at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov). Dr. Nick will share this document at the April 15 executive meeting. Several CAPE representatives have offered to discuss tax credit issues at our next KAIRS annual meeting.

*The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) is a coalition of national organizations and state affiliates serving private elementary and secondary schools. There are 29,000 private schools in America; in fact, one in four of the nation's schools are a private school. More than six million students attend them. CAPE member organizations represent more than 80 percent of private school enrollment nationwide.*  
<http://www.capenet.org/>

**KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING – MISSION AND MONEY**

A dynamic keynote speaker and warm weather (!) were just two of the highlights of the KAIRS 2009 Annual meeting in February. The meeting's theme of *Mission and Money* set the tone for the two-day gathering. Tuition payment programs, charitable gift planning, endowment building and strategic planning were addressed. Additionally, two of the on-going membership issues were addressed: alternate accreditation with the state of Kansas and the addition of the independent colleges of Kansas.

### ***KSDE Director***

KSDE Innovation and Improvement Director, William Hagerman, provided an outline of his reorganized division. Education Commissioner, Dr. Posney has redistributed many of the various departments, and the liaison for private schools, which was formerly filled by Stacy Warren, has been eliminated. His division may be the most natural fit for a future liaison, as Dr. Hagerman oversees educational alternatives, including charter, non-accredited private, and virtual schools; academic and technical education, including career and technical education; the Kansas Educational Leadership Commission and Wallace Foundation Grant; and school improvement that constitutes QPA and Professional Development.

Dr. Hagerman also highlighted the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Project that hopes to help address the more than 10,000 Kansas students in the class of 2008 that failed to graduate. The project is profiled on the KSDE website, [www.ksde.org](http://www.ksde.org), by selecting the Educator's box on the left side and then scrolling down the left side to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills link.

### ***Accreditation Update***

Dr. Nancy Bolz, Kansas Director of North Central Association (NCA) joined Dr. Nick Compagnone, KAIRS President, in a recap of the progress that has been made towards an alternate state accreditation model. A summary of their remarks follows.

Based on the assumption that it does not make sense for schools to have to satisfy multiple accreditation models, KAIRS members, led by Dr. Nick Compagnone, have been studying other state models that recognize alternative accreditation for private and religious schools. In the past two years, KAIRS began working closely with NCA members including Nancy and Eddie Krenson, Senior Vice President AdvancED East Region. NCA is one component of the unified organization, AdvancED. KAIRS executive committee members met with Mr. Krenson and discussed ways that the two organizations could work together toward meeting the demands of the state and simplifying accreditation for member schools.

The group then met with members of the KSDE and raised several issues of concern for KAIRS schools. Some of the challenges discussed included the Kid's Count program reporting system, communication concerning AYP regulations, professional development councils, and teacher licensure issues.

Currently, because the KSDE has been through a great deal of transition, along with a new federal administration, the KAIRS committee is waiting for the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind to see what the state will do. The goal is to have the state recognize an alternate accreditation model that KAIRS would form with NCA. This would include recognition by both the Kansas Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education. It could then be made available to all KAIRS members.

### ***Hall of Fame Banquet***

As was the tradition of the past seven years, the Hall of Fame Banquet was a high point of the meeting. Six teachers were recognized as KAIRS Distinguished Teachers 2009. They are featured on the KAIRS website, [www.kairs.org](http://www.kairs.org) and are as follows:

**Christian Schools** – Delonn Anderson, Maranatha Academy, Shawnee  
**Diocese of Dodge City** – Virginia Boyd, Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Dodge City  
**Independent Schools** – Jamie Kennedy, Wichita Collegiate  
**Lutheran Schools** – Stella O’Brien, Zion Lutheran School, Independence  
**Diocese of Salina** – JoAnn Bean, Sacred Heart Grade School, Plainville  
**Diocese of Wichita** – Joy Kirk, St. Patrick Catholic School, Wichita

### ***Highlights of Keynote Speaker John Findlater***

Education consultant, John Findlater, provided thought-provoking sessions throughout the Annual Meeting. He encouraged administrators to sharpen their focus on their missions during these challenging times – and additionally, he highlighted the difference between this generation of students that are currently in school and the faculty and administrations that are instructing them.

Keynote Address: *Things Are Tough All Over! They Better Be Different Because They've Spent Time with Us!*

Many schools were started 100 years ago because someone had a *Big Idea*. This was a theme of the keynote address delivered by John Findlater. “What is the Big Idea of our schools?” he asked. “People are drawn to institutions that have a history that is alluring and knowable, and on which they can build a future.”

A former Catholic teacher and principal, he is now an education consultant and speaks to education associations across the country. Throughout his dynamic talk, which also included sobering stories of the current economic status of Michigan – his home state, Mr. Findlater stressed the importance of having a central theme, or Big Idea, around which a school is operated.

“Tough times bring clarity. If we only have \$50 to spend, not \$150, it causes us to think more clearly about what we’re going to do with what we have,” he explained. “Really tough times bring absolute clarity – the clarity of these times is what we’re going to be able to stand on for decades to come.”

In order to focus on a central idea, he recommended having the entire faculty and staff work toward the same ideal – having a clear, unified school concept that was shared by the entire community. The history of the school is an important component of that vision.

Once a school has its Big Idea, Mr. Findlater encouraged administrators to be radical about the idea. “You’ve got to take your school and look at your facility, demographics, staff, parents and then decide the kind of programs that go to the root of your Big Idea and what will differentiate your school from other institutions,” he said.

“People look for variety. Pretend you are a parent moving into your town, looking for a school for your child and make a list of all the attributes of your school that would invite you to come and check it out.”

When Mr. Findlater launched his urban Catholic school in Detroit, he looked for what was radically different from the other downtown schools. After exploring the situation, the school began to offer a Montessori preschool and daycare beginning at two years old. They taught music to every student with plastic recorders. They also began separating boys and girls in fifth grade.

“You have to find the hooks that are consistent with your mission that make people want to attend your school. When I could say to a single mother that her young man was going to spend the entire day with male teachers, it was alluring,” he said.

Finally, he recommended teaching kids “against the grain. Start with your building and make it a different kind of place so that people will ask what is that school doing?” He continued, “For example, most parents do not like going to the school office. They equate it with a dentist’s office. Does your school welcome guests? How do the hallways look?”

Using an example from his Detroit school, Mr. Findlater told how he had hung large flags in the halls. They had a hall of all 50 states, a hall of nations, and a hall of history. The students had to go through the hallway and had to know which flag went with each state.

His parting thought was not to be afraid to be a bit crazy and he closed with a Flannery O’Connor quote - *You will know the truth and the truth will make you odd.*

### ***Afternoon Findlater Session***

In a second presentation, *Getting a Grip on Kids Today: Ten Cultural Shifts*, Mr. Findlater examined the dangers of what he referred to as the chasm between the current and older generations. The disconnect between the students and the older faculty and between the administration and younger faculty can be a real challenge.

He highlighted a series of contrasting issues that play a role in dividing the generations. These included *virtues versus values*, with virtues being constant and values changing like a K-Mart Blue Light Special. “Kids in our society deserve to hear the virtues that our school espouses,” Mr. Findlater commented.

Someone has to be in charge – and that can be difficult for parents that want their kids to be happy. Mr. Findlater suggested that *authority versus negotiation* is an issue and no school can be effective if the kids are in charge and it is similar to a child negotiating for things in a Toys R Us.

*Sacrifice versus egoism* was the next contrast that Mr. Findlater presented. Kids in this generation have so much “junk” that they don’t have an idea about what sacrifice entails. He said that most kids want what they want and they want it now. Some of the junk – particularly electronics, along with going home to empty homes, has led to a situation of *isolation versus interaction*. This can result in school being the only place where children interact face to face and might eat a meal at a traditional table with no television.

“Kids do not even know how to introduce themselves. We have problems in the cafeteria with throwing food and eating with fingers. They don’t know how to have a conversation,” he said. “Statistics indicate that 50 percent of all kindergarteners have a television in their room. How do we lesson plan ways to get them to interact with one another?”

In his contrast of *liberal education versus vocation*, Mr. Findlater encouraged administrators to focus beyond just increasing SAT scores or teaching only what students need to do to make the highest salary. He said, “Give kids skills and vision and make young hearts and minds free – and make them free spirits of Jesus. That’s part of the mission statements of many of our schools.”

Mr. Findlater concluded by contrasting *reputation to celebrity*. “Now, it’s all about being famous, being noticed, and making your mark. When for so many of us, it was our good name – our reputation. The power of my mother saying to me - ‘What will your father think if he heard you say that?’”

He stressed the importance of teaching students about personal responsibility and helping them to learn the lesson that most people who do good things and are good students will never be famous, but it’s the way things need to work. “The very best teachers understand that the most important truth about teaching is that *everything* is teaching. Kids don’t miss anything. We teach who we are.”

## IMPORTANT 2009 DATES

APRIL 15, 10AM KAIRS Executive Committee Meeting (All are welcome to attend.)

## KAIRS EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2008-09

President: Nick Compagnone, Salina Catholic Diocese

Vice President: Terry Tilson, Head of School, Berean Academy

Treasurer: Holly Goodwin, Assistant Superintendent, Wichita Diocese

Annual Meeting Secretary: Shelli Kadel, Wichita Friends School

Member-at-Large, Lutheran Representative: Neal Kurtz, Principal  
Linn Lutheran School

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