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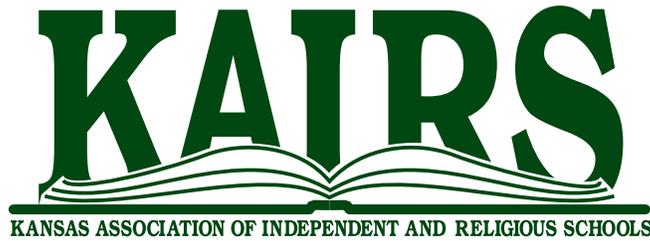
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KAIRS Focuses on Serving Member Schools

The educational landscape in Kansas continues to change, but the Kansas Association of Independent and Religious Schools (KAIRS) continued in its 36-year commitment of providing outstanding education to its more than 150 schools and 37,000 students ('05-'06). KAIRS is comprised of Christian, Catholic, Independent, Lutheran and Seventh-day Adventist schools. It is the state's largest organization of non-public schools.

This past year, KAIRS looked closely at how it might best serve its member schools and their students. The organization strives to maintain a positive relationship with the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and discussions regarding accreditation are ongoing. KAIRS was gratified this past year when KSDE reorganized and included a staff member who now works as a liaison between the Department of Education and KAIRS.

Educational funding remained a priority for KAIRS. Membership considerations included tax incentives and scholarship programs as possible means to assist families



The KAIRS 2006 Distinguished Teachers were honored at the Hall of Fame Banquet. From left, Shirley Meissner (Independent Schools), Bonnie Schuette (Diocese of Dodge City), Dave Ochs (Lutheran Schools), Judy Franklin (Christian Schools), Sister Agnes Lero (Diocese of Wichita).

in supporting their children's education. Tax incentives for educational savings accounts may be another viable option.

The KAIRS Hall of Fame, which is featured on its website (KAIRS.org) gained two new members last year. Karen Norton, former KAIRS president and long-time Head of School at The Independent School of Wichita, and Jean Ross, president of Thomas More Prep-Marian High School, joined the four previous inductees.

As has become tradition, the Annual Hall of Fame Banquet honored five new KAIRS Distinguished Teachers. The recognition of outstanding educators in Kansas is a high point of the year.

KSDE Appoints Liaison to Non-Public Schools

In a department-wide reorganization in the summer of 2006, the KSDE created the Division for School Innovations. Staci Warren was hired as the Coordinator. *continued on page 3*

From the KAIRS President —

Greetings! As the incoming KAIRS President, I have enjoyed my first six months in office and am looking forward to diligently serving our KAIRS members.

This past year at our annual meeting, KAIRS re-examined the needs and focus of our organization. At that time, we reiterated that the primary purpose of our organization is to promote and advocate for the independent and religious schools in our state. We also affirmed the need to connect with the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) in assisting with quality services for students attending KAIRS schools. When the KSDE created a Division for School Innovations, we were

pleased that Staci Warren was assigned as a liaison to private, parochial and other non-public schools. KAIRS has been a longtime proponent of creating such a position.

KAIRS is an organization that has great potential for networking within our state. We also hope to pursue additional networking with other states that have similar organizations like KAIRS. Going beyond our comfort zone may also support our organizational goals.

— Nick Compagnone, PhD

KAIRS Hall of Fame

The KAIRS Hall of Fame recognizes and honors outstanding life-long contributions to religious and independent schools in Kansas. These educators have given extraordinary service to a KAIRS member school (or a series of schools) during their careers as educators.

Edward Bierbaum has been a devoted Lutheran educator for 40 years. Even as a young man, he knew he wanted to become a teacher — inspired by a gentleman he admired who was his instructor. Other mentors, however, thought that young Ed might be called to be a pastor. After much prayer and thought, he decided to pursue being a Lutheran educator.

“The force that moved me to enter the teaching profession would have to be God. As I look back, I can see God’s hand guiding what I have done. I have spent my entire teaching career in Lutheran schools because I wanted to be free to share with children and young adults that Jesus Christ was their Lord and Savior,” he explained. “There are many disruptive forces that affect young people today. If I can be a small part in giving a child some stability in his or her life by sharing what Jesus has done for me, I have accomplished my task.”

Mr. Bierbaum has invested the last 13 years of his career as the principal and teacher at Linn Lutheran School in grades six through eight. During this time, he has also served, and continues to serve, in numerous leadership positions at the Kansas District level of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LC-MS). These include the Chair of the District Professional Development Council, 2000-2006; Kansas National Lutheran Schools Accreditation Commissioner, 1998 – present; a member of the District Board of Directors, 2003 – present; and chair and past chair of the Kansas Lutheran Educators’ Conference.

James Bradshaw, Executive Director for Educational Services, Kansas District, LC-MS, praised Mr. Bierbaum for his years of service, “Ed Bierbaum has been an outstanding teacher-principal in his



13 years at Linn Lutheran School. His dedication and service go beyond his own school as he has also been instrumental in the development of the teacher certification process and the advancement of National Lutheran Schools Accreditation in Kansas.”

Prior to his move to Kansas in 1994, Mr. Bierbaum held several positions in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He was the Science Department Chairman and a science and math instructor for grades nine through twelve at Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School. Additionally, he was the director of the Sheboygan Area Lutheran Outdoor Education Camp for 20 years. He began his teaching career at St. John Lutheran School in Victor, Iowa in 1966.

Mr. Bierbaum earned a B.S. in Education from Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebraska (1966) and later received a master’s degree in education from the same institution (1977). He returned to Concordia University to earn a master’s degree in education administration (1997). Mr. Bierbaum is married to Donna, a retired Lutheran educator, and has two children who attended Lutheran elementary and high schools. ■

KAIRS Hall of Fame Members

- Founders:** Robert Eggold, James Thiessen, Vincent DeCoursey
2005: Bunny Hill
2006: Karen Norton, Jean Ross

KAIRS 2006 in Review...



Karen Norton (left), former KAIRS President and former Head of School for The Independent School of Wichita, and Jean Ross, President, Thomas Moore Prep-Marian High School in Salina, were inducted into the KAIRS Hall of Fame in 2006.



Barry Downing, (right) chair and CEO of Corporate Lodging Consultants, Inc. was the keynote speaker at the 2006 Annual Meeting. Mr. Downing is an entrepreneur and philanthropist in Wichita.



KAIRS members attend one of several informative presentations at the February convention.



Dr. Nick Compagnone (left) is the current president of KAIRS. He is the Superintendent of the Diocese of Salina.

KAIRS Restates Stance on Non-Public School Funding

In 2006, KAIRS reviewed its fundamental tenets and revised several of these principles. Following is a restatement of one of KAIRS foundations:

KAIRS Core Funding Principles

Families should have educational freedom — that is, the right to choose the *school that is best for their child regardless of income or residence*.

1. The first responsibility for funding non-public schools lies with the organization that sponsors the school — not the federal or the state government.
2. We are not willing to alter our standards or our admission requirements in order to gain financial assistance for our families.
3. All schools should comply with federal, state, and local statutes regarding employment, non-discrimination, civil rights, and health and safety. However, state regulations become unfair when they force non-public schools to comply with requirements for public education without public funding.
4. Funding for education should follow the child just as it does at the post-secondary education level and in most other countries. Funding should vary with family financial need, with priority given to families of modest means and middle-income. The new system of massive court-ordered financial assistance to public education threatens the balance of school funding so drastically that some of our schools may not be able to compete fairly for teachers, students, resources, or (especially) for families of modest means.

5. Each KAIRS school needs to tell its story better to its constituents and to those who make funding decisions.
6. Each KAIRS school needs to work toward endowments and other third-source funding to reduce per-pupil tuition so that they can serve a broader base of students.
7. The State of Kansas needs to use tax policy to provide tax credits for contributions to education by individuals and corporations. ■

KAIRS Public Policy in 2007

Several issues continue to be important for KAIRS. • Accreditation for our schools is an ongoing concern. Many states across the nation offer alternative accreditation, especially for private schools. KAIRS schools are accredited by several recognized bodies, but many schools are still required to obtain Kansas accreditation in addition to that of their own organizations. Dialogue between KAIRS and the Kansas State Department of Education should continue. • Bob Corkins, Kansas Commissioner of Education resigned from his post in November 2006 after 13 months on the job. KAIRS will be intently watching the selection of the next commissioner. • KAIRS is an organization that has great potential for networking within our state of Kansas. It is also working to develop a plan to concentrate more on networking with other states that have similar organizations like KAIRS.

KAIRS Focuses on Member Schools

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dinator of Educational Alternatives in the department. One of Ms. Warren's responsibilities is to serve as a liaison between KAIRS and the KSDE.

"KAIRS has advocated for the development of this position for several years," said Dr. Nick Compagnone, KAIRS President. "We look forward to the benefits of this new opportunity for KAIRS schools to communicate and partner with KSDE."

KAIRS Meetings Broadcasted Live via Web

This past year KAIRS broadcasted a meeting live to its members who could not geographically attend. Thanks to ESSDACK's (Educational Services and Staff Development Association) Mar-

ratech technology and Smokey Valley Virtual school software, several members could hear and see the speakers via video link. A broadcast of the quarterly meetings also was reproduced through available technology, and distributed to interested members.

Membership Education

The 2006-07 year quarterly membership meetings focused on planning and development. In the early fall, Sister Carol Cimino, SSJ, Ed.D., a popular marketing and public relations consultant, provided insights on an effective public relations campaign. She also offered interesting current statistics about private education.

In November, Steve Brown, founding attorney for Vogel & Brown, located in Salina, provided KAIRS members with helpful suggestions in the area of charitable gifting and developing relationships with major donors. The

give-and-take session provided keen insights into the sometimes-challenging area of fund-raising.

2006 Annual Meeting

The 2006 meeting featured an inspirational and informative group of speakers. Barry Downing, chair and CEO of Corporate Lodging Consultants, Inc. (CLC), was the keynote speaker. Mr. Downing – an entrepreneur and philanthropist – shared the story about his latest educational philanthropic effort in Wichita: The Opportunity Project (TOP).

TOP is a full-day, year-round, early childhood education center for economically disadvantaged children (birth-to-six years) that Mr. Downing and his wife have helped develop and fund.

Other speakers included Dr. Cheryl Rude, who is the director of Leadership Development at Southwestern College in Winfield. An expert in the field of

developing leaders, she presented insightful and motivational information on leadership.

Diane Worth, a Wichita attorney, addressed difficult employee law issues and how they pertain to private schools. Curt Riggs, a Risk Consultant with IMA of Kansas, provided a detailed presentation of many areas of safety concern for school administrators.

Diane Page and Dene Nelson completed the speaker sessions with their highly entertaining presentation of Jane Goodall's worldwide, grassroots youth program, entitled "Roots and Shoots."

Rounding out the program, Carol Rupe, Kansas State Board of Education member, spoke with attendees. Ms. Rupe, a board member from Wichita, has been a consistent friend to KAIRS and has given an update of Board workings at the last three Annual Meetings. ■

KAIRS Distinguished Teachers 2007

Christian Schools



Dennis Burd is a committed mathematics teacher at Maranatha Academy in Shawnee. For the past 10 years, he has passionately shared his knowledge and love of math to his students. Mr. Burd routinely gives up his lunch hour or stays after school to help his students master the material.

In addition, he is a gifted musician who serves as the high school's worship band advisor, and organizes student worship bands to lead worship during chapels. Boyd Beck, Maranatha Academy Secondary Principal, said, "Dennis is a devoted teacher and servant. He instills a desire for music and worship for Jesus Christ, is a man of integrity and is dedicated to his profession."

Mr. Burd received his degree in secondary education from Calvary Bible College (1994) and an Associate of Business degree from Kansas City Community College (1990).

Diocese of Dodge City



Inga Atkinson has shepherded and lovingly instructed the 3-year-old "Star"ters and 4-year-old prekindergarteners at Holy Family School in Great Bend for the past five years. Nominated by her fellow teachers, Mrs. Atkinson was chosen for her commitment to helping each of her young students learn and succeed, and also for her dedication to

Catholic education.

"Inga is the most genuine and patient person I know," said Karen Moeder, Holy Family Principal. "She treats every student as if they were her own children, nurtures them into strong young people, and is a shining example of what it means to teach here."

Mrs. Atkinson has taught at Catholic and Christian schools since 1984. She received her bachelor's degree from Kansas State University (1984) and her Associate of Science degree (1982) from Northeastern Oklahoma A & M.

Independent Schools



Gale Farmer is an outstanding and beloved 28-year mathematics instructor at Wichita Collegiate School. Mr. Farmer is routinely one of the first teachers to arrive in the morning and the last to leave, as he is driven by his passion to inspire his students to love and respect the discipline of mathematics.

"In addition to teaching his students mathematics, Gale is creating critical and analytical *thinkers*," Jonathan Eades, Head of Upper School, Wichita Collegiate, said. "Never before have I seen a teacher with such a unique ability to cultivate life-long learners, and most important yet, intellectual risk-takers."

Mr. Farmer also is currently the Academic Dean and the Math Department Chair for Collegiate. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in 1970 and 1972 respectively.

Lutheran Schools



Donna Longhauser is an invaluable second grade teacher at Holy Cross Lutheran School in Wichita. For the past eight and one-half years at her current school – and more than 29 years in her teaching career – she has had the gift of making each child feel special. She is particularly talented in working with struggling students.

"Donna works hard to educate the whole child. She is concerned with all aspects of each child's life," Bill Dieckhoff, Holy Cross Lutheran Principal, said. "She seems to very naturally be able to identify specific needs children have, and determine how to find solutions for these needs."

Mrs. Longhauser has spent her entire career in Lutheran primary schools. She received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Concordia Teachers College in River Forest, Illinois in 1974.

Diocese of Salina



Laura Reif Foss has been an outstanding and enthusiastic first grade teacher for the past 10 years at Sacred Heart Grade School in Plainville. Her creative approach to subjects and her skill in class presentation have her young students eagerly arriving early each morning.

Mrs. Reif Foss's administrative talents also prompted Carol Parker, Sacred Heart Principal, to appoint her as "teacher-in-charge" in her absence. Mrs. Parker became acquainted with Mrs. Reif Foss in 1976 when she taught her in fifth grade. She said, "I have watched her grow into a wonderful young woman full of creative energy, and Christian love for her students and peers."

Mrs. Reif Foss completed both her master's degree in elementary education (2000) and a bachelor's degree in elementary education (1993) from Fort Hays State University.

Diocese of Wichita



Roxanne Goehring has been creatively teaching science at St. Anne's Catholic School in Wichita since 1981. Her exceptional abilities can be seen in her imaginative use of labs and inventive projects that address the varied learning styles of her students.

Mrs. Goehring is active in St. Anne's fine arts program as she directs an annual melodrama for the middle school students. She also is intricately involved in the Human Sexuality Program that helps students and teachers alike in following the teachings of the Catholic Church.

"Roxanne's daily model of generous giving, compassion, dedication, humor and rapport with students, parents and staff is truly an example for all of us," said Sister Margaret Nugent, St. Anne's Principal.

Mrs. Goehring began her teaching career in 1970. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Wichita State University (1970).

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 State Department of Education, the Kansas Board of Regents, the local, state, and federal governments, and other agencies that impact quality education.