

October 2005

Welcome to KAIRS Today!

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.

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

*\*Editor's Note: This month we are introducing two new sections in our newsletter. The first is under the title of Innovative Programs where we'd like to share some of the exciting programs our member schools are creating and offering to their students.*

*The second is an announcements section. We will include announcements of special events and speakers where member schools would like to invite other KAIRS members to attend. This would include special speakers, beyond school fundraisers and annual events.*

*We would like to invite our membership to submit these listings at [crkairs@yahoo.com](mailto:crkairs@yahoo.com). The KAIRS Executive Board reserves the right to exclude any submission and all submissions will require Board approval to be included. Please note that KAIRS is not endorsing these events or programs, but rather providing our membership with a notification service. Thanks! – the editor.*

THE OCTOBER ISSUE:

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## NOVEMBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING – NOV 8, GARY MUSSELMAN TO SPEAK

Plan to attend the November 8 General Membership meeting to hear Gary Musselman, Executive Director, Kansas State High School Athletics Association (KSHSAA). Mr. Musselman will specifically address the recent question that was considered by his association, "Should the KSHSAA appoint a committee of representatives of both public and private member schools to study issues of similarities and differences between public and private schools?" He will also provide an update on KSHSAA activities in general.

The meeting will also focus on the upcoming February annual convention, the latest information from ESSDACK and a brief discussion of the new Kansas Education Commissioner Bob Corkins.

The meeting will be held at the Missouri Synod Lutheran offices in Topeka, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL – KAIRS FIRST BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

Hearty congratulations are extended to The Independent School for receiving the designation as a *No Child Left Behind* - Blue Ribbon School for 2005! The Independent School is one of 295 schools (50 private schools) throughout the United States, and one of seven in Kansas (2 private) to win this award. They are the first KAIRS member to do so, and are the first Wichita school to receive this award.

From Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings' press release, dated September 23, 2005, "The achievement gap is closing and that is great news for every student," Spellings said. "These Blue Ribbon Schools are an example of what teachers and students can achieve. For the first time, we are insisting on results and accountability in return for our federal investment in education. In the three-plus years since *No Child Left Behind* was signed into law, we've learned a new equation: 'Accountability plus high expectations plus resources equals results.'

The press release continued: The *No Child Left Behind* Blue Ribbon Schools program recognizes schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. The schools are selected based on one of three criteria:

-Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance on state tests.

-Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests.

-Private schools that achieve in the top 10 percent in the nation.

Karen Norton, Head of School. The Independent School, commented, "We are very excited about receiving the award. It gives us a national presence and lets people know that we are both regionally and nationally competitive."

On the day of the award, Karen said that during their awards pep rally, they had the mailman "deliver" a large box. When it was opened, big blue balloons came out, followed by a banner that announced the award. "It was an awesome day!" she said. She and other school leaders will travel to Washington, DC in November to receive the award.

Congratulations to The Independent School!

### KAIRS DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS 2006 AWARDS

Hopefully everyone is currently giving careful consideration to the upcoming Distinguished Teachers Awards. Our various school groups each have a different process, but the deadlines are quickly approaching. November 12 is the deadline for ACSI schools to send their nominees to Warren Holmes, and for the Independent schools to send their nominees to Shelli Kadel. The Catholic and Lutheran Schools select their winners within their own organizations. However, all winners are due to Shelli Kadel NO LATER than December 3. The past honorees truly have been distinguished educators. Don't miss out!

For the past two years, we have featured the Distinguished Teachers in our Annual Report and plan to continue this tradition. We hope that with their permission, we will also feature them on our new KAIRS Web page.

When submitting a photo of your winner, please take an excellent, digital close-up from the neck up, with a neutral background. Either color or black and white are fine, and please send it as a jpeg file to Corey Reese at [crkairs@yahoo.com](mailto:crkairs@yahoo.com). It is one of the favorite aspects of our Annual Report!

### PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

From Bob Voboril:

Recently, I forwarded to you preliminary proposals in the United States Congress to assist schools that serve families who have been evacuated from the communities stricken by the recent hurricanes. As these make their way

through Congress, we will keep you posted.

Earlier this month, the Kansas State Board of Education selected Bob Corkins to replace Andy Tompkins as the Commissioner of Education. While a first reaction is that Mr. Corkins is sympathetic to many of the concerns that KAIRS member schools have, the animosity created by selecting a non-educator who has been an advocate for less spending on public education may create additional problems for KAIRS. It will be critical that the KAIRS public policy agenda be given careful thought before it is implemented.

CAPE Update from October 18, 2005

House Leaders Announce Assistance Plan For Students Affected By Hurricanes

U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Boehner (R-OH) and Rep. Bobby Jindal (R-LA) today announced a proposal for Family Education Reimbursement Accounts to assist public and private school students affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"The hurricanes have put a strain on schools across the nation, yet public, private, and charter schools have all risen to the challenge, opening their doors and welcoming displaced students as their own," said Boehner. "Our hurricane recovery efforts must be focused on empowering individuals, and that's why this proposal provides direct aid to parents and families."

The innovative proposal builds on President Bush's call for equitable aid for all students affected by the hurricanes.

For details about the proposal, visit: <http://www.capenet.org/new.html>

### **KAIRS CENSUS FORMS**

Just a quick reminder – if you haven't already done so, please return your census forms to Bob Voboril. The response so far has been excellent and the information is truly valuable to our organization.

### **DUES DUE!**

If you haven't yet paid your KAIRS dues, please send them ASAP to David Swank – KAIRS Treasurer. Thanks!

### **INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS – ST ANDREWS' SKILL BUILDERS CLUB**

The Skill Builders Club at St. Andrew's Elementary School in Abilene is an after-school program designed to provide extra support for students who need additional aid in basic math and reading skills. It was launched this past summer with help from a grant through the Abilene Community Foundation.

Skill Builders meets twice a week for 60 minutes and is available to first through fifth graders. Parents are asked to pay a small fee, but scholarships are available through the grant program for students with financial need.

Chris Bacon, St Andrews' principal explained, "We wanted to provide support for students who want extra assistance in developing their basic reading and math skills. Students meet in small groups (two to five students) with a teacher, and participate in high interest games and activities that are aimed at improving their math and reading skills. Since the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* legislation, we are striving to find new ways to meet the needs of all students We hope to give students a needed boost as early as possible to help them be successful."

St Andrews has a regular after school care, but the Skill Builders Club is in addition to this. Students may attend the Skill Builders Club as part of their regular after school care with no additional fee. Students not enrolled in the After School Program may attend the Skill Builders Club, also. They are charged a small fee to attend. Teachers are paid for their time working with the children, thus supplementing their income a small amount.

"We are very excited about our new Skill Builders Club. We are beginning to see impact for our students already, and we have had many positive comments from parents," Mrs. Bacon said. "The small group instruction and high interest activities provide learning opportunities that are reaching the students involved. We plan to continue and even expand this program. "

### CONDOLENCES TO ANN DEPPERSCHMIDT

Our condolences are extended to Ann Depperschmidt, Superintendent of the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City, on the passing of her husband Ron last month. Ann has designated Sacred Heart Catholic School in Ness City to receive memorials. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Ann during this difficult time.

### ANNOUNCEMENT – CAIR PARAVEL TO HOST INTELLIGENT DESIGN SPEAKER

The question of how evolution should be treated in the science curriculum of Kansas schools has been much in the news lately. Cair Paravel is sponsoring one look at this question. Details follow.

Cair Paravel Latin School will be hosting Dr. Phillip Johnson on Friday October 28, 7 pm, for a presentation entitled, "Darwinism, Freedom and Education." Dr. Johnson is the author of "Darwin on Trial" and many other works on evolution and intelligent design, and will be in Topeka for a series of meetings and lectures.

From James Waldy, Dean of Faculty, Cair Paravel, "This forum is designed specifically for the science teaching community. We are not inviting the general public for this evening as we are attempting to provide a setting in which science teachers and professors can come for a gathering that will enable the teaching community to hear from and speak to Dr. Johnson. No matter which side of the evolution debate you may find yourself on, you are strongly encouraged to join us in this opportunity to speak directly to one of the key players in the intelligent design movement.

"As hosts of this event, our desire is not to create a pro-creationists environment or an environment that is hostile to evolutionists. Ours is a desire to speak to and hear from one of the main players in the current debate, and we covet true debate - that is, a good representation from all sides."

### IMPORTANT 2005-06 KAIRS DATES

Nov 1: KAIRS Executive Committee Meeting, The Independent School, 9 am.  
Nov 8: General Membership Meeting, Topeka, 10 am  
Nov 15: Hall of Fame Nominations Due  
Dec 2: Distinguished Teachers 2006 Nominations Due to Shelli Kadel  
Feb 6-7: Annual Meeting, Topeka

### KAIRS 2005-06 OFFICERS

President: Karen Norton, The Independent School, Wichita

Vice President: Nick Compagnone, Salina Catholic Diocese

Secretary: Bill Dieckhoff, Holy Cross Lutheran School, Wichita

Treasurer: David Swank, Trinity Academy, Wichita

Annual Meeting Co-Secretaries: Shelli Kadel, Wichita Friends School  
&  
Nick Compagnone, Salina Catholic Diocese

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