

KAIRS Executive Committee 2003-2004

President

Karen Norton
Head of School
The Independent School,
Wichita

Vice President

Bob Voboril
Superintendent of Schools
Catholic Diocese of Wichita

Secretary

Jane Limback
Assistant Principal
Hope Lutheran School,
Shawnee

Treasurer

Dr. Nick Compagnone
Superintendent of Schools
Catholic Diocese of Salina

Annual Meeting Secretary

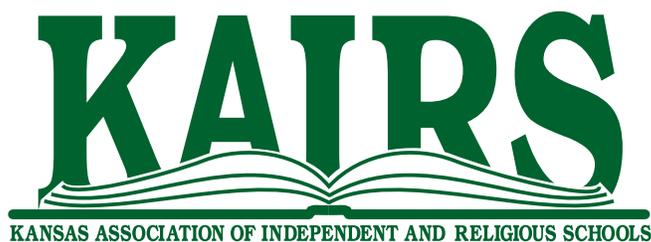
Judy Pitts
Administrator
Bethel Life School, Wichita

Staff

Corey Nason Reese
Public Relations Director

Karen Norton
President
Phone: 316-686-0152
karen_norton7531@hotmail.com

Bob Voboril
Vice President
Phone: 316-269-3950
supt@cdowk.org



February 2004, Vol. 2

KAIRS Begins 34th Year of Representing Kansas Non-Public Students



KAIRS elects its Executive Committee each February to serve during the academic school year. From left, sitting: Bob Voboril, Vice President; Nick Compagnone, Treasurer; standing: Karen Norton, President; Judy Pitts, Annual Meeting Secretary; Jane Limback, Secretary.

The Kansas Association of Religious and Independent Schools (KAIRS) is beginning its thirty-fourth year of representing the non-public school

children in the state of Kansas. KAIRS was founded to ensure that children attending religious and independent schools would be treated eq-

uitably in educational law, policy and programs.

As the state's largest organization of non-public schools, in 2004 it represents more than 38,000 children, 2,700 teachers and 25,800 families in 159 Christian, Catholic, Independent, Lutheran and Seventh-day Adventist schools.

This past year was a busy year for the organization as it continued to provide its member schools with important information on relevant educational issues. There was an informative annual meeting, recognition of the organization's outstanding teachers, a network of public policy liaisons established, and continuing membership in a national organization of private schools.

continued on page 3

From the KAIRS President —

Greetings. We are pleased to present our KAIRS Annual Report to you.

KAIRS has had an interesting and educational year. After our 2003 Annual Meeting, we began a more in-depth process of member education. This process included speakers from the U.S. Department of Education, the University of Kansas and the Kansas State Department of Education. Our speakers covered important topics such as the No Child Left Behind Act, teacher evaluations and the process of using a Professional Development Council for the recertification of teachers.

The importance of KAIRS has been emphasized in all of the educational sessions. Because many of our schools have chosen not to be state accredited, KAIRS must become more involved with teacher recertification and licensure. The No Child Left Behind Act is going to impact all of us in some way, and through KAIRS, we can become more educated about that impact. With our census showing that we represent more than 38,000 students from the State of Kansas, KAIRS will continue to make a difference for those students who are enrolled in our schools.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the KAIRS organization and look forward to another exciting year!

— Karen Norton

2003 Annual Meeting Highlighted by Excellence

Right: The KAIRS 2003 Distinguished Teachers were honored at the Hall of Fame Banquet. From left to right, Front row: **Kris Alsin**, Hope Lutheran School, Shawnee (Lutheran Schools); **LeAnn Folden**, Bethel Life School, Wichita (Christian Schools); **Rose Ann Burkhart**, Holy Family School, Great Bend (Diocese of Dodge City); Back row: **Tom Compton**, Colgan High School, Pittsburg (Diocese of Wichita); **Ernie Drowatzky**, The Independent School, Wichita (Independent Schools); **June Mongeau**, Sacred Heart Grade School, Plainville (Diocese of Salina).



Below: Dr. Martha Gage, Director of Teacher Education and Licensure, Kansas State Department of Education, prepares for her discussion on teacher licensure.



Left: Susie Schainost, Head of Middle School, The Independent School, welcomes participants to her workshop entitled, "Outside the Box".



Above: Karen Norton, KAIRS President, moderates a panel that included (from left): Nick Jordan, Kansas Senate, District 10 (Shawnee); Dan Williams, Kansas House, District 14 (Olathe); and Carol Rupe, Kansas State Board of Education, District 8.

Left: Bob Voboril, KAIRS Vice-President, offers helpful ideas and advice about the topic of Development.



KAIRS members participate in one of Susie Schainost's innovative exercises suggested in her hands-on workshop, which gave a wide variety of teaching ideas.

KAIRS 2003-04 Membership Profile

Enrollment of all KAIRS Schools	38,333	Average ACT Score	22.6
Number of Member Schools	159	Full-time Teachers	2,281 (84%)
Families Represented	25,799	Teachers with a Master's Degree	24%
Internet Access in Classrooms	86% of 2,325 classrooms	Savings to Kansas Taxpayers	\$185,864,250
High School Graduates	1,856	(Foregone State Aid Estimated at \$5,500 per pupil)	

KAIRS Public Policy Agenda Based on Equity

KAIRS believes that parents are the first and best educators of their children, and they should be able to choose the most appropriate school for their children without financial penalty.

KAIRS believes that public educators are partners and not competitors. However, the commitment to the total formation of the human person, rooted in spiritual values, makes KAIRS schools unique and distinctive.

KAIRS respectfully points out that school funding is inherently unequal and that this discrimination against parents who choose religious or independent schools for their children has been detrimental to educational achievement as a whole. This is particularly true for those who have the fewest choices: low income families.

KAIRS believes that a more neutral stance, which respects local decision making, shared religious and community values, and high expectations for every child, would benefit all families and all schools. n

2004 Issues Worth Watching

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The reauthorization of the IDEA is nearing completion. According to Bob Voboril, KAIRS Public Policy Coordinator, it looks to be favorable for KAIRS. Providing services in the student's district where he or she attends school, rather than where he or she resides, is a key issue for KAIRS and the IDEA reauthorization currently contains that provision.

Tax Credits & Vouchers

Vouchers and tax credits have been found constitutional nationally, but the laws are being appealed in some states — Arizona in particular. Colorado has a program set to begin in the 2004-05 school year. The Washington, D.C. program has been approved by the House of Representatives, but not the Senate.

KAIRS Begins 34th Year

(Continued from page 1)

Distinguished Teachers Awards

A highlight of each Annual Meeting is the recognition of that year's KAIRS Distinguished Teachers at the Hall of Fame Banquet. Each school system honors one teacher. This past year, six outstanding teachers were honored. They are featured on page 2.

Alternate Accreditation

In 2002, KAIRS assisted the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) School system in gaining approval for an alternate accreditation program for its schools. Now in its second year, the Lutheran schools are accredited by National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) in conjunction with the state's Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA). Ed Bierbaum, NLSA Commissioner for the Kansas District, explained, "The process allows the LCMS schools to speed up the process of accreditation with both agencies. We do not have to do

one process and then retool and do the second."

Membership Education

The 2003-04 year featured a slight change in its quarterly membership meetings as each meeting concentrated on critical issues and provided insightful speakers. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was the first session and featured Dr. Maureen Dowling, U.S. Department of Education Program Specialist.

In September, Marceta Reilly, KU Associate Professor, offered helpful insights into the challenging area of teacher evaluations. At the November meeting Kathy Boyer (Education Consultant for School Improvement and Accreditation) and Susan Helbert (Assistant Director for Teacher Education and Licensure — under Dr. Martha Gage) discussed Professional Development Councils and teacher licensure.

Annual Meeting

Each year the Annual Meeting strives to educate KAIRS

members on the challenging issues facing educators. The 2003 meeting was no exception with the speakers including the highly motivational Dr. Mike Cook, Executive Director of ESSDACK; Dr. Martha Gage, Kansas Director of Teacher Education and Licensure; Susie Schainost, Head of Middle School, The Independent School; and Bob Voboril, Superintendent of Schools, Catholic Diocese of Wichita.

The meeting featured a panel of Kansas Legislators and a Board of Education member who fielded questions from the membership. Opportunities for building professional relationships among the KAIRS statewide membership have proven to be valuable for those attending.

Local School Public Policy Liaisons

KAIRS has established an internal network of volunteer public policy liaisons that consists of member-school parents who are particularly interested in public policy issues. Bob Voboril, KAIRS Vice-President, Public Policy Coordina-

tor, provides monthly (and if needed, more frequent) electronic updates on important policy issues. These parents then communicate with their schools, local legislators and are invited to attend the KAIRS Annual Meeting.

Communications

KAIRS continues to broaden its goals in order to improve communication among its members. 2003 saw another objective accomplished as KAIRS published its first Annual Report. KAIRS also maintains a public relations director on staff, who among other duties, sends out the electronic monthly newsletter, *KAIRS Today*, 10 times each year to the entire membership.

Membership in the Council for American Private Education

KAIRS is a state affiliate of the Council for Private Education (CAPE). CAPE, the Washington D.C.-area coalition, is dedicated to fostering communication and cooperation within the private school community and public sector. Each year KAIRS sends a delegate to the national conference. n

KAIRS Distinguished Teachers 2004

Christian Schools



Kevin Taylor has been a vital member of Trinity Academy in Wichita since 1997. He teaches Spanish and Bible and is the Chair of the Foreign Language Department. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Wichita State University. He also taught at the InterAmerican School Quetzaltenango, Guatemala from 1995 to 1997.

Beyond his academic excellence, Mr. Taylor was instrumental in starting the Servant Leadership program where students volunteer at a "people-oriented" organization or ministry every two weeks. Trinity Headmaster David Swank said, "In addition to being a talented teacher, Kevin truly loves his students and pours his life into theirs. He has a humble attitude that draws students to listen to his Godly counsel."

Diocese of Dodge City



Connette Eckels is in her 28th year as a primary grade teacher at Sacred Heart in Ness City. Currently, she teaches kindergarten, first grade and Jump Start (pre-kindergarten) students. Her principal, Ann Depperschmidt said that Mrs. Eckels routinely accepts new challenges with grace and a positive attitude, and she demonstrated her dedication to the school when she volunteered for three years to

serve as Head Teacher. Mrs. Eckels received her Bachelor of Science degree from Fort Hays State University.

Sacred Heart has been part of Mrs. Eckels' life since she attended school there. Mrs. Depperschmidt said, "Connette has a talent and a true gift to teach primary age students. Her gentle spirit and her ability to enhance the students' self esteem are totally dynamic in the teaching field."

Independent Schools



Dave Hawley is known not only as an outstanding seventh grade American History teacher at Wichita Collegiate School, but for his near "legendary" ability as a tennis coach. During his 26-year tenure at Collegiate, Mr. Hawley has coached the boys' tennis team to 15 State Championships and the girls' team to 13 State Titles in a row. He's been named Kansas Tennis Coach of the Year and Midwest Coach

of the year six times each.

Mr. Hawley received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harding University. "Wherever Mr. Hawley is, he is surrounded by kids, and wherever they are, he is teaching them. Students come back from their high school and college history classes saying they remember it all from their seventh grade class," said Bunny Hill, Head of School, Wichita Collegiate Middle School.

Lutheran Schools



Jan Aberle is an invaluable kindergarten teacher at Holy Cross Lutheran School in Wichita and has been providing outstanding education and encouragement to kindergartners at Holy Cross for the past 25 years. Her love for the children, conscientious preparation, and experience in working with primary school children has ensured the success of her students. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from

Wichita State University.

Holy Cross Principal Bill Dieckhoff said, "Her students, parents, colleagues and administration, hold Jan in high esteem. They recognize Jan as an important member of the Holy Cross teaching team and many of her innovative ideas are gleaned through her continual growth in local university classes and workshops. She has been a faithful servant to the Lord's little ones for 25 years."

Diocese of Salina



Trish Ott teaches first grade at Manhattan Catholic School and has done so since 1997. During her 13 years at Manhattan, she has also taught second grade and served as principal for a year. She excels as a reading teacher and has a deep love for teaching children to read. Mrs. Ott received her degree in Education and English from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. She also has a degree in Educational

Management from the University of Houston at Clear Lake City.

Manhattan Principal, Tom Schmitz said, "When students have Trish for a teacher they are given such a solid foundation on which to build. She is a personal example of the love and caring that is the stronghold of our Catholic School. A faith community is alive in her classroom."

Diocese of Wichita



Nell Kaba is a third grade teacher at St. Joseph Catholic School in Wichita where she has taught since 2000, and also attended as a student. Mrs. Kaba has served in the Wichita Diocese for 28 years, with 23 years as a primary teacher and five years as the Director of Harbor House –the Wichita Diocese shelter for abused and battered women. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from

Kansas Newman University.

"Mrs. Kaba is an outstanding teacher and we are blessed that she chose to return to her Alma Mater at this point in her teaching career," Dan McAdam, St. Joseph Principal, explained. "Nell is also very much filled with the Holy Spirit and this is most evident in the depth of faith that is demonstrated by her students."

Mission

Through its common commitment to quality education, KAIRS serves to unify its member schools while respecting their diversity. KAIRS provides a framework for communication and cooperation among independent and religious schools in the state of Kansas, preschool through secondary. In addition, KAIRS strives to maintain productive relationships with the Kansas State Board of Education, the Kansas Department of Education, the Kansas Board of Regents, the local, state, and federal governments, and other agencies that impact quality education.