

# KENTUCKY SCHOOL ADVOCATE

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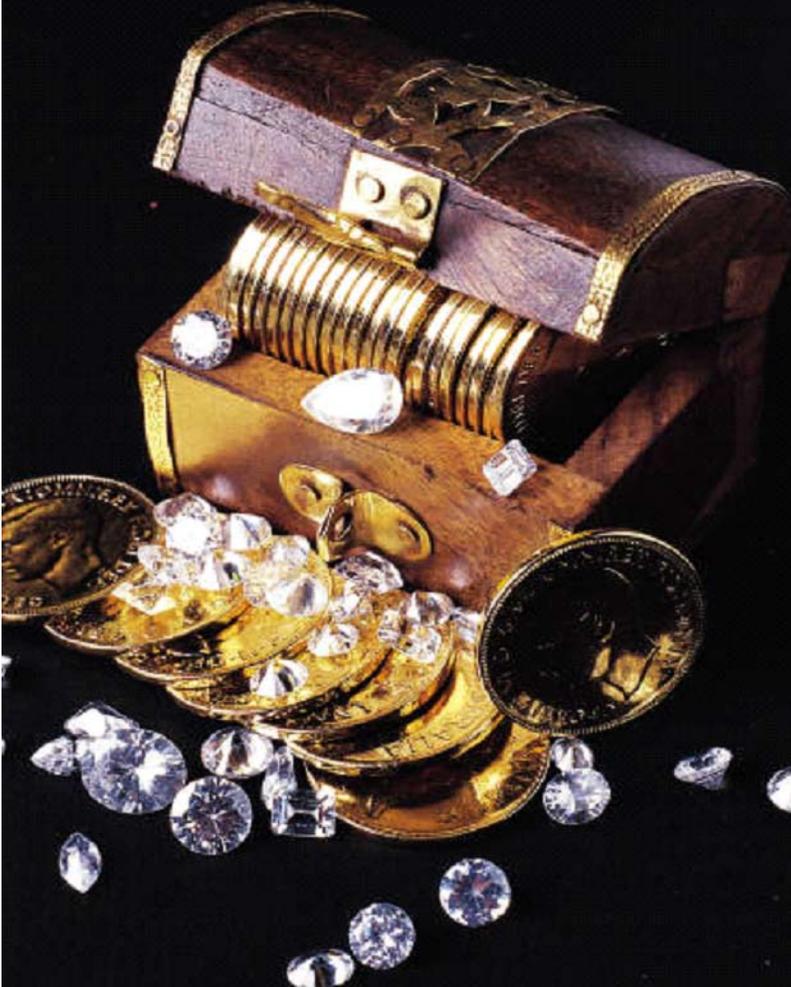
**Celebrating 75 years**

Complete conference coverage

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**FEATURES**

**COVERAGE OF KSBA'S 75TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**GENERAL SESSIONS**

**David Zach** is not your garden-variety prognosticator. The futurist, who was the conference plenary speaker, seemed to prefer getting board members to think about the future instead of giving them predictions ... Page 9

While KSBA observed its 75th anniversary at this year's conference, that wasn't the only common thread running through the event: Board members got a heavy dose of new **common standards** ... Page 10

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**The Warren County High School Orchestra helped bring the celebration to an end during the 75th annual KSBA conference's Sunday brunch. Complete conference coverage begins on Page 9.**

# TAKE NOTE

## Kentucky School Boards Association

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## KSBA Board of Directors

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**Pre-K work draws national eye**  
KSBA's early childhood education push was the subject of a story in the December issue of *Pre-K Primer*, a National School Boards Association publication. The article focused on the two-year effort by KSBA to raise awareness among school boards of the benefits of preschool education. The work was funded through a Pew Charitable Trusts grant to NSBA's Center for Public Education. The magazine listed the highlights of KSBA's two-year program, including preschool education as a focus of the association's regional meetings and Summer Leadership Institute, development of Academy of Studies materials on the subject and partner-

ships with the state's Early Childhood Regional Training Centers and advocacy groups such as the Strong Start Committee.

### Still serving after all these years

The man who was once Kentucky's second-longest-serving school board member did not retire as planned when his term ended at the end of 2010. In a Jan. 3, 2011 letter, Education Commissioner Terry Holliday appointed Walt Ryan to fill a vacancy on the Walton-Verona Independent school board. Ryan's appointment runs until the November general election this year. Ryan logged 48 years on the board. ☞

### Have a seat

Board members from Casey and Gallatin counties have taken their seats on KSBA's Board of Directors. Before leaving the KSBA presidency, Delmar Mahan appointed Casey County school board member Dr. Michael Turner as regional chairperson for the association's Middle Cumberland Region and Gallatin County board member Becky Burgett to represent the Northern Kentucky Region.

Both seats became vacant when the incumbents, Mike Combs and Chris Watts, didn't seek re-election to their local boards of education. Burgett and Turner will serve out the last year of their KSBA board terms.

Turner, of Liberty, has been a member of the Casey County board since 2006. A graduate of Eastern Kentucky University and the Cleveland Chiropractic College, Turner is a chiropractor. He is a member of the Liberty-Casey County Chamber of Commerce and

the national and Kentucky chiropractors' associations. Turner is a former president of the Liberty/Casey County Economic Development Authority. He was chosen as attending chiropractor for the World's Greatest Athlete Olympic Decathlon and the 2004 Olympics Track and Field trials. His practice was twice chosen business of the year in Casey County and he was named Entrepreneur of the Year 2010.

Burgett is in her 19th year on the Gallatin County school board. The Verona resident is a human resources specialist with Proctor and Gamble in Cincinnati and also works in the KSBA board team training cadre. Burgett, who attended Northern Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky, is a court-appointed special advocate for children in Boone District Court's family court, a member of the Children Inc. board of directors and a graduate of the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership. She is a past winner

of KSBA's Kids First Advocacy Award and sits on the Kids First board of directors. Burgett also was recognized by Proctor and Gamble for outstanding coaching and mentoring of new employees.

Both Burgett and Turner will be eligible to seek election to a full three-year term at the 2011 Fall Regional Meetings.



# On a journey to give hope to the silent children

*(Editor's note: this column is excerpted from remarks made at the closing brunch of the KSBA annual conference.)*

Public education has been a large part of my life. It's been my livelihood, and like many of you, it's something I have become quite passionate about. I was raised in the eastern section of Lincoln County in a small rural farming community called Preachersville. My initial response to education was not like it is today. After about five or six days of my first year of school, I told my parents I wasn't going back anymore. The very next day I was back in school, mainly due to a determined father. I was fortunate indeed to have parents who placed a high value on education and saw to it that their children would be better prepared for life.

That youngster who had some difficulty going to school had difficulty staying in school. I did experiment with playing hooky. The first time I did this, a friend of mine and I agreed we'd come to school and leave. We didn't show up for class and strangely enough we didn't go very far. We went just a short distance where we had a good view of the school. We thought our absence would cause a stir, that a search party would be out to look for us and that we'd cause some degree of excitement. We waited....and waited....and nothing happened. We were quite disappointed.

In the course of time, with the ins and outs of life, the opening and closing of doors, changing of attitudes and having new priorities, like you, I became a school board member. But today is not about me and I assure you that during my tenure it never will be. This conference, the future, is all about you, the 872 school board members scattered around this state, daily engaged in the noble endeavor of making life better for young people.

All of us are on a journey, one that will be longer for some than for others. Regardless of the length, you will leave behind some type of legacy. This journey may witness outstanding success, a failure or two, high points and low, and perhaps tragedy and sadness. But it should always be characterized by a sense of duty. As you know, this journey can be one of wonder, of discovery, of excitement, growth and pride. This can be a journey where you realize dreams, make a strong contribution and indeed affect the future.

A child is waiting for all of us, waiting for those words of encouragement, efforts of support and unchanging faith that every individual can, in their own way and time, achieve success. Throughout this journey, we should be challenged in this manner. And in your own personal journey, I'm confident that you will have the courage and commitment commensurate with the degree of your conviction.

The young people are depending on us. Theirs are the lives that you can affect and change and perhaps save. Indeed, what you do today can have an impact for generations to come.



We may never know the full extent of our influence on these young people. I think that's good; that unknown is OK with me.

Regarding a journey, there's an old proverb that goes, "As long as we're heading in the right direction, all you have to do is keep walking." On your own personal journeys, you may think of many people you've come in contact with. Think of all of those wonderful teachers who have done so much in the classrooms in your district. Think of the administrative staff who have performed exceptionally well. And you cannot forget the outstanding students who have brought credit to your schools and your communities.

We must try to give hope to a lot of silent children. We are responsible for all of the students from the college bound to the at-risk. I firmly believe that every child at least once deserves to have a front-row seat.

Our journey is worth it all. The challenges continue; work still needs to be done. That child is still waiting. Today I hope you will join me and recommit ourselves to the challenges ahead. Let's keep walking in the right direction and working on behalf of these young people.

In due time, you will have your reward. At services' end, you will be considered true and faithful stewards and advocates for those young people with the inquiring minds.

Finally, always remember that no one ever stands so tall as when he or she stoops to help a child. ☘

—Tom Blankenship, a school board member from Lincoln County, was installed this month as KSBA president

Quotes on education from Kentucky and elsewhere



fun.” Rowan County High School Assistant Principal Ray Ginter on the addition of an aviation class at his school. From the *Morehead News*.

“**S**tudents are exposed to a field which is dominated by baby boomers that are beginning to retire, which will cause several job vacancies. Aviation is saturated with math, science and social studies. As students make the connection to the content areas, learning becomes

“**T**he worst trouble really is that this is a cut we could kind of get past and move forward on, but (Education Commissioner Terry Holliday) alluded to fiscal year 2012 being in a similar situation. As they say, this may become the new norm for us. We’re going to have some really difficult choices to make probably over the next couple of years.” Barren County Schools Finance Director John Stith reacting to news of a mid-year, \$49.3 million cut in state SEEK funds due to a shortfall caused by several factors, including higher-than-anticipated student enrollment. From the *Glasgow Daily Times*.

“**I**n this situation, a portion (of funds to cover the cut) will have to come from our contingency fund. In order for us to continue to provide a quality education, the state is going to have to fund instructional materials and staff. Unfunded mandates need to be a thing of the past.” Hazard Independent Schools Superintendent Sandra Johnson on some of the choices district leaders face due to the SEEK cut. From the *Hazard Herald*.

“**E**verybody’s heard about ‘edujobs,’ including the schools and the community, so they are thinking this is going to mean new education jobs either this year or

next, and this will curtail our ability to actually do that.” Jessamine County Schools Superintendent Lu Young on the recommendation that districts use their federal “edujobs” funds to cover the SEEK cut. From the *Nicholasville Jessamine Journal*.

“**T**hat (SEEK cut) means your school districts will have to come up with some extra money — probably out of their rainy day fund to make up for it. The only answer for the school systems are to either raise taxes or to use their rainy day fund to make up for the loss of the money.” State Rep. Rick Nelson (D-

Middlesboro). From the *Harlan Daily Enterprise*.

“**T**he bottom of the bucket is near.” Bowling Green Independent Schools spokeswoman Leslie Peek on her district’s loss of \$331,000. From the *Bowling Green Daily News*.

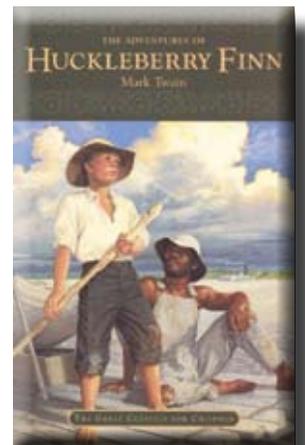
“**W**e have new standards, new assessments and a new way of how we view assessment in the classroom. Teachers have to view assessments differently because looking at that assessment dictates how you teach now.” Chip Southworth, director of secondary education for Scott County Schools, on preparing teachers for the new state accountability standards that will be part of testing next year. From the *Georgetown News-Graphic*.

“**I** think it energizes their bodies and their brains to be able to absorb knowledge everywhere.” Camp Dick Robinson Elementary School (Garrard County) art teacher Mary Scott on the impact at her school of the FITT (Frequency, Intensity, Type, Time) room, a mini-gym that encourages student physical activities. From the *Danville Advocate-Messenger*.

“**T**he more kids are engaged, the better the discipline. We emphasize role models and some-

Revising history

“**I**f kids don’t learn that it’s not okay to use the N-word or to treat people this way – that words and actions truly do offend – what could happen? So I ask all parents and teachers and community members: What better place to learn these ideas and practice a culture of tolerance than in a safe classroom where an adult can lead a discussion based on history and students can feel free to express their ideas without criticism?” Julie Ford, an English teacher at Daviess County High School, on a book company’s plans to publish a new version of Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, minus two “culturally offensive yet historically accurate racial terms.” From the *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*.



times teachers just have to show kids how to be positive. In our model the teachers act appropriately using proven techniques. The teachers do a great job of running with it. There's less lecture and more engagement." Chad Buckman, assistant principal of Zoneton Middle School (Bullitt County), Kentucky's 2011 Assistant Principal of the Year. From the Shepherdsville *Pioneer-News*.

**"I think it's important to show today's students that people who were once**



**in the same seats they are in made that sacrifice to serve their country."** Erlanger-Elsmere Independent board member David Bird on creating a wall

of honor to recognize every graduate who served in the military during Lloyd High School's 83-year history. From the Fort Mitchell *nky.com*.

**"Anything that's 600 or 700 pounds with antlers, you just don't need to get around if they're stressed."** Jayson Plaxico, a wildlife biologist with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, after tranquilizing an elk that had become trapped on the playground of a Pike County elementary school. From the Pikeville *Appalachian News-Express*.

**"The problem we have at the high school level is that students start on some of those skill sets so late. At the same time they're working with the academic requirements, they're trying to squeeze in a set of vocational requirements as well, and that's where I think we and all other**

high schools in Kentucky lose out. If we're really serious about this, then we need to start preparing kids with those skills earlier on, and we can do it instead of cramming everything down at the last minute." Webster County Schools Superintendent James Kemp on one element of a proposed districtwide middle school, which he feels will help prepare students for success when they get to high school. From the *Providence Journal*.

**"These are students that could be working full time to support their families, in legal trouble, pregnant or even just have social anxiety. We give them the flexibility they need to be able to learn. We get to know our students' lives and help them on a very personal level. If they need a place to stay, we find one for them. We receive calls at all of the times of the day, at home and at the school. It is our job to help them in every part of their lives."** Gateway Academy High School (Graves County) Principal Donna Crouch with her take on the positive impact of the dropout prevention efforts at her school. From the *Paducah Sun*.

**"We are going 30 minutes longer than a normal school day. I don't think that we can add any more time to the school day. We have another week in January and the whole month of February and the floods of March. So unfortunately I would like to ask that we just eliminate spring break from the calendar. This will be five days we can teach before testing. I think it is critical."** Letcher County Schools Superintendent Anna Craft whose board agreed to cancel the scheduled spring break to make up for some of the 20-plus days – and counting – of instructional time missed by the end of January. From the Whitesburg *Mountain Eagle*. ☘

## Mandating PE, body mass index measurements

### POINT ...

**"I don't believe in a nanny state or a fat police and that's not what this bill is about. We want our children to receive moderate to vigorous physical activity 30 minutes a day. Now there is a heightened concern about the height and breadth of government, but public school is an institution that exists already. We're not reaching into their homes or in their bedrooms or under their kitchen tables and telling them they have to do jumping jacks. This is taking place in the school environment."** Rep. Addia Wuchner (R-Florence) on her legislation, House Bill 88.

### COUNTERPOINT...

**"Most legislation starts out innocently enough, but it always leads to the destruction of our freedoms. The Dudley-Do-Rights always start off by just collecting data. Then they are so 'shocked' by the data that they feel compelled to take action to control our children. They will say they don't want to, but they must, because they love the kids so much and they like the power and control, too."** Tom Wurtz, a northern Kentucky political commentator in a blog entitled, "Rep. Wuchner: Leave our Kids' Big Macs Alone!"

From the Danville *Advocate-Messenger*



# The Kentucky School Boards Association Still going strong after 75 years

Annual Conference coverage, Pages 9-24



# Futurist: Preserve past as prologue

By Madelynn Coldiron  
Staff Writer

Using illustrations like a 1903 book of thought-provoking literature for second-grade students that today seems advanced and a now-closed 1930 school designed with whimsical features for children, futurist David Zach focused as much on what has been lost as what might be found in years ahead.

"We no longer have things carved above the doorways – carved in stone; we used to have things like, 'Knowledge. Wisdom. Eloquence,'" he told the 1,000-plus school board members, superintendents and others attending KSBA's annual conference in Louisville. "Now we have those posters that are replaced every few weeks as the themes change."



As for the book meant to communicate ageless truths to students, "Would that document be allowed in your public schools today? What has been lost?" he asked. "I do not want to suggest that history be an anchor, though anchors have their uses. But history is a toolbox, it is a treasure box and if you do not go in and use those tools, you will lose those tools."

Zach, the plenary speaker at the Feb. 4-6 event – KSBA's 75th – juxtaposed past and present to drive home points about the future.

It was not your typical "crystal ball" prognostication.

Some nuggets:

- Teachers must have credentials and a structured career path, yet in other areas, credentials increasingly are less important than the ability to get the job done.

"How much of your work over the last 20 years has been dramatically altered, transformed, by the work of college dropouts?" he asked, citing Michael Dell, Apple's Steve Jobs and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg as examples.

- Get used to what you cannot get used to. "You think we've seen a lot of innovation over the last 20 years, but in some ways, we're just getting warmed up. There's going to be confrontation, resistance and frustration. Surprising, unpredictable futures ... And what you have to do in that situation is figure out where to put your attention. The most valuable thing in the economy today is attention, because attention is the pathway to all other things – time, money."

- The emphasis on STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and mathematics is "basically nonsense, if that's all they're focusing on. Because we must also have something I've come up with: PTHB --philosophy, theology, history and biography." Science, Zach said, "does not know how to answer the questions; it knows how to raise them. And we are so poorly prepared to face those questions."

- It's not all about change. "Find a place to stand because when you have a foundation, a place to stand, you think you can rule the world. But if there is nothing that you can rely on, nothing that is permanent, then you are just swept along, like market forces that do not serve you."

- Think like a designer: "How could we make that happen and what would have to

## David Zach's Call to Action for taking ownership of the future

1. Start smoking – relax, take breaks, talk to strangers to find out what's going on.

2. Start drinking – if you break bread, you break barriers.

3. Promote a first aid mindset – take risks, weighing consequences against the value of rebooting.

4. Engines of innovation – be free to fail; protect and support small ideas.

5. Toys and tools – learn to turn off technology and not worship it.

6. Wisdom and innocence – listen to the lessons of history and approach the future as a child.

Continued on next page

# Board members also look to the future — of core content and testing

By Madelynn Coldiron  
Staff Writer

Just as they do in schools across the state, new core content standards and a new state assessment loomed large over KSBA's 75th annual conference.

Several clinic sessions dealt with aspects of the standards, from professional development to basics for board members. Superintendents gathering for the conference took advantage of the time to hold their own training on the standards Friday morning. The new core content dovetails with assessment reforms mandated in 2009 by Senate Bill 1; educators currently are being trained on the new math and English/language arts content through a series of networks across the state.

"School boards are critical players in this," KSBA Executive Director Bill Scott told a general session crowd at the annual conference. "The stakes are much too high for board members to stay on the sidelines."

At this point, school boards should be asking their superintendent and administrators whether the district's teachers are getting the professional development and support they need to begin teaching the new math and English/language arts standards in the fall, Scott said.

"Board members need to be asking the superintendent and some of the representatives from your district who are going to these regional trainings, how's the training and what are you doing with it when you get back to the district to help your colleagues?" he said.

Make this a regular discussion topic at board meetings and



**Gene Wilhoit, left, former Kentucky education commissioner and now head of the Council of Chief State School Officers, talks with KSBA Associate Executive Director David Baird, center, and Executive Director Bill Scott during a break at a superintendents' training session on new core content standards held in conjunction with KSBA's conference.**

get regular updates on SB 1, Scott said, and engage the local media to help the community understand the rigorous new standards; make sure teachers have the support they need.

"This is critical work and the clock is ticking," he told a clinic session on the topic, "and your kids are going to have to know these standards by the spring of 2012."

Felicia Cummings Smith, associate commissioner at the state education department, emphasized to superintendents gathered for their preconference training that, "We are not going to change the course" on the new standards.

"The common core standards are at the center of our agenda for college and career readiness as well as increasing the graduation rate in our state," she said.

Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of State Chief School Officers and a former Kentucky education commissioner, stressed during the superintendents' training that the standards initiative is not telling educators how to teach, but it will "promote more diversity in instructional processes, more equalization of learning opportunities for students and more creativity and initiative on the part of the folks at the school and district level."

He urged superintendents to begin thinking about related curriculum design and also how the new standards will affect textbook use. "There's no way that a single text is going to provide the resource base you need with this," he said.

Forty-five states are now on board with the national standards. Science standards are expected to be unveiled by the end of this year and talks are starting on social studies and the arts. ❧

## ZACH continued from previous page

change in order for it to happen – that's the essence of futurist thinking, of not stopping at any one point when someone says you can't do that, but rather asking what would have to change so it could happen."

In the information age where machines talk to machines, the source of wealth, Zach said, is our ability to connect people, things and ideas, "and especially people, things and ideas we didn't think were connectable. Wealth is not just dollars and cents – it is everything that has value."

The key question for the future is "what has not yet been connected," he said.

Zach ran through a laundry list of present and future change: Biometrics, cloning, bionic body parts, computers that are smarter than us, virtual reality that makes reality pale. With unlimited choices, possibilities and futures, "Are we thinking about the things that may guide all this power we are now having?" he asked.

Our children, he said, are getting the message that nothing can wait, last or satisfy; no one can be unhappy, judged,

trusted; nothing is hidden, forbidden, certain; everyone will be connected, famous, followed; everything is a need, a choice, is possible.

Creating a sense of freedom and liberation from the past has been good, Zach said, but in looking at those messages again, "You begin to see signs of decadence...and signs of willful self-destruction. This is not a list of things about a society that is optimistically looking forward," he said, "it is a litany for a society that is tired and wants to sleep." ❧

# Beshear, Williams, lobby for education bills...and votes?

By Brad Hughes  
Staff Writer

**K**entucky state government leaders – both candidates for governor – asked school boards and superintendents to get behind pieces of education legislation at KSBA's annual conference. While they were at it, they also admitted that actions being taken in Frankfort are making things rough for those local leaders.

Speaking at separate appearances during the Feb. 4-6 conference, Gov. Steve Beshear and Senate President David Williams explained, apologized and exhorted school leaders about cutting SEEK funding, reducing high school dropouts, supporting charter schools, and staying the course to implement the Senate Bill 1 reforms adopted by the 2009 legislature.

## Beshear

"I don't have to tell you what we've been through for three years because you've been on the front line," Beshear said in a Friday opening general session address. "We've cut a billion dollars (but) we've made children the top priority because education is the best long-term investment we can make.

"You've been hurt. I don't pretend we haven't taken a dime out of education," the governor said. "I know it's been tough on you and you've had to make tough decisions."

Beshear confirmed what superintendents and district finance officers have been expecting after this year's budgeted SEEK funding fell \$49.6 million short – SEEK will be underfunded next year as well.

"The shortage on the SEEK fund is \$28.7 million in next fiscal year," he said. "Fortunately, we have \$133.6 million in 'edujobs' money. I know you'd rather spend that money some other way; I would, too. But at least we have sufficient funds to fully fund the SEEK formula for the next two years.

"I ask you to stay the course and continue to be the fiscally responsible managers that you've been," Beshear said. "I didn't think I'd get elected to be a budgeteer, and I know that you didn't think you'd be a school board member having to worry all the time about your budget. But that's the lot that has been cast for us during this historic recession."

The Democratic governor, who is seeking re-election, called on his audience to get behind House Bill 225, a measure that would raise the mandatory school attendance age from 16 to 18 by 2016.

"Our kids need more education, not less. We need them to stay in school because their economic security depends on it," Beshear said, adding that he knows some school leaders have



Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear



Senate President David Williams

concerns about the bill.

The current version of the bill addresses those concerns by phasing it in over four to five years, he said.

"It gives us plenty of time to make sure that we have the alternative programs and alternative career paths in place in all of our schools," Beshear said. "Some say, 'Well, you're just going to leave those kids in classrooms to disrupt the schools.' We're not going to do that; we're not going to allow that. We can work with these children and many of them in these alternative programs can become successful adults. We're going to have time to phase these programs in in schools that don't have them.

"It's not a magic bullet, but we need to send a strong message to our students that education is important and that you need to finish school if you're going to be successful."

## Williams

Williams (R-Burkesville) also referenced unpopular decisions school leaders face due to "the present budget crunch," particularly in implementing Senate Bill 1.

"You may have to put your future as a school board member at risk on occasion," Williams said. "As fellow legislators – and I believe that's what you really are – many times we have to make decisions that seem to be not particularly popular but we know that have to be done."

The Senate leader – a candidate in the Republican primary for governor this year – briefly mentioned the SEEK shortfall by saying that the data on average daily student attendance – a basic element of SEEK calculations – was "flawed" when it was given to the General Assembly.

Williams received applause when he pointed to the Senate's passage of a bill to give superintendents greater authority to hire principals. And he made a pitch for the charter school bill passed by the Senate, but in trouble in the House.

"We need to allow voluntary charter schools," he said. "They would have to be approved by local school boards; no one else would be able to charter a school and divert public money." Williams said charter schools would strengthen the state's options for turning around persistently low-achieving public schools. ☘

# Garrard County board member has 'Proud' moment

Advocate Staff report

**G**arrard County school board Chairman Joe E. Brown has led the board through school building projects, two tax increases and three superintendents. But he's also led Paint Lick Elementary School's opening day event with positive comments each year.

His leadership in those disparate venues shows Brown's commitment to the district's children at all levels. It also explains why he is being recognized with the 2011 Proudfoot Award for Outstanding School Board Member in Kentucky.

Brown's acceptance theme was advocacy for children. He paid tribute to the rest of the board team, noting, "These folks can be counted on to stand up for children every time."

While board members may meet once a month, Brown noted, "We have a duty the other 30 days of the month to be advocates for children."

Kentucky's population is aging and many taxpayers no longer have ties to their local schools, said Brown, whose son, Kevin, is general counsel for the state education department.

"We as board members have to be ready at all times when we encounter these folks in the Rotary, in the church in the grocery store, or wherever, to explain to them why it was necessary for us to set the tax rates that we set, why it was necessary for us to adopt a nickel tax, why it's necessary for our students



KSBA President Delmar Mahan and Kentucky PTA President Sandy Rutledge congratulate 2011 Proudfoot Award winner Garrard County school board member Joe Brown.

to have clean, modern, cool and warm facilities and safe facilities in which to learn," Brown said.

Brown was nominated for the award by Paint Lick Elementary's PTO, which cited his support of the school, its staff and its parents. The Kentucky PTA sponsors and judges the award.

"Mr. Brown has been known to support the school in ways that most people do not realize," PTO Officer Tara Noe wrote in the nomination. "He sometimes gives donations to help with attendance incentives and often can be seen at school during the school day."

The 24-year member of the Garrard County school board has served as its chairman for the past decade. During his tenure, the district has built new middle and high schools and three elementary schools, made possible in part by the

two "growth nickels" the board approved.

"In a rural county that is heavily dependent upon an agricultural property tax base, Mr. Brown's leadership on the issue assisted in galvanizing broad support from the community by emphasizing education as the only sure way to guarantee a better quality of life to the next generation of Garrard County children," his nomination said.

After leading the board through three superintendent searches, he also helped those new school chiefs during their transition into the district, his nomination said, noting that the key qualification he always looks for in a superintendent is being "student centered."

His nomination notes that Brown accompanies the superintendent to schools on Teacher Appreciation Days, helping to hand out thank-you gifts to all employees.

"By leading and participating in such events, Mr. Brown can honestly say he has visited every classroom in every school, an accomplishment that makes him aware and knowledgeable of what is going on in Garrard County Schools," it said. "This knowledge and interest lead to informed decisions and an ever-increasing credibility with his constituents."

At the state level, Brown, a retired banker, has been designated by the education commissioner more than 40 times to help interview and recommend candidates to fill school board vacancies around the state, a voluntary task. ☞

## Holliday issues rea

Advocate Staff Report

**K**entucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday announced the Commonwealth Commitment to College and Career Readiness, and in doing so, issued a challenge to the state's school boards. The "commitment" is aimed at improving the preparation of high school graduates to do college-level class work or to move into the labor force with the necessary skills.

"We have 50,000 eighth-grade children. If we don't do something different, only 17,000 of the 50,000 will be ready for college or careers when they graduate in 2015," he said. "I

am asking you as a board to adopt as a goal, as a focus of Senate Bill 1, this college and career readiness."

The commissioner has e-mailed copies of this commitment to all superintendents and school board chairmen. Every district has been given a goal, he said.

Holliday said the state Department of Education would be supplying local school leaders with "focused strategies" to help prepare students for post-high school studies and work. And the commissioner said he would put the spotlight on



# Hammond named superintendent of the year

Advocate Staff Report

Rockcastle County schools believe success happens one student at a time, a theme exemplified by Superintendent Larry Hammond, who makes it a point to communicate one-on-one not only with students, but with staff and school board members, as well as community members and business people.

His communication skills and his leadership in the areas of finance, effective educational programs and community relations were cited as reasons Hammond is the recipient of the 2011 F.L. Dupree Award for Outstanding Superintendent. The award is presented by the family of the late F.L. Dupree Sr., a Lexington businessman and a lifelong supporter of Kentucky's public schools. It recognizes exceptional leadership in educational programs, finance, and student, staff and community relations. Honorees are chosen by a panel of past recipients.

"Lots of things have changed in Rockcastle County and for those of you who have been involved in education and administration for 16, 20 years, you've witnessed it as well," Hammond said when accepting the award. "We're engaged in a great war against ignorance and we win some of the battles and of course the real challenge is to win the war, but we do win some of the battles."

Hammond cited an e-mail he recently received thanking him for the district being back in school after missing days because of snow. That message, he said, urged him to "go strong." Hammond said the words could be a challenge for all of us – board members and legislators among others – "to go strong in the future."

During his tenure, Hammond has guided the district from assessment scores in the mid-50s (on the old KIRIS exam) to a 2009 district transition index score of 97.

The improvement in academic achievement and Ham-



Superintendent of the Year Larry Hammond of Rockcastle County is congratulated by School Energy Managers Project consultant (and former Pulaski County superintendent) Tim Eaton and Breathitt County school board member Ina Southwood.

mond's involvement in many areas of the community have been a boon to the area's economic interests, said Rockcastle County Chamber of Commerce President Arielle Reese.

"As chamber members, it is our job to ensure that our county and cities run and operate smoothly – and that tax dollars are spent in a cost-effective manner," she wrote in a letter of recommendation. "We must work together to effectively utilize and expand these resources to enhance economic opportunities for all Rockcastle Countians. Mr. Hammond has provided input to these endeavors by serving on many community advisory boards while providing leadership and countless hours volunteering to help give back to the community ..."

Hammond also has been a good neighbor, allowing a local company that was being forced from its premises

to temporarily move into a vacant school property until a \$6 million construction and expansion project by the county government was completed. County Judge-Executive Buzz Carloftis wrote that 94 people could have lost their jobs.

"Knowing that many of his students' parents worked for this company ... Larry stepped up to help the county government and the community retain those jobs that were scheduled to move out of the county," he said.

Since taking the reins in 1995, Hammond has focused on facility construction, including new buildings and upgrading existing ones and the continual improvement of Rockcastle County schools' technology. The opening of a new 60,000-square-foot area technology center in 2008 is one of the district's most recent accomplishments in this area.

Student and staff relations also are important to Hammond. He is a frequent visitor to the schools, attending student activities, talking with them in the hallway and eating lunch with them in the cafeteria. For staff members, Hammond participates in all professional development and instructional planning sessions. ☘

## diness throwdown



those school boards that did – and did not – take up his call.

"I'm going to put a map on the KDE webpage and every time we get a commitment from a local board, I'm going to turn that district 'green' and all the others are going to be 'red.' We're going to track at the state level, do we have more than words or do we have real commitment from our boards," Holliday said.

Kentucky's postsecondary institutions also will be coming at the readiness problem from their end. Kentucky universities are working with high

schools on transitional courses to help students who didn't make the ACT cut score, he said.

"That strategy alone," Holliday said, "will get us about 25 percent toward our goal."

"So I implore you, I beg you, I put the challenge to you to commit to the Commonwealth Commitment for College and Career Readiness for all children," he said. "There are some who are going to say, 'Oh, we're moving too fast. Oh, we don't have the money. We don't have the ability.' The truth is that either we don't know how to help all children succeed or we don't believe they all can succeed. And we do know how to help them all succeed." ☘

# FRIENDLY CELEBRATION

## Murray businessman honored for scholarship program

Advocate Staff Report

**W**hen Murray businessman Robbie Rudolph decided to give back to the school system and the region that set him on his path to future success, he did it in a big way, helping set up a scholarship program to benefit students from four school districts.

For his work in creating the Four Rivers Scholarship Program to serve the Fulton Independent and the Carlisle, Fulton and Hickman county school systems, Rudolph is the 2011 individual winner of the Kentucky School Board Association's Friend of Education award. It is given annually to both a corporation or organization and an individual in recognition of their outstanding contributions to public schools.

Rudolph, founder and president of Rudolph Tire Company, grew up in Fulton. To promote economic growth and development in the region, he has given more than \$100,000 to help students in these four school districts pursue educational opportunities at all levels.

Rudolph said the award really represents the four school districts and their superintendents involved in the scholarship program, and their ability to work together. He noted that the scholarship program began after he simply asked Fulton Independent Superintendent Dianne Owen what her district needed. This is what school boards should do, he said.

"I think we all need to be cognizant of what students need and what schools need and what we really need to do is listen: Listen to what the superintendents need, listen to what the school principals need. Let's don't tell them what to do – just find out what they need," Rudolph said.

The businessman said the scholarship program represents a commitment to the students.

Robbie Rudolph continued on Page 22



Rudolph shares a few thoughts after accepting the KSBA Friend of Education Award.

## Bank helps finance the future of area schools

Advocate Staff Report

**T**his may sound like it belongs in a commercial, but to Russellville Independent Schools, First Southern National Bank is more than just a bank. Not only has it given financial resources to the district, but bank employees also have given their time, serving as mentors and volunteers.

For these and other contributions, First Southern National Bank is the corporate recipient of the 2011 Kentucky School Boards Association's Friend of Education award. It is given annually to both a corporation or organization and an individual in recognition of their outstanding contributions to public schools.

William "Rusty" Clark, president of First Southern National Bank of Russellville, called the Logan County and Russellville Independent school districts "great partners." He said the mentoring program in particular is "near and dear to my heart."

"I think our employees get as much out of the mentoring as the students do," Clark said. "Part of our mission statement is being responsible stewards for those resources that are entrusted to us and also making our communities better places in which to live. And we really can't think of a better place to do that than investing in our young people in our communities."

In its nomination, Russellville Independent Schools cited the bank's participation in the district's mentoring program as one of its greatest contributions. The district and the bank began collaborating in 2004, with six of its employees training to become mentors. Since then, school officials say First Southern National Bank's commitment to the program has remained consistent, with seven employees participating this year. The bank allows these employees to meet with students during business hours.

Junior Achievement classes – which teach workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy – are taught by bank employees, who also serve as speakers during these programs.

The bank celebrates student success, posting framed portraits of the top students from the senior class in its lobby until the following year, when they are replaced by the next group of high achievers.

Each year at the back-to-school open houses, First Southern National Bank contributes to

First Southern continued on Page 22

# Under instruction

Metcalfe County leaders make changes to move high school from bottom of the list

By Jennifer Wohlleb  
Staff Writer

When state test scores were released last September, Metcalfe County Schools Superintendent Pat Hurt was so pleased the high school made Adequate Yearly Progress along with a 14-point increase, she said, “Hot diggity dog,” and gave away hot dogs to community members in the town square.

In addition to the hot dogs, she also put in their hands a packet of information about Metcalfe County High School’s turnaround from eight months earlier, when it had been placed on the state’s list of persistently low-achieving schools.

Hurt and several Metcalfe County school board members shared their success story during a workshop at KSBA’s annual conference.

“How do you turn around a high school that needs to make an about face?” she asked.

Fortunately, before being named in January 2009 to the low-achieving list, the district had already begun the transformation of a school that had been performing lower than expected for awhile.

School board member Steve Thomp-

son, who was chairman while this was going on, said school board-school council retreats were an important first step. Thompson said both sides needed better communication.

“If we’re not communicating face to face with the people at the ground level of seeing schools improve, how are we going to be able to judge whether we’re doing our job and if they’re doing their job?” he said. “At first, the councils did not want to be there. But I looked at it a lot differently because I had come from a school council and sitting on the board side of it, I thought it was the council’s opportunity to point the finger at the board and say, ‘You’re not giving us what we need. You need to help us more,’ and let them spell out what and why.”

District leaders also decided that the high school needed new leadership. The top job there had been a source of tension for years, to the point where for one entire school year there was no principal because of disagreements over who to hire. Thompson said the district’s previous superintendent had also not adequately communicated the board’s desire to turn things around to the high school staff.

“We’d say to the superintendent, we’ve got to see some changes at the high school,” he said. “The superintendent goes to the high school folks and says, ‘They’re screaming about changes being made at the high school, you guys need to step it up a little bit.’ The principal goes to the staff meeting and says, ‘Well, the board’s screaming again. And then you go to the grocery store and see a high school teacher who says, ‘Mr. Thompson, what does the board of education have against the high school?’”

“At our high school, it almost became an us-against-them mentality. Every time we tried to do something, it just fell on deaf ears.”

Hurt said an interim principal was put in place last January who took to the job as if it were hers permanently, and the school community began to respond. In addition to changing

leadership, Hurt said newly established district walk-through teams were quickly able to determine why principals were spending nearly 80 percent of their time on instruction, but with few results. All district principals had school administrative managers for administrative tasks.

“We started sending district teams into classrooms at the high school level because we needed baseline data,” Hurt said. “Where we thought we knew what the problem was, we needed to get a handle on what was really happening.”

And what the teams found out was that the feedback from the walk-throughs was not being communicated to the teachers.

“I left two of my district staff at the high school for the rest of the year,” Hurt said.

The district also hired a consultant who was at the high school for 20 days and provided valuable feedback and motivation. Two additional specialists were brought in to help with problems in special education.

Hurt said the interim principal also worked to get every student in the school to take some ownership in the state assessment and pledge to do their best.

“Our interim principal was a key player in what happened at the high school,” she said. “She moved us very quickly from being an adult-centered high school to being a student-centered one.”

And along the way, instead of fighting against the low-performing label, the district embraced the change it brought.

“At some point, we realized there was no way out but through,” Hurt said. “We didn’t like the status, we didn’t like that we couldn’t get off the list no matter what we did. There were a lot of things that we didn’t like.”

“I think our staff at the high school realized for the first time that it may have been the best worst thing that ever happened to our high school, to hit rock bottom and know that things have to change. This was a real eye-opener for them. I think our staff knows that what we did in the past is not acceptable.” ❧



Metcalfe County Schools Superintendent Pat Hurt's hard hat illustrates that her district is "under instruction."

# Mason County Schools push customer service to the front of the line

By Jennifer Wohlleb  
Staff Writer

After spending years focusing on treating students like customers, Mason County Schools Assistant Superintendent Kelly Middleton tackled the district's last customer service frontier – the spork.

Or more accurately, what the spork represented: a lack of attention to customer service in Mason County's cafeterias. He saw the spork in action when eating lunch one day at an elementary school.

"They had Salisbury steak that day and I've got my spork," he said. "There was a little girl at the next table who had given up on the spork and had picked it up, gravy and all, and was trying to eat it. Until you go through and see it for yourself, you just don't know."

Middleton said the impetus for changing the food service culture came out of his regular monthly meet-

**A Mason County elementary student's letter about a cafeteria experience demonstrates why customer service should matter to school administrators.**



Photo provided by Mason County Schools

## The remedy for bridging the customer service gap

By Wayne Dominick

Jefferson County Public Schools' customer service was ailing, but school officials knew just where to go for a remedy – the local hospitals.

Public Information Officer Lauren Roberts and her staff consulted with hospitals and several other Louisville businesses on how best to serve customers.

"We realized that we needed to take a fresh approach to the way we dealt with parents, faculty and each other," said Stephanie Bateman, who joined Roberts at a seminar on customer service at KSBA's annual conference. Bateman is the district's director of communications and publications.

The process started when the district began to investigate ways to improve its market share. "People in Jefferson County



Customer continued on Page 24

Frankfort Independent board member Paul Looney looks over some of the material Jefferson County Public Schools uses to promote its "I am JCP" customer service campaign.

ings with students to discuss school issues.

"I finally had a kid step up a few years ago and say, 'Mr. Middleton, the food's not any good,'" he said, which sent him on his odyssey to experience lunch at every school in the district.

He saw everything from cafeteria employees who yelled at students to shut up, salad that was brown by the last lunch period of the day, unappetizing food combinations and questionable practices that turned what should be a relaxing social time into the opportunity for punishment.

"We train our secretaries in 26 things to do anytime the phone rings or someone walks in the door," he said. "We are absolutely sick about customer service in Mason County. Food service was actually the last thing we jumped into in Mason County. I feel bad for waiting and it's really taken off since then."

One of the things students complained about was the lack of choices in everything from having just one entrée to only one type of salad dressing.

"Now, elementary students have six entrée choices daily, middle schoolers have eight and high schoolers have 12-15 every day," Middleton said. "There are full salad bars, soup bars. We involved the kids in these changes. It changed the culture of our schools, no lie."

Cafeteria employees have been a big part of that culture change, interacting with students instead of just putting food in front of them.

"The research says that if a child has at least one person in their life who makes a connection with him or her, then chances are they are going to be successful," said Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth Pettitt. "Superintendent (Tim) Moore raises the expectations for us on opening day. He says, 'I don't want just one for a kid going through Mason County Schools, I want one (connection) at the primary level, one at the intermediate and one at the middle and the high levels, and one from our support staff – cafeteria, custodian, bus driver, monitors. You make a difference, too.'"

Pettitt said district leaders emphasize to all employees that they have the power to make a difference in a child's life. "It's not just a teacher thing, it's a staff thing," she said.

Students have also been directly involved in other changes. "We asked kids if they wanted to drink from cartons or bottles," Middleton said. "We've had vendors bring in samples of foods and have students do a tasting and let us know what they liked."

The food service has a Facebook page along with a Twitter feed, both of which Middleton said receive regular feedback from students.

"We believe people support what they help to create, and students think they helped to create the cafeterias," he said, noting that hardly any students bring their lunches from home anymore, which has increased the food service revenues. ☘



Photo provided by Mason County Schools

Presentation is important in Mason County school cafeterias. No details are too small, even when it comes to slicing oranges in half a specific way so they won't squirt juice in students faces when they tear into them.

## Twelve customer service concepts

1. Hire the best
2. Train everyone
3. Collect reliable information
4. Monitor and evaluate customer service
5. Praise and reward customer service
6. Spend time and money on staff
7. Maintain facilities
8. Give great customer service to employees
9. Look for ways to improve or to "wow"
10. Keep backstage items backstage
11. Recover from mistakes
12. Make connections and form relationships with customers

— From Mason County Schools

# DISCOVERING LEADERS

## Elizabethtown middle school program looks past the obvious

By Madelynn Coldiron  
Staff Writer

**A**t Elizabethtown Independent's T.K. Stone Middle school, the launching of a project-based learning class last year dovetailed with an idea for helping students who had lost their enthusiasm for school at a critical age.

The school took advantage of a leadership program developed by the foundation representing the nearby Patton Museum at Fort Knox. It is aimed not at class presidents or overachievers, but at students who are unaware of their own leadership potential.

"They don't think about leadership at school or being a leader in life," explained Cindy Carter, a language arts teacher at T.K. Stone who teamed with social studies teacher Thad Elmore on The Leader In Me project.

The program for eighth-graders was launched last year after some collaboration and a run-through with the Junior ROTC program. "We could see the benefit in a school setting," Elmore said.

The leadership development material revolves around eight to 12 flexible modules to help students discover and develop confidence in their leadership skills and boost their self-esteem. The entire project takes nine full days, Carter said. The leadership behaviors taught use Gen. George Patton and other leaders as inspirations. Six "imperatives" make up the foundation of the lessons and student self-discovery: values, teamwork, excellence, commitment, action and perseverance.

"We really put students into doing some fun, quirky things, to look at their skills and talents," said Carter.

Students receive a grade for the project, in which they are learning skills that apply academically, such as writing presentations and essays. Carter said 42 percent of the first group of students went up at least one level in reading afterward.

But, noted Elmore, "The benefits are the ones you can't measure – that's what I like about it."

He and Carter stressed the flexibility of the project, which can be adapted for in-school or after-school use and



Elizabethtown Independent board Chairman Tony Kuklinski talks with Elizabethtown Independent students and The Leader in Me participants, from left, Justice Love, Brianna Taylor and Cole Fulkerson, who were part of the presentation about the program.

can be used by groups ranging from athletic teams to gifted classes. Both teachers worked together with the support of the school's principal, arranging their class periods and planning periods for The Leader in Me sessions.

One of this year's Leader in Me participants, Justice Love, said the program taught her that, "I can be a leader anywhere and can stand up and express myself."

Jordan Reed said his problem was that he was too talkative and not able to listen. After the program, "My friends noticed I like their insight a lot more," he said.

Cole Fulkerson, now a freshman in high school, found that the skills he learned in the leadership program made the transition "so easy."

Last year, other students noticed what the initial participants were doing and wanted to be in the program. "They were superstars," Carter said.

Because of the interest, students this year had to submit an application in addition to meeting other criteria. Parents must sign off on their child's participation. Parental participation also is important, she said, because parents are needed to help facilitate when the children are working in group activities. ☞

# Job-Embedded PD

By Wayne Dominick

**K**aren Kidwell seemed to be preaching to the choir during her presentation on job-embedded professional development during KSBA's annual conference.

Almost every head in the room was nodding in agreement as the project manager for Leadership Networks with the Kentucky Department of Education pointed out the weaknesses in the current professional development system for educators.

McCracken County school board Chairman Neil Archer used a sports analogy to sum up Kidwell's points: "If coaches coached their players the way we coach our teachers, they'd never win a game," he said.

Archer was referring to the current methods of having a big meeting and telling teachers how to do things, but failing to follow up or get feedback on the process. "You can't just tell people to change the way they're doing things and then expect it to happen. You have to work with them and give them instruction along the way," he explained.

Those are two areas the new model hopes to strengthen, according to Kidwell.

The change in professional development delivery is the result of language in Senate Bill 1, which paves the way for a new student assessment system to match new core content standards. The legislation also calls for the Department of Education to, "Provide or facilitate statewide training for teachers and administrators on integration of standards in instruction, assessments and improvement of student higher-order thinking/communication skills."

For this to happen, Kidwell said, administrators and teachers must understand the standards and the most effective way of delivering instruction to make sure students do well.

The adoption of the common standards also requires teachers to learn ways of teaching specific subject content, thus revealing another flaw in the current professional development delivery system, according to Kidwell.

"Obviously, if we have to work on specific subjects, we can't do it in a meeting that includes the entire faculty. It only makes sense for teachers in the same subject areas to work together," she said. Leadership networks can help accomplish this goal, she said.

The model devised by the Department of Education sets up Leadership Networks on several levels, from classroom to entire regions.

The networks, now being used to prepare teachers for the new standards in math and English/language arts, include Content Leadership Networks to provide support and instructional strategies to teachers in the same subjects; Administra-



**Neil Archer of McCracken County Schools and Mike Traylor of Caldwell County Schools compare how their districts provide professional development at the recent KSBA Annual Conference.**

tor Leadership Networks to serve building administrators; Instructional Supervisor Networks for district-level leaders; Superintendent Networks; and even Higher Education Networks to help colleges and universities deliver strategies to future teachers.

The Content Leadership Network would also allow teachers to get feedback on their implementation of methods and strategies from other teachers. Dr. Ann Lyttle-Burns sees this as an important piece in the teacher improvement puzzle.

A former teacher in Fayette County who is now a member of the Minority Intern Superintendent's Program in Clark County, Lyttle-Burns said under the current system of professional development, teachers never really know if they are doing things right.

"The way it is now, you go to a PD day and you come back and try new things, but you're not sure if they're working so you find yourself slipping back into doing things the way you always did them," she said. "If you had someone to work with you, it would make it a lot easier."

Caldwell County Board Member Mike Traylor thinks having networks would help even experienced teachers. Using another sports analogy he said, "Let's face it. Even Tiger Woods gets coaching when he's having trouble. If he needs a coach to help him, our teachers sure could use them."

Several board members at the session acknowledged that establishing these networks and increasing the time teacher leaders spend out of their classrooms would put added stress on already-strained budgets.

Marsha Walker, a former teacher who now serves on the Adair County Board, said she would like the new model to include observations. "I think the best way for teachers to learn is by observing good, quality teachers. Going into their classrooms and watching how they do everything, from teaching a lesson to handling discipline problems. They can learn a lot in just a day," she said.

Kidwell agreed and said that as part of the program, KDE is producing videos of teacher leaders in their classrooms to demonstrate how to implement the new standards.

— *Domick is a writer from Frankfort*

# Whitley County: A turnaround before turnarounds were cool

By Madelynn Coldiron  
Staff Writer

The Whitley County school district was doing a turnaround before that word even came into use in education circles.

The state education department commandeered the entire district back in 1989, declaring the system financially and academically bankrupt. While the action later was overturned in court – similar action also was taken against another district – Whitley County school leaders launched a turnaround campaign that addressed both the problems and the public image fallout.

District leaders outlined the steps they took get the district back on its feet at a KSBA annual conference clinic. Most recently, it placed in the top 10 percent of Kentucky districts as measured by the 2010 transition testing index, and met all its No Child Left Behind Target goals.

Former Superintendent Lonnie Anderson, who was hired by a new school board two years after the takeover, said the district was dealing with deficiencies in finance, attendance, test scores and the dropout rate. The negative publicity compounded those problems. Among staff, he said, there was a “feeling of failure” and the reasons for the takeover made easy excuses.

“We had to move from making excuses to problem solving,”

he said.

The board team made the decision to demonstrate confidence in the district with “a few quick and early wins,” that provided momentum, Anderson said.

The early wins, he said, motivated staff and students, silenced naysayers and proved that the administrative team could succeed.

“We needed to be sure we had the priorities established that would make the greatest difference because we had a limited amount of resources,” Anderson said.

The early actions included cleaning and upgrading school facilities, pursuing grants, hiring new bus drivers and floating a bond issue to replace old school buses.

## Academics

Deputy Superintendent Paula Trickett listed key initiatives that improved the district’s test scores, ranging from a revised personnel evaluation instrument to vertical and horizontal alignment of curricula coupled with exit criteria. The district also invested in classroom technology.

The board came up with a creative way to recruit effective teachers by using student teachers at nearby University of the Cumberlands as emergency substitutes, giving principals the opportunity to spot good instructors, Trickett said.

The board also approved a policy requiring portfolios at every grade and mandatory summer school for any student whose portfolio was rated novice.

“Now we practically have zero novice scores in our district,” Trickett said.

The district went after the achievement gap using a variety of grant-funded programs for after-school work, she said, knowing that to close the gap, “we’d have to be able to have access to these kids outside of the school day.”

## Dropouts and readiness

Taking aim at the district’s then-7 percent dropout rate – it is now less than 1 percent – Whitley County schools made sure at-risk students had reasons for attending by creating new sports and clubs.

“We wanted every student to have at least one extracurricular activity,” board Chairman Delmar Mahan said.

Math and reading courses were added for students who were not performing at grade level in those subjects, while credit recovery was offered during the school day, after school and in the summer. School-based day care and alternative programs were implemented and the district began a universal preschool for 4-year-olds, eventually developing a preschool center.

“I know it’s expensive,” Mahan acknowledged, “but it’s worth the effort to get kids ready.” ❧



Whitley County Schools Deputy Superintendent Paula Trickett said the district attacked academic deficiencies through improving teacher effectiveness and closing the achievement gap, among other things.

# RESOURCE CENTERS: Closing gaps and filling needs

By Wayne Dominick

**M**ike Denney was up front with those attending his session, "FRYSC and achievement gaps: Future leaders in jeopardy."

"I don't have all the answers, folks. There is no easy way to close the achievement gaps," he told the audience of more than 20 school board members.

He did, however, tell them how family resource and youth services centers can help close the gaps and how they, as board members, can help the FRYSCs.

While providing support for students is the traditional role for the centers, current economic conditions have required FRYSC directors to provide help to even more families and remove barriers to learning.

Denney, director of the state Cabinet for Health and Family Services' division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, said this often involves more than just school supplies and clothing. "One of the big problems we're facing across the state is number of times students change schools," he said. "Often it's because parents can't make the rent

payment and have to find another place to live. This causes a big disruption in a child's education."

To help alleviate the problem, many FRYSC directors have developed relationships with landlords to help families find suitable housing within the school district.

Denney pointed out this type of approach is one of the program's strengths. "We're not a cookie-cutter program where we do the same thing the same way in every district," he said. "We even do things differently in schools within the same district. We tailor our programs so they will provide the best service for the most people served by that center. And we often change direction depending on circumstances within a district."

He cited a center in western Kentucky that revamped its program midyear when a large employer in the county announced it would be laying off workers. "That director knew a lot of her families would need services she hadn't planned on so she rewrote her entire program to accommodate them."

Denney acknowledged tight budgets

make it difficult for school boards to fund FRYSCs beyond state funding, but challenged the board members to be involved in other ways. "It's your responsibility as a school board member to know what's going on in your schools and in your community," he said. "You need to know how your FRYSCs are involved and what they are doing to help those in need."

Jerry Board, now in his third year on the West Point Independent board, is well aware of the value of the centers. "We have a very high poverty rate and as a result our FRYSC director, Marsha Adams, is being asked to provide a lot for people. I honestly don't know how we could survive as a school without her," he said.

Floyd County Board Member Sherry Robinson said that as a community leader, she would have no problem approaching local businesses to solicit their support for FRYSC programs.

Board agreed, "I was elected to help kids and I'm going to do everything I can to do that."

— Dominick is a writer from Frankfort

## Kentucky Superintendent Vacancy

### Montgomery County Schools

4,900 (PS-12) [www.montgomery.kyschools.us](http://www.montgomery.kyschools.us)

The Montgomery County Board of Education is seeking an individual who has evidence of being a proven instructional leader. The successful candidate should have administrative experience, good oral communication skills, evidence of good fiscal management, and should be an effective motivator for the 650 staff members. Along with excellent people skills, the candidate must display a willingness to be visible and involved with the community. Experience with budgeting and building projects is a plus.

The salary is negotiable, with contract to begin July 1, 2011. Candidates must hold or be eligible for a Kentucky superintendent's certification. *Application deadline is March 4, 2011.*

### Grant County Schools

3,850 (PS-12) [www.grant.kyschools.us](http://www.grant.kyschools.us)

The Grant County Board of Education is seeking a superintendent of schools with the leadership skills for its exemplary school district that will assure the continuation of the current progress. The successful candidate should possess administrative experience, strong interpersonal skills and be community oriented. A student centered leader with a record of enhancing student performance is a plus. The candidate should also understand and be supportive of the district goals including furthering the new Career and Technology Center. The starting salary will be negotiable. Candidates must hold or be eligible for a Kentucky superintendent's certification. *Application deadline is March 14, 2011.*

To apply, send seven copies of all of the following: a cover letter/introduction, resume, application form, responses to eight questions, certification, three (3) letters of recommendation, and one video (optional) to: Name of district search, Kentucky School Boards Association, 260 Democrat Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601. Find application form, video information and questions at: [www.ksba.org](http://www.ksba.org); go to Employment Opportunities.

## FIRST SOUTHERN continued from Page 13

students' financial literacy, educating them about how to open checking accounts. The bank also has created Honor Roll Savings Accounts, depositing \$1 for every "A" a student makes on his or her report card, up to \$10 per grading period. And among its financial contributions, one of the biggest it makes each year is the sponsorship of boys and girls basketball tournaments. Bank employees make the arrangements, draw up schedules, book accommodations and staff the games. Any profit made after expenses is donated back to the district. ☘

KSBA President Delmar Mahan congratulates corporate Friend of Education winner First Southern National Bank of Russellville and, center, bank President William "Rusty" Clark and Alex Keltner, senior vice president.



## ROBBIE RUDOLPH continued from Page 13

"I told all the students at all four schools that when you graduate from high school and you throw that cap in the air, we're going to catch it," he said. "We're staying with you through postsecondary; we're staying with you until you get your job."

Since the program was created last year, 50 graduates have received scholarships for postsecondary education, while additional funds have been used to pay for dual-credit courses for high school students offered through partnerships with West Kentucky Technical and Community College, Murray State University, Mid-Continent College and the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Beyond financial assistance, the Four Rivers program promotes academic achievement and a focus on the future for students in all grade levels. Every student in kindergarten through fourth grade receives a free book as part of Rudolph's Readers. Fifth- and sixth-graders participate in an annual

Career Day, which allows students to explore career opportunities in the region and includes local business and industry partners. Seventh- and eighth-graders take field trips to the region's two technical schools to learn about the skills they will need to pursue career interests.

The program, which is the most recent recipient of the KSBA Public Education Achieves in Kentucky (PEAK) Award, also helps high school students with college visits and provides in-depth assistance with financial aid.

Rudolph was nominated for the award by Superintendents Dianne Owen, Fulton Independent; Dennis Bledsoe, Fulton County; Kenny Wilson, Hickman County; and Dr. Keith Shoulders, Carlisle County. They wrote, "His contributions provide not only means, but the motivation to pursue a post-secondary education and career. As these graduates enter the local work force, it is not only the students who benefit, but the surrounding community, as well." ☘

## Bad, bad board members



Trimble County board member Kim Temple gets into character as a board member who acts like a Sherman tank during meetings. She was one of nearly a dozen board members who participated in a skit at a conference workshop session aimed at identifying and stopping disruptive board behaviors. Other disruptive personality types include the Naysayer, Explosive, Bulldozer, Indecisive, Sniper and Agreeable.

The workshop, led by KSBA Associate Executive Director David Baird and Jean Crowley, a Danville Independent board member and KSBA board team development specialist, provided tips on the best way to neutralize these bad behaviors in order to keep meetings on track and board members functioning as a team.

# Seventy-five and counting



The celebration of public education continued at the Kentucky School Board Association's 75th Annual Conference.

Top photo, many past KSBA presidents shared memories of their time on the Board of Directors. From left, Ed Massey, Boone County; Brenda Jackson, Shelby County; Bill Lovell, McLean County; Joe Brothers, Elizabethtown Independent; Wilson Stone, Allen County; Margie Bradford, Bardstown Independent; Mary Cohron, Bowling Green Independent and Robert Evans, Fort Thomas Independent.

Left, Lee County High School student Aaron Shelton let his feet warm up the crowd as he kicked off the conference with a flurry of movement.

Above, at the end of the first day of conference, the Bullitt County Middle School Jazz Band provided a nightclub atmosphere as board members from across the state mingled at the Trade Show reception.

Conference from A to Z (or from Burbank to Peppers)



Former Louisville and Cincinnati radio announcer/comedian Gary Burbank opened the conference with an array of observations on education, politics and life lessons, including a suggestion – by his character Earl Pitts, American – that the nation should also remember the contributions of the not-so-smart, such as the man who first touched his TV antenna against a power line. But Sunday's closing brunch speaker Debra Peppers had her audience alternately laughing and wiping away tears as she shared stories from her days as a hall of fame teacher in Missouri to her Emmy-winning work as a radio and TV talk show host. She urged school leaders to “catch (students) being good and celebrate that good with them.”

**CUSTOMER continued from Page 16**

have a lot of options when it comes to choosing a school and we wanted to do everything we could to get them to choose our schools,” Roberts said. “We were getting complaints from parents and staff about how difficult it often was to get answers and we weren’t sure how to solve it.”

That’s where the hospitals came in. “We discovered schools have a lot in common with hospitals. We both deal with people who call with questions, and many times they aren’t sure who they should talk to. They’re stressed out and need help,” Roberts told the group.

The first thing JCPS decided to do was find out where the problems were. The answers were somewhat surprising. “We surveyed everyone we could – faculty, staff, parents – and found out that we were doing a better job dealing with the public than we were with each other,” Bateman said.

That information convinced JCPS leaders they needed to change the culture in the district. They also knew that such a change would require two things – a total commitment from administration and buy-in from the entire staff.

The first part was relatively easy. Central office staff knew a change was needed and were willing to do whatever was necessary to get it done. To accomplish the second part, the district organized focus groups comprising representatives from every group – custodians, bus drivers, clerical staff, teachers and administrators.

Roberts and her staff took what they heard and put together a program to emphasize and recognize customer service.

The first part of the program involves making every staff member feel like a needed and important part of the district’s success. “We started by putting up posters that say ‘I am JCPS’ to remind everyone that they are part of the district,” Roberts said. “We wanted everyone to know that whenever they deal with someone, they are representing Jefferson County Public Schools.”

In addition, the district developed a training program to

give the staff ways to improve customer service. One technique came from the district’s conferences with Norton Hospital.

“We copied Norton’s 15/5 rule,” Roberts said. “When you come within 15 feet of someone you should acknowledge them with a nod or a smile. If you come within 5 feet, you speak to the person. It’s a simple thing, but it makes a difference.”

A 24-hour rule was also implemented, meaning staff responded to all phone calls and e-mails within that time, and the phone was to be answered before the fifth ring. The district also took some advice from the focus groups on ways to improve customer service.

To back up the program, the district embarked on a rewards campaign.

“We distributed referral cards that staff members fill out and submit when they see someone else giving great service or when another staff member gives them great service,” Bateman said. The employee’s supervisor is made aware of the service and the employee receives a reward, such as a certificate, mug, notepad or pen.

Roberts said while there is no hard data, she has observed an attitude change throughout the district and is not getting as many complaints as she did before.

She cautioned board members in attendance that the key to making the program work is having a concrete plan and making sure everyone is involved.

Oldham County Board Member Larry Dodson agreed, saying he thinks board members also should be involved in the training. “We were the ones out there answering the public’s questions. We need to know who has the answers and how they can reach them,” he said. “Customer service is what board members do every time someone comes to them with a concern.”

—Dominick is a writer from Frankfort

# Will recent incidents of gun violence change school safety conversations in Kentucky?

In fewer than 60 days ending 2010 and opening 2011...

- A depressed Wisconsin teen went to his locker, retrieved a duffel bag with two guns, returned to class and held 24 classmates and a teacher hostage for hours before killing himself.

- An ex-teacher's husband went to a Florida board meeting, pulled a gun, began shooting at the superintendent and board members, was wounded by a security officer and committed suicide.

- A suspended Nebraska high school senior returned to his school, sought out the assistant principal involved in his situation, shot and killed her, then drove away to take his own life.

- A Colorado board moved its meetings to schools after a member, claiming death threats, said he would bring a gun to meetings at the central office, where there was no "concealed carry" ban.

- A Texas board was asked to let staff be armed on campus as a "first line of defense," while two state legislatures and Congress were urged to ease gun possession limits at schools.

And in the middle of these incidents came the murders of six people and the wounding of 13 during the attempted assassination of a U.S. congresswoman at an Arizona town hall meeting.

Look at the news. Americans are talking about guns, gun control, the Second Amendment, personal rights and public safety. But the news coverage also shows local government leaders in several states discussing how to deal with security issues at their meetings.

Are Kentucky's school board members and superintendents ready for those conversations here?

## Shifting attention

Officials have had to address schools, guns and violence at least as far back as 1966, when a student climbed atop a University of Texas tower, killed 16 and wounded 32. Columbine High School in 1999 and Virginia Tech University in 2007 again shocked the nation and its education leaders into action.

Kentucky hasn't been immune. Students with guns killed two at East Carter High School in 1993 and three at Heath High School in 1997. After the latter incident, the General Assembly mandated tighter school security. Today, the Kentucky Center for School Safety is a training and information resource to the state's districts. School resource officers, a rarity a decade ago, are much more commonplace now.

But the shootings at the Florida school board and Arizona congresswoman's meetings are causing different kinds of safety discussions in Kentucky courthouses, city halls, district central offices, and even in the Capitol in Frankfort.

What should public officials do to ensure safety at public meetings that are open virtually to anyone and everyone?

After the Florida incident, KSBA Executive Director Bill



Brad Hughes  
KSBA Member  
Support Services Director

Scott and Kentucky Center for School Safety Executive Director Jon Akers encouraged school boards and superintendents to engage in serious talks about meeting safety.

They recommend that school leaders:

- Conduct a thorough review of their emergency management plans, especially their responses to situations that may arise at school board meetings.

- Ensure that this plan has been shared with – if not developed in concert with – local emergency first responders: police, fire departments and emergency medical services.

- Discuss the community climate experienced at board meetings, asking:

Do meetings routinely include an armed, uniformed security officer?

If not, should such a security practice be given serious consideration for your meetings?

Are law enforcement agencies readily available in case of an emergency?

What are the options for calling for immediate assistance from law enforcement in an emergency?

These aren't topics to put on the shelf until trouble can be reasonably anticipated. School boards close schools, raise taxes, expel students and set policies that establish expectations for people in school every day and those who visit once in a while. Superintendents fire people for performance issues, identify programs for elimination due to budgets and enforce decisions that may infuriate the affected.

There are enough conversations that start off "If we had only thought about..." This shouldn't be another one.

## The Last Word

I've walked the halls of hundreds of Kentucky schools, but I'll never forget my one visit to Heath High School, barely a week after the deadly December 1997 killings and woundings. I've attended hundreds of school board meetings, including some with over-the-top heated passions. I've been to meetings with uniformed, armed police officers, invariably more for show than out of fear that someone would pull a gun and open fire.

But now and forevermore the actions of a deceased ex-convict whose spouse was fired from her teaching job in a Florida school has a permanent place in the back of my mind. I'll still be going to school board meetings, right along with district staff, parents and grandparents, board members and superintendents, and, of course, children. And I'm sure there will be situations that cause me to think about Florida...and wonder if the locals thought about, talked about and resolved what to do if the unthinkable erupts at their traditionally simple, quiet, unremarkable monthly meetings.

And that's a message worth getting out. ☚