

March 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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#### **ANDY TOMPKINS TO SPEAK AT APRIL 16 MEETING**

Andy Tompkins, former Commissioner of Education for the state of Kansas, will be the guest speaker at the April 16 (Monday) Membership Meeting. Dr. Tompkins is currently an associate professor at the University of Kansas in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. He will provide insights on the area of strategic planning.

Our meeting will be video streamed via the Internet. To attend, you do not need to have a camera. You only need to have the ability to hear sound. Additional information will be forthcoming.

*Please note that this day differs from the original meeting date, in order to accommodate Dr. Tompkin's schedule. The meeting will be, as usual, in Topeka at the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod administrative building, beginning at 10 am.*

#### **EXCITING NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR KAIRS**

Several new opportunities have recently surfaced for our organization.

First, at the annual meeting, Dr. Kerstetter expressed interest in joining KAIRS. This would involve a change in our bi-laws, but expanding the range of KAIRS to include the non-public secondary schools could give our organization new insights on the wider scope of education, and also bolster our standing with the state and other education organizations. Please email Dr. Nick with your thoughts on this.

Second, the Council of Private Schools (CAPE) has expressed interest in the Internet streaming of our quarterly meetings. They will be joining our April 16 meeting via the

Internet, which will feature Dr. Andy Tompkins. If this goes smoothly, KAIRS may lead the way for other state organizations to follow suit.

*From KAIRS President, Nick Compagnone:* “The CAPE representatives are very interested in the video streaming of our meetings. Additionally, we will be studying ways to network nationally. This is a nice compliment for us as the other states have more financial resources than KAIRS. The U.S. Department of Education also is looking at what we’re doing in this arena.”

## KAIRS WEBSITE NEWS

Our Web designer, Leo Johns, has recently developed a KAIRS Blog. We hope to have 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.

Finally, in visiting with one of our speakers at the Annual Meeting, he complimented our website. He liked the design and the ease of use. Kudos again to Mr. Johns. (Mr. Johns has a child in a KAIRS member school and provides his services at a much-discounted rate as part of his support for KAIRS.)

## KAIRS ANNUAL MEETING 07 – AN OVERVIEW

### State of KAIRS Address –Dr. Nick Compagnone

With Schools of Transformation as the theme, the 2007 KAIRS Annual Meeting focused on many of the components that make our member schools uniquely suited to help students achieve their potential.

The speakers, beginning with the keynote speaker, Dr. Philip Kerstetter, addressed our roles as faith-based schools, how technology and student-centered education is changing education, the importance of teachers who are committed to our distinct perspectives, and the various accreditation models available.

As sometimes happens, the meeting focus took on a life of its own, as attendees met with the new Kansas Department of Education liaison to KAIRS, Staci Warren, and listened to the encouragement of Dr. Kerstetter. Conversations went beyond individual schools to the broader mission of KAIRS. Our organization continues to be an important force in the state of Kansas – currently in terms of working towards alternate accreditation and providing alternative opportunities for Kansas school children.

Dr. Nick Compagnone, KAIRS President, opened the meeting with an overview of what he hoped would be accomplished in the 2007 convention. He encouraged members in the need to better articulate their individual school’s mission to the public and families, and also collectively what KAIRS does as an organization.

He also noted that although each school has their own specific mission, we have a common thread of wanting to provide a smaller, family-friendly atmosphere in our schools where we provide a safe and secure learning environment.

“We have a great state in the landscape of education, and we serve nearly 38,000 students,” Dr. Compagnone said. “We are here to collaborate together and work toward a common mission. Accountability and transparency are two of the key components.”

## Keynote Address

### *Keynote Speaker Offers Insights on Faith-based Educational Institutions*

Highlighting the positive elements of faith-based secondary education institutions, Dr. Kerstetter, president of Kansas Wesleyan University, delivered his keynote address. He contrasted the difference between faith-based and public education, and having worked extensively in both settings, Dr. Kerstetter was uniquely qualified to comment on the differences.

Beginning with a story of two boyhood friends who began their lives together, but ended in a radically different fashion, Dr. Kerstetter praised the advantages offered to students by the close interaction with staff members that is often available at smaller institutions. The more successful boy ended up in a field he had never imagined – due to the insightful guidance of one of his professors.

While not criticizing large public universities, Dr. Kerstetter indicated that there was a significant difference between private and public universities. He cited a 1998 study that found three significant advantages of smaller, private secondary schools.

Those advantages were: improved preparation for vocation, better integration of values into daily living, and a higher commitment to society. In regard to vocational preparation, the study found that at private universities, the students were more engaged in the classroom with their teachers, and they engaged more often in independent study. They had improved writing and oral communication skills. Internships were more often pursued.

Additionally, at private schools, students were far more likely to engage in conversations regarding the integration of their values into their everyday lives. Schools like Kansas Wesleyan, Dr. Kerstetter said, are distinctively positioned to insert values into their curriculum and engage in discussions about those values with the students.

He added that KAIRS institutions, as well as faith-based private secondary schools, also are far more likely to have active members of society in such organizations as PTA or PTO. He said, “These are the values our schools celebrate and encourage.”

“Make no mistake – there is a big difference between private and public schools,” Dr. Kerstetter said. “In the 1960s generation, they continually asked, ‘Is this relevant?’ Our challenge is to help our students find relevance in the seemingly irrelevant things in life.”

He concluded, “In the 44<sup>th</sup> chapter of Mathew, there is the story of the treasure hidden in a field. Unfortunately this current generation – the millennial generation – are not always accustomed to working hard and long at any task. Your job (and ours) is to help your students know that what is valuable may not always be visible. They should, however, still work hard to uncover it.”

“May we continue to foster knowledge, wisdom and understanding in the fertile soil of our schools – and nurture, enable and prepare our students to go out in service.”

## Discussion with Dr. Kerstetter

Dr. Kerstetter met with several educators for an informal discussion of educational trends. The topics varied, but the issue of teacher shortage in the near future was a concern that warranted an extended conversation.

“I am looking at an aging faculty coming in the next five years; we’ll potentially be losing 50 percent of faculty at Kansas Wesleyan,” said Dr. Kerstetter. “There’s a contradiction right now – we see the state and federal governments putting more restrictions on the training and licensure of teachers. The demographics show it may be counterproductive to do so.”

Addressing this, Dr. Kerstetter suggested that there might be the need for greater creativity in the certification of teachers, instead of less. Second career individuals are a probable pool from which the next group of educators will come. If this is the case, they may not be trained and certified in the same manner as teachers straight out of college.

The group also discussed the difficulty in hiring and retaining teachers. It was mentioned that the public schools could pay higher salaries, so faith-based schools, in particular, needed to foster the idea of being “called” into the vocation. Dr. Kerstetter explained, “If people see the value of what you’re doing – the monetary value isn’t the only issue.”

Finally, the area of student teaching was explored. Dr. Kerstetter suggested that young teachers from his school (and others like it) might be more inclined to stay at KAIRS member schools if they were exposed to them during their training years. He noted again, this idea goes back to idea of men and women being “called” into the service of teaching, rather than simply considering it as a job.

### Department of Education Official Encourages KAIRS Participation

Most religious and independent schools are somewhat skeptical when it comes to joining with the federal or state government on programs. To better educate the KAIRS membership, Dr. Mary Cohen, the Secretary of Education’s Regional Representative for Region VII, and Staci Warren, Coordinator of Educational Alternatives for KSDE, spent an hour explaining some worthwhile programs that they wanted KAIRS members to consider.

Dr. Cohen opened her remarks by indicating that the Department of Education, under the Bush administration, has changed its whole approach towards private schools – both religious and independent. She said that it was very welcoming, and had an entire department that was dedicated to working with these schools.

In considering how private schools could work together with the federal government, Dr. Cohen encouraged KAIRS members to first be aware of what is available for their children who need Supplemental Educational Services (SES), and to secondly, consider being a SES provider. She explained that under the No Child Left Behind Act, (NCLB), school districts were required to set aside a certain portion of funds to provide supplemental services – and that private schools could benefit from this regulation.

The title money follows the children, she said, but not in cash. “If you have Title I children, you are entitled by law to be consulted by your local school district regarding the services that are provided. Unfortunately, the faith-based and non-public schools are often left out of that discussion.”

In regard to becoming an SES provider, Dr. Cohen recommended consulting the guidebook and to become familiar with the regulations. “The Education Department is encouraging schools to sign up, because it is difficult to get enough SES providers – in both small and large areas. “

“I am always amazed that more faith-based and independent schools have not begun to be a part of the supplemental services program. Some of you would perform these services quite well; this makes your facility more attractive to the outside community. It is also a good way to bring in some extra money into your schools,” Dr. Cohen said.

“I think it is well, worth your time to explore this idea. Becoming an SES provider is a partnership with local school district and the state. You will begin talking with the people in these organizations and your profile will be raised. The faith-based and independent schools do a beautiful job and people are not always aware of this.”

Staci Warren, the newly appointed Coordinator of Educational Alternatives for KSDE, introduced herself to the KAIRS membership. Having worked previously as a principal for a Catholic school, and prior to that a Title I coordinator, she hopes to be able to provide insights from both perspectives.

In addition to acting as the liaison with non-public schools, Ms. Warren is also the education coordinator for charter schools. She indicated that one of her primary goals for the KAIRS membership is to answer questions: email is the best way to contact her. "Please contact me. I can come up with a pretty quick initial answer and then will search out a more in-depth solution, if that's needed."

She requested an email list from KAIRS so that she can better communicate with our membership. (*That list will be provided shortly to Ms. Warren.*)

Dr. Cohen and Ms. Warren contact information for KAIRS members:  
[Mary.Cohen@ed.gov](mailto:Mary.Cohen@ed.gov), and [swarren@ksde.org](mailto:swarren@ksde.org) 785-296-2958.

\*Members interested in wanting to become an SES provider should go to the KSDE website at the following address for additional information:  
[www3.ksde.org/sfp/nclb/title1/ses\\_apprvd\\_providers\\_06\\_07.htm](http://www3.ksde.org/sfp/nclb/title1/ses_apprvd_providers_06_07.htm)

### **Distinguished Teachers 07 – Informal Discussion**

All three teachers were given the question: How has teaching in a KAIRS school empowered me? Additionally, how have the met the multiple needs of the students in their classrooms?

The first Distinguished Teacher to speak was Laura Reif Foss (Sacred Heart Grade School, Plainville). She brought samples of an electricity unit she had taught, with another teacher, for first and second grade students. She explained the project (done with old Christmas lights, craft sticks and batteries). She told how this project addressed skills across the curriculum, and emphasized writing and science. Laura cited this unit as an example of how she had been empowered in the classroom. She had not been told, "don't stray from the path," in fact the opposite had been encouraged. Cooperative learning, and collaboration with another class and teacher, were desired. She felt freed to teach in a way that fostered excellence in learning.

Donna Longhauser (Holy Cross Lutheran School, Wichita) said that her experience had helped her to not compartmentalize her life. All that she had done helped her share her religion, and the life of Jesus. She has been encouraged to meet each child's needs – as a ministry to those children. In addition, she has helped strengthen the life of the children, and teach them how to be more productive. In her setting she feels like everyone is on the same page, and operates as a team.

Inga Atkinson (Holy Family School, Great Bend) told how the blending of two schools into Holy Family School has helped her feel supported. It is a blessing to teach in a school where each person has chosen to be there, and feels chosen by God. The ability to show preschool children how they fit in a community has been valuable. Additionally, preschool children are valued as part as a thriving community.

When asked what administrators do that helps...all three talked about the support they have received, the positive outlook on educating children and their work, and the fact that their administrators listen to them.

*Editor's Note: Two additional presentations were given at the Annual Meeting: Technology in our Schools by Bob D'Andrea, and Accreditation Models and Discussion. Due to the extreme length of this month's issue, those two presentations will be summarized in the April issue.*

### **Winners of Vendor Drawing**

Thank you to our generous vendors. Our meeting is greatly enhanced by their support and generosity! They contributed prizes to a very enjoyable drawing. Here is a list of the winners:

**Lifetouch**- 5 Stuffed Bears: John Macy, Marlene Clayton, Carol Parker, Jim Bradshaw, Frank Kennedy

**Smart Technologies**: Smart Board (Valued at \$1,500): Ann Depperschmidt

**Purifan**: Room Fan: Mark Shotte

**Parker Uniforms**: Bear with Uniform: Pam Nummela

**Pearson Silver Burdett Ginn Religion**: Big Book of Poetry: Dawn Oldenettel

**Harcourt Religion Publishers**: 8 maps-History of Christianity: Dawn Oldenettel;  
Teaching Tool Ball: Kelly Bright

**Fingertip Math**: Math game: Bob Eggold

### **HALL OF FAME BANQUET**

#### *2007 Hall of Fame Inductee*

At the Hall of Fame Banquet, Monday February 6, KAIRS inducted one new member into the KAIRS Hall of Fame.

The 2007 inductee is **Edward Bierbaum**, Linn Lutheran Principal.

Mr. Bierbaum attended, with his wife, Donna. He will retire and move to Missouri when the year concludes. Congratulations to this outstanding educator.

The Hall of Fame resides at the KAIRS website: [www.kairs.org](http://www.kairs.org).

#### *KAIRS Distinguished Teachers 2007*

Five outstanding educators also were honored at the banquet. The winners will also be featured in the KAIRS 2005 Annual Report and on our website, [www.kairs.org](http://www.kairs.org).

Christian Schools: **Dennis Burd**, Maranatha Academy, Shawnee;  
Diocese of Dodge City: **Inga Atkinson** Holy Family School. Great Bend;  
Independent Schools: **Gale Farmer**, Wichita Collegiate School;  
Lutheran Schools: **Donna Longhauser**, Holy Cross Lutheran School, Wichita;  
Diocese of Salina: **Laura Reif Foss**, Sacred Heart Grade School. Plainville  
Diocese of Wichita: **Roxanne Goehring**, St. Anne's Catholic School. Wichita.

## 2007 KAIRS Annual Business Meeting Minutes

On Tuesday morning, February 13<sup>th</sup>, KAIRS president Nick Compagnone called the meeting to order at the Ramada Inn in Topeka.

The minutes of the 2006 meeting were read and approved as presented.

The treasurer's report was presented. The balance was \$5,891.43 and did not include the Annual Convention monies. A MSP to accept the treasurer's report.

Nick proposed the idea of accepting Christian colleges, their teachers and administrators as potential members of KAIRS, if they so desired. This will be formalized in the near future.

The public relations position being held by Corey Reese was reviewed. Nick pointed out the complexity of the jobs to be accomplished. He stated that the executive board is recommending a reduction in the number of KAIRS newsletters from the present ten to only five. These five would coincide with the regular scheduled meetings, both annual and quarterly meetings. He also stated that the quarterly meetings would also be available to members via the web. These would include the September, November, and April meetings.

The proposed budget for next year was presented, in the amount of \$4735. A MSP to accept the budget as presented.

Priorities for next year's meeting agenda were discussed. These included the following:

- Pursuing PDC/KAIRS avenue
- Pursue recruitment of students from faith-based colleges
- Pursue placement/procedures – KAIRS Statistics (Directory, Census, Minutes, etc. Teacher Recruiting
- Best practices library
- Teacher Health – Mentoring Program – Networking
- Membership Relationships

Nick asked for suggestion for a theme for the annual meeting in 2008. Jim Bradshaw suggested a theme of 1 Corinthians 12 – Building a Team/Body of Christ  
Suggestion was made to utilize the wisdom of the membership both past/present  
Committee structure – task force – build leadership  
Through personal contact attempt to raise membership number

Shelli Kadel talked about the schedule of the second weekend in February and the location at the Ramada Inn. Both seemed acceptable to all groups present.

The executive committee will call on volunteers to assist in the planning.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned. The members joined in singing the common doxology as the benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill D. Dieckhoff  
Secretary

**IMPORTANT 2007 KAIRS DATES**

April 16 (Monday): General Meeting – Andy Tompkins, 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

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