

KAIRS Today December 2008

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.

A very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all KAIRS members.

DECEMBER ISSUE:

- 1. KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING– DYNAMIC EDUCATION CONSULTANT**
- 2. PLAN TO ATTEND THE KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING – FEB 9-10**
- 3. ALTERNATE ACCREDITATION UPDATE**
- 4. KAIRS EXECUTIVE BOARD WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS**
- 5. IMPORTANT 2008-09 DATES**
- 6. KAIRS EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2008-09**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING– DYNAMIC EDUCATION CONSULTANT

KAIRS is welcoming a dynamic speaker and educational consultant, John Findlater, to present the Keynote Address for the 2009 Annual Meeting. He has titled his address, *"Things Are Tough All Over! They Better Be Different Because They've Spent Time with Us!"*

He will also lead two additional break-out sessions: *"Getting a Grip on Kids Today: Ten Cultural Shifts"* and *"The Landscape of Leadership: The Three Most Important Things for Private Schools Today."*

Mr. Findlater has been actively involved in Catholic Education for more than 30 years as a teacher and principal, and has consulted with a wide variety of religious and independent schools across the country. As a speaker, he has been featured twice at the national convention of the ASCD (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development), and the meetings of the Florida Middle School Association, among others. He has taught primary, middle and high school students, but his most exciting challenge was in founding the innovative inner-city school in Detroit – The Martyrs of Uganda Catholic Academy.

Mr. Findlater completed his undergraduate work at Aquinas College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and earned his master's degree from Boston College in the Catholic School Leadership Program.

PLAN TO ATTEND THE KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING – FEB 9-10

Our theme for 2009 is Mission and Money, which seems aptly appropriate for this time in our nation's and our schools' histories. The meeting will include a dynamic keynote speaker, John Findlater (see separate article), the North Central Accreditation alliance, and our new relationships with the private colleges of Kansas as KAIRS members. In addition, several additional speakers are in the working.

Each year the Annual Meeting provides the opportunity for administrators from KAIRS schools to meet and share ideas. In addition, administrators are encouraged to invite board members, other administrators and master teachers to attend the scheduled sessions. (See the attached registration form for additional information.)

Please make your reservations with the hotel as soon as possible. **To Register:** Complete the following form and send it by February 2, along with your check made payable to KAIRS, to the following address. \$80 first person, \$70 each additional person (meals included)

Shelli Kadel: KAIRS Convention Secretary
14700 W. Kellogg
Wichita KS 67235

The registration form should be available on the website (www.kairs.org) the week of 12/22/08.

ALTERNATE ACCREDITATION UPDATE

Dr. Nick Compagnone, KAIRS President, along with members of the KAIRS Executive Committee, has been meeting throughout the fall with representatives from North Central Association and the Kansas Department of Education to discuss alternate accreditation options for our members. As non-public schools, many KAIRS schools opt out of the state accreditation process, while others do dual accreditation. Currently, these options fail to provide an ideal situation for them. The KAIRS Executive Committee is working diligently to provide a workable, alternate accreditation model that meets the state requirements without compromising the missions of our religious and independent schools.

Please join the Executive Committee via the Internet or in person on January 7 in Topeka for an update. Also plan to attend the February Annual Meeting, as this topic will be discussed in depth.

The KAIRS Executive Committee welcomes your feedback on this (and any) issue. Please don't hesitate to send any of the members an email. The committee members and their emails are listed at the bottom of this issue.

KAIRS EXECUTIVE BOARD WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS

Two new members have joined the KAIRS Executive Board for 2008-09: Neal Kurtz, principal of Linn Lutheran and Holly Goodwin, assistant superintendent, Catholic Diocese of Wichita. This month, we are profiling Neal and next issue we will introduce Holly. Welcome both and thank you for your service to KAIRS.

Life-long Lutheran Educator Called to Kansas

Neal Kurtz and his family were new to Kansas in 2007, when he was called as principal to Linn Lutheran School, but Neal is certainly not new to the field of education. He began his career as a Lutheran educator on a snowy day in January 1971 when he accepted the call to Osmond, Nebraska. There he taught 27 students in grades one through four at Immanuel Lutheran School.

Six years later, in 1977, Neal became the principal at Immanuel and for the next 31 years, he has served as principal and teacher at three other schools in small towns in Wisconsin and Nebraska before he was called to Linn Lutheran.

“You get to know everybody in a small school. I enjoy the way the parents work together in small groups. The kids usually come from very close families. A lot of them are rural. This sounds like a negative to some people, but you get to do a lot of things. I get to be a jack-of-all-trades. I just love it,” he explained.

In addition to his career as administrator and teacher, Neal has been involved at the district level of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod where he served as chairman of the Education Commission of the Nebraska District. He was also active in the Osmond community as an Emergency Medical Technician and assistant chief of the Osmond Fire Department.

Neal’s educational background includes a bachelor’s degree in 1970 from Concordia University (Concordia Teachers' College at the time) in Seward, Nebraska. In 1991, he earned a master's degree in Elementary Administration from the same University.

Married to his wife, Janis, in 1975, the Kurtz family includes three boys – two of which are grown – and Daniel who is a senior at Linn High School. They are enjoying their life in Linn.

Neal teaches sixth, seventh and eighth grades at Linn Lutheran in addition to serving as the principal and music director. His school has an enrollment of 39 students and they share programs with the public school (five blocks away) including physical education and lunch. When his students graduate, they continue on to Linn High School.

“From the first day, we felt a part of the community. I think in particular it’s the group of people I work with here. Having moved several times, you get a different feeling when you move into different places. Sometimes after eight or 10 years, you still don’t feel part of the community, but here we do. It’s a comfortable situation,” Neal explained.

His educational philosophy is centered on the basics. Neal said that over the years he’s seen a number of educational trends, but he’s been hesitant to “jump on one bandwagon or another.” He continued, “The most important thing is that Jesus is the

main focus of our educational program. After that, I think elementary students need to have a strong foundation before they move on to junior high and high school.”

Neal is looking forward to serving on the KAIRS Executive Committee as the Lutheran representative. “To me, KAIRS is an exciting concept. We were involved somewhat with CAPE (Council for Private Education) in Nebraska, but not very closely. It’s exciting that Kansas has this group because amongst our private Christian school systems, we have a lot in common. It’s good to share ideas. It makes us stronger.”

IMPORTANT 2008-09 DATES

January 7, KAIRS Executive Meeting, Topeka

February 9, 10: KAIRS Annual Meeting, Topeka

KAIRS EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2008-09

President: Nick Compagnone, Salina Catholic Diocese
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Vice President: Terry Tilson, Head of School, Berean Academy
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Treasurer: Holly Goodwin, Assistant Superintendent, Wichita Diocese
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Annual Meeting Secretary: Shelli Kadel, Wichita Friends School
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Member-at-Large, Lutheran Representative: Neal Kurtz, Principal
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