

KENTUCKY SCHOOL ADVOCATE

A publication of the Kentucky School Boards Association ■ February 2010



2010 KSBA Annual Conference: Board members learn lessons

Energy savings • Early childhood education • School meals • Grade-level transitions • School safety • Green schools • Communications • Strategic planning • ACT strategies • Effective meetings • Image building • Leadership transitions • Legislative advocacy • Community education • Charter schools • Budgeting • Single-gender schools • School construction • Informed budgeting • eMeetings • School law • Student board members • School councils • Service learning • Student wellness

Kentucky Superintendent Vacancies

Jackson County Schools

(2,221 enrollment, PS-12)

www.jackson.kyschools.us

The Jackson County Board of Education is seeking a proven education leader as its next superintendent. Strong character traits including those of honesty, integrity and being ethical and fair are expected. The successful candidate should also possess excellent people skills along with good public relations skills. The salary will be competitive and negotiable with the contract to start July 1. *All applications must be received by Feb. 24.*

McCracken County Schools

(7,038 , K-12) www.mccracken.kyschools.us

The McCracken County Board of Education is seeking an outstanding innovative education leader for its next superintendent. This individual should continue the current momentum of the district through leadership that oversees continuing improvement of student achievement, a reconfiguration of building grade levels and strong communication skills. Additionally, the successful candidate should possess administrative experience that includes demonstrated leadership involving all segments of the community and must be eligible for a Kentucky superintendent's certification to apply. Beginning date is July 1. Salary is competitive (Current salary \$145,000). *Application deadline: Feb. 26.*

Trigg County Schools

(2,051, PS-12) www.trigg.kyschools.us

The Trigg County Board of Education is seeking an experienced and proven public school leader with the necessary skills and commitment to continue the district's successful movement toward achieving its highly aggressive academic and non-academic goals through its established vision and

mission. The successful candidate must demonstrate exemplary instructional, management, communication and organizational skills and must have expectations of self and of each stakeholder within the school community. Salary will be regionally competitive, with contract to begin July 1. *All applications must be received by Feb. 26.*

Nelson County Schools

(4,730 – PS – 12) www.nelson.kyschools.us

As its next superintendent the Nelson County Board of Education is seeking an individual with the leadership skills and strong instructional background needed to assure the continuation of current district progress. Along with administrative experience, candidates should possess strong interpersonal skills with a strong desire to be part of the total community. The successful candidate should also demonstrate the innovative skills necessary to successfully operate a school district within the current economic climate while promoting high expectations and accountability. Candidates must hold or be eligible for Kentucky certification. Salary will be competitive and negotiable, with the contract beginning July 1. *All applications must be received by March 9.*

Eminence Independent Schools

(675 – PS – 12) www.eminence.kyschools.us

As its next superintendent, the Eminence Independent Board of Education is seeking a passionate education leader capable of building upon the rich tradition and heritage of the Eminence School District. Along with administrative experience, the successful candidate also should have a proven record of instructional leadership. The board seeks a leader who respects diversity, promotes teamwork, has excellent people skills and will completely immerse himself or herself in the Eminence community. *All applications must be received by March 25.*

To apply, send seven copies of a cover letter/introduction, resume, application form, video, responses to eight questions, certification and three (3) letters of recommendation to: (Insert district name) Superintendent Search, Kentucky School Boards Association, 260 Democrat Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601. Find application form, video information and questions at www.ksba.org, under "Employment Opportunities."

KENTUCKY
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KSBA

"A brighter future through better public schools"

2010 CONFERENCE COVERAGE

THE SPEAKERS

STARTING EARLY

When his Maryland school district bore down on closing the achievement gap, preschool expert Dr. Jerry Weast started from the bottom up ... Page 8

CHARTER CHALLENGE

In his first speech to the association membership, state Education Commissioner Terry Holliday didn't mince his words – the words “charter schools,” to be exact ... Page 9

IT'S MAGIC

Attendees may have been closer to believing in magic after hearing from Billy Riggs – and believing in public education as well ... Page 14

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On the cover



Fleming County Schools officials tested their skills on the video game, “Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader.” Playing the game during KSBA’s annual conference are board member Jamie Collinsworth, seated, board member Ed Ward, left, interim assistant superintendent Rita Dials, and board member John Hyatt.

TAKE NOTE

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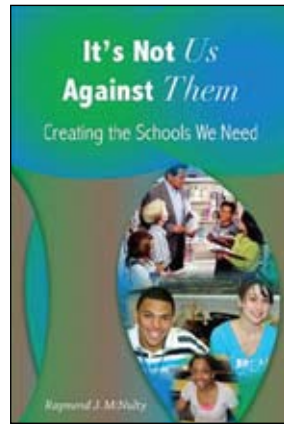
Positively improved

The Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline is pointing to recent Kentucky data showing that the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system it promotes is making a difference in suspensions, disciplinary infractions and graduation and retention rates in the schools that reported their figures. The system creates a framework for using the best practices in student behavior and academics; the center provides training.

In 10 Kentucky schools reporting three consecutive years of data while using the PBIS system, suspensions decreased by 24 percent in high schools and 40 percent in middle schools. Data involving 13 high schools using PBIS show improved dropout rates and retention rates.

Bookworthy

Bowling Green Independent Schools' Goals and Expectations initiative is featured in *It's Not Us Against Them: Creating the Schools We Need*, a book by Dr. Raymond J. McNulty. The district's four



overarching goals and expectations are Building Relationships, Engaging Students, Teaching 21st Century Skills and Personal and Professional Growth. McNulty is Senior Vice

President of the International Center for Leadership in Education and a former Vermont education commissioner.

Not too much information

The digital train has left the station with the creation of the Kentucky Learning Depot, a repository of digital learning content available to all P-20 educators. It will expand resources with standards-based digital content such as textbooks, animations and videos. The repository also allows educators to share these resources, which saves time and money as well as spreading information about best practices.

The new system is a collaboration among an assortment of the state's education entities. For more information, visit www.kylearningdepot.org.

Complete

With the appointment of two new members to the Kentucky School Boards Insurance Trust Board of Trustees, the reconstituted panel has a full complement of 21 trustees.

The board oversees the combined risk management services of KSBIT and the Kentucky League of Cities as part of a new partnership.

The newest trustees are Madison County Superintendent Tommy Floyd and Bourbon County Schools Finance Officer Andrea Kiser. Floyd becomes the second representative of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents on the KSBIT panel. Kiser represents the Kentucky Association of School Business Officials. ☘

KSBA kudos

KSBA recently honored two employees for reaching benchmarks in their service to the association. Brad Hughes, director of Member Support Services, was recognized for 15 years on the job, while Kerri Schelling, director of Board Team Development, has reached the 10-year mark. They were applauded during KSBA's annual holiday luncheon, held at the association's office in Frankfort.



KSBA's 74th Annual Conference



Complete coverage begins on Page 8

Quotes on education from Kentucky and elsewhere



Photo provided by Glasgow Independent Schools

“Marching band has gone from an event where it was acceptable to go out on the football field, spell your school’s name and play some music and if you played well, judges gave you thumbs up, gave you a high score and you came out very successful in the end. The current trends of uniforms deal with wanting to take each performer and make them look as tall as possible and create clean lines for the visual perspective of the performance. We have an hourglass shape on our uniform currently that bows out at the mid-thigh, not creating a clean line. The width of that uniform creates the exact opposite of height on our performers. It makes them look shorter. It makes them look wider.” Glasgow Independent High School band director Corey Bonds explaining to a concerned school board his proposal to alter the school’s traditional Scottish style uniforms. From the *Glasgow Daily Times*.

“There’s tension between protecting that individual’s score and the public’s right to know. Krish (Krish Muralidhar, a University of Kentucky professor of decision science and information systems) has pointed out that someone who wanted to take a little bit of time could easily figure out the scores of these kids. So we said we’d rather err on the public release of data and protect the privacy of students.” Ken Draut, associate commissioner of the Office of Assessment and Accountability at the Kentucky Department of Education, on why the state opted to limit the release of some testing statistical information about minority student groups. From the *Lexington Herald-Leader*.

“If you have ever gone through a virtual tour of a hotel when looking for a place to stay, you can un-

derstand how this program is set up. You can log onto the site, click on to, say, Room 232, and see what the room looks like, dimensions, exits, etc. You can also put additional information, such as, in Room 232 between 9 and 10:30 Mrs. Jones is teaching English, and there are 20 students enrolled in the classroom, and get a roster of who those students are.” Muhlenberg County Schools Superintendent Dale Todd on his district’s purchase of new “pictometry” computer software to help emergency responders during an indoor crisis. From the *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*.

“I feel that this is an adequate thing to ask of our students. Who am I to deny a student, who has met the requirements of the state, a diploma?” Franklin County board member Michelle New on the board’s deci-

sion to permit students of the alternative high school to graduate with the state’s minimum 22 credits compared with a higher number required of graduates at the district’s other two high schools. From the *Frankfort State-Journal*.

“When I first heard about the proposed laptop initiative for LaRue County students, I had a knee-jerk reaction. Purchase computers for students? Don’t they already have them at school? But I’ve changed my mind. Computer literacy is a must in our current economy. If you can’t handle one of the electronic monsters, you are at an immediate disadvantage at school and the workplace. Like it or not, computers are here to stay. Having access to a computer is as necessary as having access to pencil and paper. It’s not a cheap proposition with laptops ranging in cost from \$700-\$1,200 each. But it will pay off for our students in the long run.” Portions of an editorial on a proposal to purchase laptop computers for LaRue County students to use for school work at their homes. From the *Hodgenville LaRue County Herald-News*.

“Our principals, board members and myself all share the common thought that we are ultimately accountable and we take that very seriously. Student achievement is a direct reflection of the principal’s leadership in the schools and the leadership in the central office. I feel that I have a group of principals that are working hard with the instructional supervisors and their



efforts will bear fruit. Regardless of the proposed change, I am committed to seeing every student succeed that comes through our doors.” McCreary County Schools Superintendent Donnie Wright on a state board of education request for legislative authority to remove superintendents and school board members when individual schools repeatedly

fail to meet academic goals. From the Whitley City *McCreary County Voice*.

“I’ve never seen a stairwell that big in my life.” Hardin County sixth-grader Torie Bias after an introductory tour of the new North Middle School before it opened in January. From the Elizabethtown *News-Enterprise*.

“The thing of greatest concern is that education’s funding has stayed basically flat at best the last two years and it appears that with these latest estimates that it will be difficult to even remain flat again. Know-



ing that roughly across the state about 8 percent of SEEK funding this year actually came from stimulus funding and knowing that money is only there for one more year, it causes quite a concern.” Bowling Green Independent Schools Superintendent Joe Tinius voicing a common concern as the legislature builds the 2010-2012 state budget. From the Bowling Green *Daily News*.

“Some students just can’t... there’s not discipline problems, it’s not that they can’t do it...but they just can’t survive in the traditional high school. Some are hungry to get this because they realize in the time

that they’ve been out ‘I have to get this done.” Kathy Hancock, co-founder of the Christian County Schools’ Academy of Continuing Education, on the initiative to help dropouts earn their high school diplomas. From the Hopkinsville *Kentucky New Era*.

“Somebody didn’t do their job and we paid for it once and we’ll pay for it again. It’s obvious we’re going to have to fix it. The thing that bothers me is if this happens the next time around, we’ll all be in our graves. If it does, I’m going to turn over in (it).” Laurel County board member Tommy Smith on workers’ findings of mortar and insulation problems in the 17-year-old North Laurel High School. From the London *Sentinel-Echo*.

“We have not stayed with the guidelines, for whatever reason. But we cannot continue to have a guideline and staff over it. If we’re going to, if we think we need to do something differently with our personnel, then we need to revise and amend the guidelines, because right now, we are not staying with the guidelines we have on the books. We have not done that in the past, but we all know we cannot continue to not follow the guideline, because personnel is the biggest portion of our budget, so we are going to have to look really closely at how we are staffing our schools.” Clark County Schools Superintendent Elaine Farris after a consultant’s study pointed out overstaffing in her district. From the *Winchester Sun*.

Alternate meals for students with overdue cafeteria fees

POINT ...

“We see this as a loss of revenue, and we want to implement any policy that we can to better serve our school district. We certainly don’t want it to be seen as we’re implementing this policy as a vindictive way to get back at parents that are not paying their bill.” Perry County Schools Finance Officer Jody Maggard on the district’s new alternative meal policy for students owing more than \$50 – which had added up to more than \$37,000 in unpaid cafeteria fees. From the Hazard *WYMT-TV News*.

COUNTERPOINT...

“There should not be a child ever set in a classroom under any circumstance and have to eat a cheese sandwich and watch another child eat a hot meal. It is wrong to put a child in that situation, to punish a child for what the parent is doing. This is not right for us to do a child that way.” Perry County board member Jerry Stacy. From the *Hazard Herald*.

Nationally certified

“This whole process really reminded me that it was about the students and what they need. We know that they should drive our assessment and instruction, but sometimes we forget that.” Pineville Independent second-grade teacher Ronya Mason on the process that earned her national teacher certification. From the *Middlesboro Daily News*.

“In the end, it is well worth the effort. I feel like I’m a better teacher because of this. I encourage all teachers to work toward this goal. It makes you look at yourself and make improvements.” Harlan Independent elementary teacher Amanda Shepherd on being another of the 226 Kentucky educators to earn national certification last year. From the *Harlan Daily Enterprise*.

Turning too little, too late into more, and sooner



By Madelynn Coldiron
Staff Writer

While the biggest worry at KSBA's annual conference last year was a disastrous ice storm, the attendees at the 2010 conference, held Jan. 22-24 in Louisville, likely had state budget concerns uppermost in their minds.

But plenary speaker and preschool expert Dr. Jerry Weast shifted their focus in another direction.

"Don't think about resources; don't think about money. Think about your mission," he told the gathering of 1,000-plus board members, superintendents and others.

Weast, a nationally known preschool authority, urged boards to rearrange their priorities – and pointed them in one direction: leveling the differential outcomes among groups of students.

"In a country with only 50-some million children in school, we're going to have to have high performers

out of every kid," he said. "The old days of sorting and getting some performance out of a few versus not so much of a performance out of many have got to change," he said.

Weast knows a few things about generating that kind of change. As superintendent of Montgomery County Schools, the nation's 16th-largest school district, he was faced with a high dropout rate among African-American and Hispanic students, lots of English-language learners, an increase in the number of families sliding into poverty and a jarring segregation between rich and poor.

Weast closed the gaps with what he calls "deliberate excellence," focusing on "what a child needs to be able to know and do when they get out of school and to have a life." The district adopted a seven-pronged system of college readiness for all, set up a tougher math curriculum and reading targets, and raised graduation requirements.

But, he said, you can't wait until high school to make that trajectory, especially for children living in poverty.

"We were expecting too little and we were delivering it too late and we weren't giving enough time," Weast said.

So the district put a higher priority on preschool and the early grades and addressed health and social issues in that age group. The new early success performance plan included:

- A standards-based curriculum
- Professional development
- Diagnostic assessments
- Instructional management system
- Parent involvement
- Full-day kindergarten
- Smaller class size
- Extended learning opportunities

The curriculum and instruction changes "meant that all the little things we were doing before – the naps and playtime and things like that – had to be geared academically," he said.

It also meant "get off this testing business and get onto assessments," he said, as teachers got hand-held devices to better track their students' performance.

Reading, writing and math are keys, but Weast said the district realized that its teachers didn't know how to teach those subjects in the lower grades and also had low expectations for students. This was addressed with embedded staff development and consulting teachers. And more than 400 teachers were fired.

For preschool, the district took over and expanded the Head Start program and provided free training and materials to day-care centers.

Continued at right

Holliday asks board teams for help on charter school plan

By Madelynn Coldiron
Staff Writer

It was Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday's first appearance before the full membership of the Kentucky School Boards Association and he used the occasion to drop a bombshell on the audience gathered for the group's annual conference.

"The word," said Holliday, "is charter schools."

Kentucky is seeking \$200 million in Race to the Top federal education innovation funding. The program's guidelines award 40 out of its 500 points if a state has charter schools. Kentucky has no law authorizing such schools, though, as Holliday pointed out, its application has the strengths of a new assessment system under development, 100 percent backing from local school districts and a history of reform.

But the odds of winning funding in the first round of the program are 50-50, he said.

"Why do we have a 50 percent odds of not getting Race to the Top?" he asked. "The word is charter."

If Kentucky loses out in the first round, adding charter schools will be the back-up plan for reapplying in the second round of RTTT, Holliday said.

Asking for open minds and discussion, the commissioner said he will support charter schools if the local school board is the authorizing agent.

"I will not support any effort to take money away from local school boards," he said, getting applause.

"I will support innovation. I will support flexibility. I will support helping every child reach their potential and be successful. Those are the things I will support."

Holliday said districts are leaving money on the table – state, federal and charitable foundation money – "because we haven't figured out how to address this charter



school issue."

"It's not going to be an easy conversation," he acknowledged. "But the back-up plan is we can address this for the next three months. I've got to address it so that you stay on board because if I lose you, I lose the race. I've got to have 174 stay with us while we're talking about charters and come up with something that helps children without damaging local boards."

Holliday said he will rely on boards and superintendents for help and "to figure this thing out" so districts have more money.

"Stay with me," he reiterated. ☘

By following this early success performance plan, 93 percent of the district's kindergartners were reading at text level 3 in 2008, compared with 39 percent in 2001.

"That started to close gaps," Weast said. The gaps began closing in preschool and kindergarten and continued to shrink by the fifth grade, he said. The district now leads the state and nation in the percentage of graduates who take an AP exam – 72 percent. Forty-eight percent of African-American students who take an AP exam score a 3 or higher, compared with 28 percent in the state and 25 percent in the nation.

"You know how to do it. Can you curb your appetite, though, from chasing rabbits?" Weast asked. "Can you refigure your political agenda? Can you work with your employees to organize and say we're going to get this done?"

He drew the connection between the 4 million kindergart-

ners who entered school and the 300,000 new teachers that started work this year: "Half those new teachers will quit in five years; a third of those kindergartners will not make it out of high school; another third who will make it out won't be prepared to do anything; and at best, we may prepare a third to carry on.

"We can't afford the social cost, even if we weren't in international competition."

Weast charges no fee for his speaking appearances because he says he is so concerned about students being prepared to compete globally and to be able to address the problems they will face in this country: an increasing wealth divide and a huge national deficit.

"It's up to you," he told board members and superintendents. "You have the power. You control it." ☘

Quiet "elder statesman" is Proudfoot winner

Advocate Staff Report

The second longest-serving school board member in Kentucky has been named the top board member in the state for 2010.

Charles Walter "Walt" Ryan, a 46-year member of the Walton-Verona Independent Board of Education, was honored with the Warren H. Proudfoot Award for Outstanding School Board Member during KSBA's annual conference. The award, which recognizes a board member for distinguished leadership and community service, is sponsored and judged by the Kentucky PTA.

Showing that 46 years of board service have only sharpened his wit, Ryan took the podium for his remarks, noting that he serves on the board with an attorney, an insurance salesman and two women: "I seldom ever get a chance to say anything."

Ryan recalled how he came to run for a school board seat when he was just 26. A neighbor and then-board member who was not seeking re-election encouraged him to run, he said.

"After I was elected, he came to me and told me he wanted to give me some advice. He told me I was one person serving on the board and we always acted as a board and not as one person to commit myself to anything. I found that to be very good advice," he said.

Ryan reviewed the progress the Walton-Verona district has made through the years and paid tribute to past and present staff, superintendents and board members. Two former superintendents, Bob Storer and Gary Muncy, joined current superintendent Bill Boyle for the event.

Board member Tina Crase calls Ryan "the elder statesman of our district," citing his ability to bring people together.

"Walt is quiet until quiet doesn't work," she said in nominating him. "Over the years he has been the 'calming' component when things get hectic and go on excessively long."

Walton-Verona board Chairman Kelly Fulmer pointed to Ryan's role in a community disagreement over whether the district should build a new high school or an addition to its existing building –when it had funding only for the latter.

Ryan, Fulmer said in the nomination, "rose above the factional disagreement to help bridge the gap between all parties, regardless of his own personal preference; he cast the crucial vote to adopt the high school wing plan at the Walton, Kentucky facility due to its educational and financial practicality."

Fulmer also cited Ryan's example in helping him understand the role of a board member when he took office in 2000. Ryan,



Proudfoot winner Walton-Verona Independent school board member Walt Ryan, left, is congratulated by KSBA Past President Ed Massey and Kentucky PTA President Sandy Rutledge.

he said, "intuitively understands the schools and district needs so well."

Ryan has spent a dozen of his years of service as board chairman or vice chairman, donating his stipend back to the school system as well as making donations to various school and education groups.

He defines visibility as a school board member in the community and the district, Crase said, noting that he routinely attends extracurricular events, serves employees at opening-day luncheon and never misses a graduation ceremony.

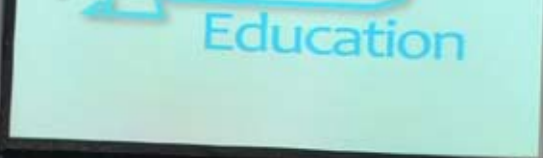
During Ryan's tenure he has supported implementation of many initiatives, including Project Prom, comprehensive extracurricular activities and athletics, gifted and talented program, the introduction of new technology and a dropout prevention program that netted KSBA's Public Education Achieves in Kentucky award.

He also saw the reconfiguration of the district's grade levels and the reforming and expansion of the parent-teacher organization. A former PTA president, Crase noted Ryan's "steady support" of that organization, which "has allowed a positive working relationship between our PTSA leaders and school administration," she said.

Ryan's community involvement includes being a co-founder of the Emergency Medical Service in Verona, a deacon in his church and chairman of the Boone County Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments. He also is chairman of the local board that maintains the New Bethel Cemetery. ☘

Outstanding honor

Nelson County Schools leader named superintendent of the year



Advocate Staff Report

For nearly 14 years, no item has been too great or small to escape the attention of Nelson County Schools Superintendent Jan Lantz if it can be used to improve her school district.

For that and many other reasons, Lantz is the recipient of the 2010 F.L. Dupree Outstanding Superintendent Award. The award, announced during KSBA's annual conference, 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.

As she accepted, Lantz (speaking at the podium above) who is retiring soon, recalled attending her first KSBA annual conference as the district's superintendent 14 years ago. As she watched that year's superintendent being honored, she said, "My board chairman, Mr. Kenny Fogle, looked at me and said, 'Maybe one day you'll be up there.'"

Lantz said she thought about her newness on the job and the issues the district faced, but said the chairman told her, "We can do this together. We're a team and we're here for the kids. And that's what has guided us over the last 14 years in Nelson County."

Lantz' nomination emphasized her collaborative approach to leading the district and that theme came through as she accepted the award, calling it "a team award and not a superintendent's award." She saluted her district's administrative team and the board, among others.

The board members, she said, "really are all about student achievement. ... They don't fight with each other. They don't profile to make a name for themselves."

Nelson County school board member Frank Hall said the

district was facing threats to its financial well being when Lantz took the reins in 1996. "She took immediate steps to correct these deficiencies, guiding the district into a pattern of sound financial management," Hall wrote in her nomination.

Her leadership in these financial areas has guided the district through difficult and controversial decisions, leading it to being among the state's bottom 20 percent in per pupil revenue while improving teacher salaries to among the top 10 percent in the state. Lantz has helped pass two growth nickel taxes, closed three schools, and spearheaded the construction of four new schools and the remodeling of four others. The district has also reduced costs by nearly \$500,000 through energy conservation.

During her tenure, the district has launched initiatives contributing to everything from increased student achievement to better communications and improved instructional practices. Among the programs are: Café Series to discuss test results and improve instruction, Reading Recovery, restructuring Nelson County High School, providing Curriculum Resource Consultants to work at each district school, and a Think Tank to bring together administration and teacher leaders to brainstorm innovations.

Lantz has been a fixture at countless athletic, academic and other student-centered events. "She wants students to know that she thinks their achievements are something to be proud of and that she is never too busy to attend a school event," Hall wrote.

She also makes time to mentor two at-risk students at Nelson County's alternative school and has established a mentoring program between central office staff and students at several schools. Her focus on students has extended to creating a student advisory group at each school, which she meets with at least twice a year. ☘

'Friend' makes a difference in Shelby County Schools

Advocate Staff Report

A Shelby County Schools alumnus who never hesitates giving back his time and resources to the district is the individual recipient of the 2010 Kentucky School Boards Association Friend of Education Award.

Pat Hargadon, pictured at right, was honored during KSBA's annual conference in Louisville. The award is given annually to both a corporation or organization and an individual in recognition of their outstanding contributions to public schools.

Hargadon's remarks while accepting the award showed in large part why he won it. He reminded the crowd that he is a product of Shelby County Schools, a 1979 graduate whose record was unremarkable.

"Don't forget those kids," he said. "There's a lot of them that show no ability when they're in high school but later on they will. I'm one of them."

In nominating Hargadon, Shelby County Schools cited the response he always gives when asked for help: "Sure."

The list of contributions the insurance agency manager has made to the district in both donations and services over the last decade is lengthy. Hargadon is one of the district's key



communicators who not only shares information with the community, but he contacts state education leaders when he has concerns about state-level action that impacts his district.

Hargadon's volunteer service in schools includes serving on a school decision-making council, the high school's Youth Services Advisory Council and district committees.

His Shelby County Farm Bureau Insurance has offered co-op opportunities to FFA students interested in the agribusiness field. He has sponsored or made donations in support of everything from the family resource and youth services center and the printing of high school motivational posters to basic preschool and kindergarten supplies and a fifth-grade field trip to a college campus.

Though that list is long, it hasn't kept Hargadon from being involved in other aspects of his community, including the Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Foundation, Leadership Shelby and Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service, among others. ☘

'KIDS' come first for ad

Boone County school board member and KSBA Immediate Past President C. Ed Massey, far right, receives his KIDS First Advocacy Award from KSBA President Delmar Mahan.

The KIDS First awards were created by KSBA's Board of Directors to honor local and state leaders who work on behalf of Kentucky's public schools and students. Each year, a state senator, state representative, school board member and superintendent are recognized.

As a Boone County Board of Education member, Massey demonstrates his commitment on the local level; as immediate past president of KSBA, he lobbies at the state level; and as member on the board of the National School Boards Association, he is no stranger to advocacy on Capitol Hill.



Carroll County company named Friend of Education

Advocate Staff Report

A Carroll County company that couples its donations with hands-on time in the schools is the corporate recipient of the 2010 Kentucky School Boards Association Friend of Education Award.

The award was presented to Dow Corning of Carrollton during KSBA's annual conference in Louisville. It is given annually to both a corporation or organization and an individual in recognition of their outstanding contributions to public schools.

Accepting the award on behalf of Dow Corning Carrollton, site manager Scott Niswonger, at right with KSBA Past President Ed Massey, said the company and its employees are being recognized "for doing something we like doing."

"It's fun working with kids," he said. "You all know that."

Niswonger recalled with relish helping to teach students that math is real and it's fun.

"When I was in middle school, I would have gotten in trouble for shooting dice in the library," he said. "But now that I'm a classroom tutor and math coach, when we're doing probability and statistics — I have a master's degree in chemical engineering — I get to go to the library and shoot dice on the floor with a couple of kids that are having a ball."

The list of Dow Corning's contributions to Carroll County Schools during the past five years is a long one. It has provided updated lab equipment for newly renovated high school science classrooms, sponsored 300 children in a reading program, donated money to support a districtwide robotics



program, helped to sponsor a middle school science fair — and much more.

The chemical company's partnership with the district, in place since 1966, has also supported science and math education with grants, scholarships and educational programs it has brought to Carroll County schools.

Dow Corning's contributions go beyond the monetary. It has provided co-op jobs for students who excel in math and science, giving them a chance to learn scientific concepts in a hands-on setting. It also offers co-op positions in office management to area technology center students.

The company's employees have taken a personal interest in the district, serving as "classroom coaches" for middle-school students who need extra help in math — producing a significant increase in high school math scores.

As the school district said in nominating the company, "Dow Corning is more than a friend; it is more like family." ❧

Advocacy award winners



Owensboro Independent Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Vick, right, receives his KIDS First Advocacy Award from KSBA President Delmar Mahan.

Vick was honored for his efforts at expanding and improving the Owensboro district's early childhood/preschool program, among other reasons. The subject of early childhood education is high on the list of issues he regularly brings to the attention of state lawmakers, whether in Frankfort or during a legislator's tour of the district's Hager Preschool.

The winners of the state senate and representative awards will be announced during KSBA's KIDS First in Frankfort event, Feb. 24-25.

Board service takes belief, passion –



and maybe a little magic

By Madelynn Coldiron
Staff Writer

What do a floating table, an amazing prognostication and a pitcher in which milk ebbs and flows have in common?

All were magic tricks that Billy Riggs, the opening speaker for KSBA's 74th annual conference used to illustrate deeper messages and to fire up – and entertain – school board members.

Riggs, an Austin, Texas, native and former pastor, focused on the beliefs that are held by effective school board members and educators.

First on the list, he said, is to believe passionately in the dream of education.

“Is transforming the lives of kids through the educational system a passion for you?” he asked. “If you do not have that type of passion you will never be as influential as you would otherwise be. Because you cannot give other people a disease you do not already have.”

But that passion shouldn't lead board members to “get so close to the details that you forget the big picture of why it is you do what you do.”

Effective board members also must believe in the power of optimism and positivity, Riggs said.

Using that pitcher of milk and a glass as his illustrative trick, he said the most important question in life is, “Is the glass half full or half empty?”

“The way you choose to answer will determine more than almost any other factor in life how happy, successful and influential you become,” he said. If perceived as half empty, he said, “it will get emptier,” while the converse also is true.

“If you're going to be highly influential at your job on a school board or as a superintendent, you've got to be upbeat and positive all the time,” Riggs told the crowd. “Because other people only follow people who believe the future is going to be bright. A brighter future through public education.”

Riggs acknowledged the realities of board service by advising his audience about handling the pressures of the job, saying they must choose their own attitude in responding to them and believe in themselves.

“Don't ever allow yourself to believe that heat applied to you by your fellow board members, by the superintendent, by your workload or by your constituents causes you to melt.”

Like pottery heated in a kiln, Riggs said, “heat can reveal the stuff of which you are made.”

Similarly – using a prognostication puzzler as a segue, he said, “I predict that your success in the future will be largely determined by your ability to handle criticism.”

If a critic is wrong, he said, “it has to be water off a duck's back.”

For someone who has never served on a school board, Riggs evinced a sound understanding of the board team relationship. The superintendent, he said, “is the keeper of the vision,” while the board is “the keeper of the visionary.”

“As a board member you cannot be the one to ramrod the vision. Your job as a board member is to support the superintendent and give him or her everything needed to fulfill the dream.” ☘

Picture: Opening speaker Billy Riggs levitates a table and carries it around the Galt House ballroom as part of his motivational magical act.



Musical mastery

Student performances are a highlight at any KSBA conference and this year was no exception.

Top, the Union County High School Band was a great start to the Saturday lunch session.

Middle, The Carroll County High School Band of Steel energized the crowd at Friday's opening session with a number of Caribbean-style songs.

Bottom, Friday's Trade Show Reception featured Owensboro Independent School's ENCORE! Show Choir, which gave a rousing "Glee"-style performance.

See more photos of student conference participation on Page 20



School districts size up their carbon footprint

By Madelynn Coldiron
Staff Writer

The number of Energy Star-rated schools in Kentucky has doubled in the last year and federal stimulus dollars are now at hand to help other schools become more energy efficient.

That's timely, since the amount K-12 schools spend on energy has risen 108 percent since 2000 and "for the foreseeable future we can expect that to keep climbing," said Lee Colton, Energy Star manager at the Department for Energy Development and Independence.

The state's school districts were required by law to enroll in the Kentucky Energy Efficiency Program for Schools (KEEPS) by Jan. 1 of this year. Under the program, districts must track and report their energy use, and look for ways they can save.

Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act "will help grow this program," Colton said.

He and officials with the KEEPS used a pre-conference session to bring school board members, administrators, and superintendents up to date on the program, which began four years ago with six pilot districts.

KEEPS, under the auspices of the Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center at the University of Louisville, provides training, resources and experts to districts at no cost. It is getting \$4.7 million in stimulus funding to beef up resources it offers to school districts, including hiring 19 additional employees. Among those are seven regional coordinators who will help school districts.

In addition to KEEPS, ARRA funds to Kentucky will widen and deepen the pool of resources in other programs that dovetail nicely with KEEPS. Stimulus dollars will allow the Kentucky's National Energy Education Development (NEED) project to expand, Colton said. That program provides educators with training and materials to teach core concepts about energy efficiency and also features a service learning component for students.

And a program that complements NEED is also getting a boost from federal funds, Colton said. Green and Healthy Schools is an online program for teachers and students to



From left, Danville Independent board member Tim Montgomery, Magoffin County finance director Jerry Swiney and William Johnson, pupil personnel director for Pikeville Independent Schools, discuss a proposed energy efficiency policy during the pre-conference session on the Kentucky Energy Efficiency Program for Schools.

conduct energy inventories of their schools to identify areas for savings. At this time, 109 Kentucky schools are enrolled in the program.

Districts taking first steps

Meanwhile, almost all Kentucky school districts have hewed to the law by signing up for KEEPS – 158 of 174, said Cam Metcalf, executive director of the pollution control center. "They're still trickling in," he said.

"Carbon footprint is coming and it's going to hit our school districts," Metcalf said.

When tackling energy efficiency, schools can use different technical guidelines in their playbook, such as Energy Star, High-Performance Buildings and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green building system (LEED).

KEEPS provides the framework with its seven-step management process that begins with a commitment to continual improvement and produces an action plan. But before a district can implement an action plan, it must have a policy, said Fred Byrd, KEEPS manager.

A model policy, now being developed by KSBA, is part of the first step, he said.

"The school board has to be committed to a policy" that is communicated throughout the district, included to the students, Byrd said.

Suggestions for drafting a policy include involving key district staff, making it understandable and communicating it to all employees. The energy experts also suggest districts partner with Energy Star as a basis for their policy.

When districts sign up for KEEPS, they must complete a detailed survey of their current energy management program. Of the 90 districts that have responded thus far, 76 percent have sent a staffer to attend energy efficiency training; 35 percent have created an energy policy; half have an energy team; and 71 percent have designated an energy manager, said Cindy Wohl, KEEPS regional coordinator manager.

The survey results can be used by the program to design training for districts, she said. ☞

— For more information, visit www.kppc.org and click on the KEEPS tab at the top of the page.

SCHOOLS

Planning for a building's lifetime costs

By Jennifer Wohlleb
Staff Writer

The life cycle of a school building often exceeds a half-century, which means taking the cheapest path during the construction phase could end up being an expensive mistake.

"Whether we like it or not, we're building 50-year buildings," said Ken Jones, vice president and general manager of Turner Construction's Kentucky and Cincinnati operations. "The question is: how well do we plan for those 50 years? And unfortunately, the industry I participate in, the construction indus-

try, focuses a lot on the first one or two (years), getting the first costs as cheap as we can, sometimes at the cost of the other 48 or 49 years you have to live in the facility."

Turner told attendees at a KSBA conference clinic that educators need to look at the total cost of ownership, not just the construction costs.

"If you extend costs out over 50 years, the initial cheapest cost does not always end up being the cheapest overall," he said.

Jones said the design and construction of any building project should include the total ownership cost.

"It may be worth adding 2 percent to

my construction costs, which might be \$250,000, upgrading the air handlers or the chillers, and that sounds like a lot of money," he said. "But if that's going to save you 5 percent in energy and 5 percent in operations, and it's going to save you money in maintenance over 50 years, you're well, well ahead if you make that investment. The problem is, we haven't had a good way to balance those two against each other as we're making capital decisions."

Jones encouraged school officials to be involved in every aspect of these projects because they know better than

See "50-year life cycle" on Page 25

GOING GREEN:

Good for the environment and student health

By Jennifer Wohlleb
Staff Writer

Saving the environment is a great reason to create a green school. Protecting the health of your students and staff is an even better one.

That was the message of representatives from the Kentucky chapter of the U.S. Green Buildings Council, a nonprofit organization whose representatives conducted a clinic during KSBA's annual conference.

"If you use nontoxic materials, you create a better indoor environment," said Joan Pauley, executive director of the Kentucky chapter. "Asthma rates go down, absenteeism goes down."

Chris Tyler, a green schools advocate, said green schools are not just about using less energy and water to save money to put back into the school building.

"A green school is a building or facility that creates a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while saving energy, resources and money," he said.

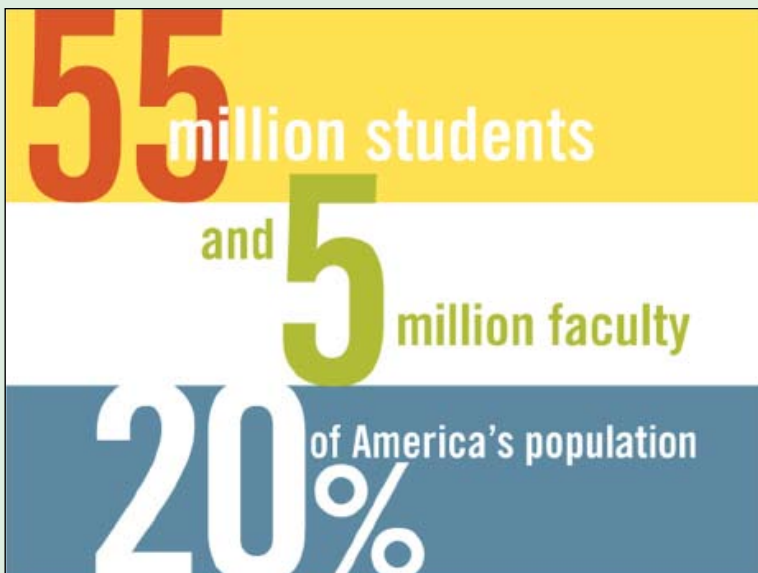
A green school does save districts money, but not only for obvious reasons.

"If we can bring up the retention rates of our teachers, you're cutting down on the learning curve and the expenses of teachers moving from school to school," Tyler said. "They are also healthier and happier. There are a lot of ripple effects."

Better indoor air quality also leads to fewer instances

See "Healthy students and staff" on Page 25

WHY GOING GREEN IS IMPORTANT



From the USGCB

Leadership gap short-lived in Danville

By Mary Branham

In 2009, the Danville Independent Board of Education lost two veteran board members and their more than 20 years of experience.

The new members – Lonnie Harp and Julie Erwin – were prepared.

“One of the things that happened after we got selected, the superintendent organized an orientation session for us,” Harp said. That session included everything from budgets to test scores. “It really was helpful especially in a sense that we were getting the basics.”

Then, the district superintendent resigned – more change for the small school district of 1,800 students. Superintendents in Danville historically stay a while, said board member Troy McCowan, so such a change is rare.

Danville board members shared their experience in forming a new leadership team at a conference clinic.

The selection of new superintendent Carmen Coleman helped the board to become a more cohesive unit, and it helped board members in forming a good relationship with the new superintendent.

Board chairwoman Jean Crowley, who works in board team development for KSBA, said that understanding of roles is a key in that relationship.

In conducting its superintendent search through KSBA, the relationship the board built throughout the process, Crowley said, “brought us together as a team.” The board also got public input from staff members and the community into the characteristics they wanted in a superintendent.

Vice Chairman Tim Montgomery said while it was important for the new superintendent to have an idea about the strengths of the district, it was equally important for that person to understand the weaknesses as well.

Throughout the process the board set goals in the spirit of

2009-10 goals for

Danville Independent Schools

- Offer powerful learning experiences
- Ensure students are prepared to be globally competitive
- Ensure growth for all – every student should advance at least one year for every year they're in school
- Ensure communication
- Ensure the community is involved and informed

“what do we want our schools to be known for,” said Harp.

Three weeks after the superintendent was selected, the board held a team-building session to develop goals. The district set goals that include global preparedness.

Crowley said the board wants everyone involved in the district to know what the goals are, so after the board approved them, the superintendent took the goals to the administration and the staff.

“It was immediately involving everyone in the district,” Crowley said. The goals are discussed regularly at board meetings; they're displayed in every district facility and are included on banners and the district Web site.

Coleman said one challenge will be to determine what these goals look like for teachers, students and parents. She said the support of school board members is critical to her success as superintendent.

“Our board members all bring things to the table,” she said. “They help me to think bigger than I may have before.” ☞

— Branham is a writer from Frankfort



Learning to lead

Pendleton County High School student Elizabeth Delaney answers an audience question following the district's clinic about service learning. With her are Ethan Ritter (left), who graduated last year, and Alex Carson. The students had a large role in the presentation, explaining projects ranging from organizing an art festival and a political forum to developing programs for younger students.

Ritter said his service-learning opportunities “have made me a better-functioning community member. It's made me a better student.”

From an instructional standpoint, said district Instructional Supervisor Pamela Harper, students involved in service learning “take ownership of the learning.

“The teacher becomes the facilitator of learning and it's the kids who become the problem solvers,” she said.

By Madelynn Coldiron
Staff Writer

The community image of Christian County Schools was about as bad as it gets. Among the beliefs: kids were bad, teachers were lazy, athletics took precedence over academics and money was wasted.

But those beliefs were mistaken and the district's leaders decided to fight back.

"If people believe you're bad, the superintendent's crazy and all those things, you're going to have a hard time getting people to buy in," Superintendent Brady Link told a KSBA annual conference clinic.

When Link came to Christian County Schools in July 2008, district leaders had "a candid conversation" and concluded that the misperceptions and negativity persisted because the public was not hearing anything from the district as a counterpoint, said communications director Regan Huneycutt.

"We had to stand up for ourselves," she said. "We had to correct those misconceptions and we had to put more effort into communicating the positive things about our district rather than challenging the negative things, including gossip."

Besides the gossip, the district was trying to counter the negative focus of the local newspaper and two community blogs.

"There are a lot of people who believe that stuff," Link said of the blogs. "It shapes the way people feel about your schools."

So does the attitude of the staff, he noted. "A lot of people who work in our district believed we weren't very good. ... If your teachers tell somebody we have a bad school, people listen to that more than they do somebody else."

Message control

The district responded with the traditional communications tools aimed at parents and with a relationship-building campaign with the local media. But it also turned to advertising to a broader audience via the newspaper and local and regional radio stations.

Negative newspaper stories were offset by paid advertising that looked like regular

IMAGE CONTROL

articles, highlighting positive events and achievements in the schools, complete with pictures of kids at work. The school system purchased weekly half-page ads and smaller daily ads with positive "factoids" about the schools.

Because the district purchased so much space, it received a 77 percent discount, Huneycutt said. And, Link pointed out, as a regular advertiser, the system now has some clout with the newspaper.

"They at least listen to us now," he said.

The district also bought inexpensive radio time and got some free spots as well for commercials it wrote about the district and its students. Ads on the Web site of two of the stations include four weeklong Web features and a monthly student showcase the focuses on an interview with a selected student.

"The biggest advantage for this is the way people see your kids," Link said. "People look at your kids in a negative way many times because all they hear about is the

bad ones. You've got to give them some messages about the good kids."

The ad campaign budget is \$12,000-\$15,000, the superintendent said. The district has 9,300 students.

Huneycutt said feedback and anecdotal information indicates the campaign is working. Link hopes improving the district's image also will benefit in other ways by helping to attract and retain teachers and improving the community's ability to attract new employees. ☞



Christian County Superintendent Brady Link talks with Hopkins County Schools assistant superintendent Linda Zellich following the district's clinic on using advertising to polish a school system's image.

Conference contributions



Clockwise starting at left: Frankfort Independent student Jeri Katherine Howell performs an original song to open the Saturday morning Plenary Session.

Trigg County High School sophomore Ellen Shipley works on a bridge design at the district's Share Your Success booth, which featured Project Lead the Way, a program that emphasizes science, technology, engineering and math.

Members of Christian County High School Jazz Band keep the joint jumpin' at the Saturday afternoon President's Reception.



24 and beyond

Boone County Schools tackle transition points to improve student achievement, help students score 24 or better on ACT

By Jennifer Wohlleb
Staff Writer

In Boone County Schools when educators talk about “24,” it’s not watercooler chatter about the most recent episode of the action-packed TV series: they are referring to the district’s goal of getting their students to an equivalent of 24 on the ACT.

“The reason for that is so that our children can be considered for Tier 1 schools when they leave our district,” said Superintendent Randy Poe. “Right now our average is 20.2. They should all have the opportunity to go to UK or U of L if they want. Those standards are basically 24 to get in.”

To reach 24, the district began focusing on transition points, starting with kindergarten all the way into college. Poe said the system began an alignment process two years ago with three goals:

- Providing numeracy and literacy skills for all K-12 students and providing supplemental services if they are performing on grade level
- Organizational alignment around the instructional core
- Parent and community engagement.

“To get to 24 we realize we’re going to have to engage our community and parents in the process; we can’t do it alone,” Poe said.

Karen Chesser, assistant superintendent of learning support, said the district’s efforts begin with making sure students transition from home to kindergarten ready to learn.

“Our end goal is not just to have students graduate from high school, but to be successful, to be globally competitive,” Chesser said.

The district teamed with Northern Kentucky University to create a definition for kindergarten readiness and from that information created a DVD that it distributed to parents of incoming students, as well as to libraries and doctors’ offices.

“Many parents who got the video went home, watched it and tried a lot of the things with their students and came back and reported to the school how much their student didn’t know that they should know: how to share, how to have a conversation, so they worked on those things,” she said. “We feel like the DVD and the information we gave to parents really helped increase their literacy levels when they came to kindergarten, and address some of the social/emotional problems that we normally see.”

For the elementary-to-middle-school transition, the district has offered an Intensive Summer Intervention Program for the past two summers, serving 300 students the first year and 700 this past summer.

Brenda Jackson, a Shelby County Schools board member and a past KSBA president, holds up a pen while her partner looks at it through his left, then right eye. This is one of the sensory integration activities Boone County does with students as part of its Summer Intervention program. These activities are designed to identify potential problems and to get both sides of the brain working together.

It’s a three-hour-a-day, 20-day program that serves students who have been identified as needing help in math and reading.

“We also put in a sensory integration circuit, which is a set of activities that helps students learn how to focus and gets the left and right sides of the brain to work together,” Chesser said.

The program was successful, with some students’ math skills increasing as much as two grade levels.

“Our summer intervention program was for students at the lowest level, but we decided we needed to tackle summer learning loss at all levels,” Chesser said. “We did a pilot at Florence Elementary School last year that’s turning into an all-district program this year.”

The program, called Summer Bridge, uses a \$10 workbook for parents of K-8 students full of specific activities they can work on together 20 minutes a day.

“A lot of schools use these, but we did a major emphasis on this with the teachers to come in to the schools,” Poe said. “They had two different nights during the course of the summer where the students would bring their bridge activities to the school and the teachers would collect them and work with the students one-on-one . . . In a school with 70 percent free and reduced (price lunch students), we had close to 90 percent complete the Summer Bridge work and activities.”

The district’s high schools also have been challenged to create their own programs tackling summer learning loss, while also tackling the problem of students transitioning from high school and needing remediation programs when they get to college.

The district partnered with NKU to create the Coyote program, which uses ACT scores to identify students while they are still in high school who will need those remediation classes, and offer them help before graduating. Poe said up to 30 percent of Boone County’s students needed remediation, and the district was able to reduce by 50 percent those having to take the remedial classes in college. ☘



Montgomery County Schools grows own police department

By Madelynn Coldiron
Staff Writer

When it comes to creating secure schools, the Montgomery County district proved the adage "If you want something done right, do it yourself."

Several years ago, the district faced a host of safety and security issues: little control over multiple school entrances, discipline issues, no central accountability for after-hours building use, and welcoming conditions that ranged from unfriendly employees to a laissez-faire attitude that saw parents freely walking to classrooms to talk to teachers during the school day.

"We didn't know who was coming in because there were so many access points in the schools," said Phil Rison, the district's assistant superintendent for operations.

Superintendent Daniel Freeman added, "We were maybe too friendly."

Montgomery County school officials described the conditions and how they fixed them in a KSBA conference clinic.

On top of the access problem, the schools were magnets for break-ins, Freeman said.

"It was just a weekend activity to break into one of the schools," he said—including the central office.

The district was paying the Montgomery County Sheriff's office for the salary of deputies who acted as school resource officers, but they often would be called out during school hours to handle regular law-enforcement incidents.

"You can't serve two masters," Rison said.

Among the steps the district took was to hire a retired state police trooper, Mike Martin, as the district's own police officer. "He is involved and his No. 1 responsibility is school and student safety," Rison noted.

School board chairwoman Fern Reed, who also sits on the KSBA Board of Directors, said she was hesitant about the hiring at first because of the cost, but is now glad the district made the investment.

Martin, she said, is used for everything from bus and ball game duties to classroom presentations.

"He is there to educate and prevent a lot of things from happening. It is absolutely fabulous," she said.

Freeman said there has been a decrease in suspensions with Martin, and now a second district police officer, on duty. Both are armed and certified.

Hopey Newkirk, the district's pupil person-

Montgomery County Schools' police officer Mike Martin and pupil personnel director Hopey Newkirk talk with Wolfe County board member Lee Picklesimer about the district's police department.

nel director, said the officers accompany her on home visits that might present personal risk. "It creates a sense of security when I go to these homes," along with some extra clout, she said.

Martin is using social media to communicate with students and establish trust. The Montgomery County Schools Police Department is on Facebook and MySpace, and has its own Web pages that allow submission of anonymous tips.

"The more you present yourself to them in a relaxed atmosphere, the more they'll open up to you," Martin said.

Other improvements

In getting a grip on improving accountability for facility use, the district centralized the booking of school facilities, using an online system under the jurisdiction of the community education director, with student activities taking precedence over community groups.

"The facilities were used so extensively we needed to have accountability," Freeman said. Improvements also were made in safety surrounding some buildings by setting up a shuttle system and by reworking parent pick-up and drop-off traffic flow that had been backing up on major roads, Rison said. Video cameras on school buses addressed discipline issues in that setting, while the use of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports improved discipline within schools.

To ensure that the tightening of security wasn't making school buildings unwelcoming, the district implemented customer services best practices based on the system established by Mason County Schools. And a mentoring program modeled after one in the Crittenden County district brought community role models into schools, while a beefed-up communications department improved contact with parents and others. ❧



Students have it their way in Mason County school cafeterias

By Mary Branham

When a friend's children told Mason County Board of Education chairwoman Ann Porter they wanted salads as a choice for school lunches, she had one thought:

"If they want to eat nutritiously, we ought to help," she said.

She told as much to Kelly Middleton, an associate superintendent in the district. Middleton was happy to oblige. After all, he and Liz Petitt, the district's instructional supervisor, had written a book on customer service in the schools.

The district was putting a lot of effort into customer service – assigning every student an advocate and paying home visits before the start of school each year, but that same effort didn't extend to food service.

Middleton found it wasn't just the food; kids told him one major thing they saw was that the adults didn't smile at them. They were constantly told to be quiet in the cafeteria.

"If you treat people badly, if you've got mean people in your cafeteria, it's not a good place," he said.

Middleton visited schools and went through the lunch lines as a student would. During a conference clinic session, he talked about the old salad selection at the high school: Students could choose a "peek-a-boo" salad, one securely hidden in a Styrofoam box, while adults had an attractive selection lined up like those in restaurant salad bars.

"One of my rules is if we don't do it to adults, we don't do it to children," Middleton said. "I don't mind staff having nice things, but if they have it, we give it to the children."

Previously, students throughout the district had two choices for their lunch. Now, elementary students have six choices, middle school students have eight choices and high school students have 15 choices, Middleton said.

School officials got students involved in the decision. "Anything you do in the school system, get the kids to think they made it; they'll buy into it," Middleton said.

That includes food selection. Food suppliers last year were invited to bring in new products and students throughout the district were selected to do taste tests and offer input on what they'd like for the coming school year.

Petitt said it was obvious the kids took the job seriously. And it may be paying off in more than just satisfied



Here is a small sampling of items — including a bottled water with the Mason County Royals logo on it — that district food services offers to give students a choice.

tummies after a meal. The district's cafeterias are making less food and there's less waste, Middleton said.

Superintendent Tim Moore said the district ends every year with a zero balance in food service. That's accomplished through less waste and careful planning from food service personnel. Moore said cafeteria managers and food service directors work together to purchase food for the district.

The satisfied "customers" have also been rewarded in other ways. Students who do well can earn lunchtime in the Hard Work Café, where they can bring one friend to dine with them in an atmosphere totally different than the school cafeteria, according to Middleton.

And the district has been offering food service until 4 p.m. at the high school to serve those students who stay after school for a practice, sporting event or other academic pursuit, according to Middleton.

Also at the high school, some students weren't eating breakfast, many because the food wasn't easily accessible. So the school food service workers took the food to where the kids are – and now they're selling 100 more breakfasts.

Marion County Board of Education member Alex Ackermann has taken Mason County's message to heart. She's pushed for similar changes in Marion County, and will go back to her district armed with information she gained in the session.

"It's less waste, less food preparation and they're operating in the black," Ackermann said, "and it can be done in older buildings." ❧

— Branham is a writer from Frankfort

Around the conference



Clockwise, starting top left: Philip Carollo with Infinite Campus talks to Hancock County board member Donna Quattrocchi and her daughter Jeannie about what the system can do. The company was among the 60-plus exhibitors at this year's trade show.

Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and his wife, Denise (at left) visit the McCracken County Schools Share Your Success booth, which highlighted the district's new high school design and laptop program. In the background is communications director Cheryl Lawson.

Kylie Wilson, left, and Addi Abell helped spread the word about a new initiative called HAWK — Helping American Watch Over its Kids. HAWK is a new facility information initiative from FacilityONE that integrates building maintenance and security systems. Addi's grandmother, Dawn Cain, is the executive director of HAWK.

Members of the Rockcastle County High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes perform an emotional skit about teens, temptation and Jesus Christ at the Sunday morning devotional of the KSBA conference.

50-year life cycle

Continued from Page 17

anyone how their buildings are going to be used.

Kenton County is one Kentucky district that has taken that advice to heart and is operating some of the highest-performing school buildings in the state, and possibly the nation.

The district has learned from each project it has completed, gathering data and establishing benchmarks that allow it to make better decisions about life-cycle costs.

"These decisions are critical at the front end of the project and as owners, we must be at the table," said Rob Haney, Kenton County Schools' director of support operations. "Architects and project managers will make these decisions whether you are there or not. You are the driver of the design and you need to make sure you include not only your administrators, but also your facility



Rob Haney, Kenton County Schools' director of support operations, answers a question about incorporating the life-cycle costs of a school building into the planning and construction phase of a project. Ken Jones, vice president and general manager of Turner Construction's Kentucky and Cincinnati operations, is pictured at left.

people, the person responsible for maintenance."

Kenton County's latest project, the ongoing construction of Turkey Foot Middle School, is a good example of how knowing these costs leads to good decisions on both construction and life cycle costs. For example, Haney said based on the data gathered from its first school to use classroom daylighting, the district was able to more accurately pinpoint the needs at Turkey Foot and save money.

"We were able to reduce the glass (size of windows) at the new Turkey Foot School," Haney said. "That allowed us to reduce the volume of the classrooms... reduce the glass, reduce the size of the mechanical systems, reduce the size of the geothermal wells. This exercise is phenomenal in terms of what it did to our first costs." ❧

Healthy students and staff

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of colds, flu and asthma. "We can make sure kids can go to school every day," he said.

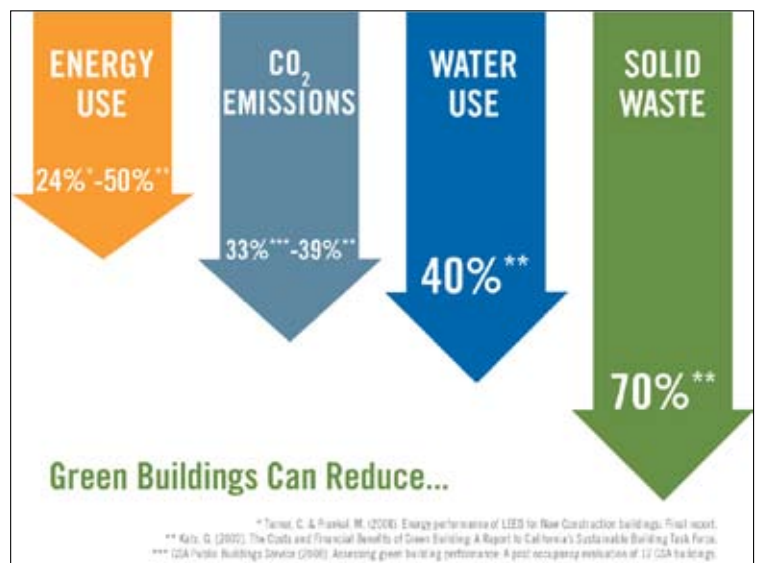
He said studies have shown that as many as 15,000 of the country's 133,000 schools have indoor air that is unfit to breathe.

And if a healthier student body isn't reason enough to think green, Tyler said some studies have shown a 20 percent increase in the test scores of students who attended a green school.

A few of the components of a green school include using products such as furniture and paints with low VOCs (volatile organic compounds), cleaning with green products, and providing safe, and, where possible, outside air.

In 2008, U.S. schools spent nearly \$6.5 billion retrofitting, modernizing and building additions to existing facilities.

"With all that money being spent, we need to stop and think how we're spending that money and how we can be more effective with those dollars," Tyler said. "Typically, schools in the past in Kentucky tended to be built to code, and when you build a school to code, you are one step away from building an illegal building. There are some things we can do to build them a few steps above code and even more to go further. We can address poor ventilation, poor lighting, expensive maintenance." ❧



From the USGBC

— For more information about creating a green school or the USGBC, go to www.greenschoolbuildings.org or www.usgbc.org.

Ending on a high note



Left: Closing brunch speaker Mark Metzger wove together humorous and emotional stories about school board service. "This work you do has installed above your head a flashing neon sign that reads, 'School board member. Open 24/7,'" said the Illinois board member and NSBA director. "What you do matters a whole lot more than you can ever appreciate right now. When you change your way of thinking and implement plans, policies and procedures, you change lives of children in ways you cannot imagine."

Middle: Director Rebecca Parlow leads the Perry County Central High School Honors Choir in their performance at the Sunday closing brunch

Bottom: NSBA President Sonny Savoie chats with Barbourville Independent board member Shirley Treadway Jr. during a break at the KSBA annual conference. Treadway is Kentucky's longest-serving board member at 49 years and counting.



Charter chatter: When customers squawk, do schools listen?

Being an admitted information wonk, my daily drive from Louisville to Frankfort and back has one constant: radio. Turn on the ignition, turn on a newscast. Local. Kentucky. NPR. Fox. Sports. Weather. Oh, yeah...and traffic. Love my tunes, but when the wheels are turning, I gotta know what's going on.

But even I had to pause for deeper reflection during a recent morning station-hopping trek.

First came a news story on the debate whether Kentucky needs charter schools to be competitive in the Obama administration's Race to the Top multi-million dollar points chase and to offer more school choice for parents.

A dial change took me into a morning team member's monologue about his war with a manufacturer of a television set that broke while under warranty. After being told "tough luck," he bought a new, different TV, only to get a call a day later that the original company had relented. His question: Why do so many businesses make customer service so hard that customers just give up?

One more channel change found a live Q-&-A with the commissioner of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Caller No. 1 told a tale of woe about getting the governmental two-step in trying to resolve an old tax issue. The IRS chief invited the caller to give his phone number to the program's producer, and promised that a member of his staff would call him today. Today. I wasn't surprised when the next caller heaped praise on the nation's top tax collector for hearing the plea of the earlier guest.

I wonder. Is the claimed clamor for charter schools motivated by money and academic options, or by parents equating schools' customer service record with that of the electronics company or the tax guy?

What's your practice

For instance, do any of these scenarios accurately reflect your school system?

- You believe parents are happy with the district's direction because they tell you they are or because they haven't stormed the central office like the torch-bearing mobs in the old Frankenstein movies.
- You take the public pulse through give-and-take at PTA meetings, an online survey or a more formal Community Discussion (a KSBA service). Or maybe your yardstick is the number of phone calls that begin with, "Are you nuts?"



Brad Hughes
KSBA Member
Support Services Director

- Your annual superintendent and board evaluation processes incorporate measurable accounting of public confidence in goals you have established. Or do you set goals and then also determine if they were met?

- You give front desk staff training in visitor and telephone assistance skills. Or do you just make sure those poor souls know how to use the phone system's "transfer" function, that is, if a human actually answers your phone system.

The credit for quality teaching, managing, leading and learning can be seriously diminished in a school system that doesn't examine the simple question, "How do you think we're doing for your children/your tax dollars/your school system?"

The Last Word

I've done a fair amount of reading about the pros and cons of charter schools in the past six months or so: news stories, university and foundation research articles, special interest op-ed pieces. What I think I've learned is that charter schools are neither the great savior for frustrated parents and overregulated schools nor the great Satan against public education in the U.S. As with so many things, it's all in the details.

Some parents might favor charter schools to access instructional curricula more to their religious leaning. Some might enroll their children for different – and perhaps, more promising – academic potential. And some would take this route because they are angry over a book in the elementary school library, a ban on nose rings or the failure of a coach to let Johnny play quarterback. Every school system, public and private, charter and church, always will have its share of these moms and dads.

But there are parents who might support greater school choice, charter schools, home schooling – whatever – because their public school system shows no sign that its leaders give a hoot about opinions generated outside the board room, the classroom or the administrative offices. And as unhappy parents talk to non-parents, an ill mood can fester into an electorate telling its legislators, "Do something different."

Kentucky may never open a single charter school, but the debate is an opportunity for local public school leaders to pose, ponder and act on a simple question: Does the public see us as the TV company that said "No" or as the tax guy who said, "Tell me your story?"

And that's a message worth getting out. ☘

Has your idea taken root
and grown into a
successful, innovative
education program?

Nominate it for a KSBA *PEAK*
(*Public Education Achieves in*
Kentucky) Award

For more information about the
program, go to
www.ksba.org/peak

Application
deadline is
MARCH 12



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