

## KAIRS Executive Committee 2008-2009

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Catholic Diocese of Salina

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Each year for the past 38 years, the Kansas Association of Independent and Religious Schools (KAIRS) has worked towards fulfilling its mission of ensuring that children attending religious and independent schools in Kansas will be treated equitably in educational law, policy and programs. The issues have varied over the years, but the commitment remains the same.

KAIRS is comprised of 139

Christian, Catholic, Independent, Lutheran and Seventh-day Adventist schools. It is the state's largest organization of non-public schools.

This past year was filled with meaningful events. The executive committee focused on the issue of alternate accreditation, with several successful meetings helping to make headway among the key participants. (see *Alternate Accreditation article on page 3*) Our Catholic members were inspired last

spring when they attended Pope Benedict's visit to Washington D.C. KAIRS also welcomed the independent and religious colleges and universities in Kansas as associate members.

While the lagging economy and a change in the national administration may present new challenges to KAIRS member schools, the desire to educate more than 34,000 children across the state of Kansas who attend KAIRS schools remains ever strong.

## New Alliance with Kansas Colleges and Universities

In the culmination of more than a year's work, particularly by Dr. Philip Kerstetter, President of Kansas Wesleyan University, and KAIRS President, Dr. Nick Compagnone, KAIRS has extended associate membership to all Kansas independent and religious colleges and universities. In doing so, the hope

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# KAIRS

KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

February 2009, Vol. 7

## KAIRS Focuses on Accreditation and Welcomes New Members



Above: Jackie Kack (left) and Cindy Curran, 6th and 5th grade teachers at St. Mary's Grade School in Salina, gave a creative presentation entitled "Hands-on-Science" at the 2008 KAIRS Annual Meeting.



Right: KAIRS Annual Meeting provides the opportunity for Mickey Wasinger, Principal, Christ the King Catholic School in Wichita, (Diocese of Wichita) left and Trina Delgado, Principal, St. Mary School in Garden City (Diocese of Dodge City) to compare notes.



Above: 2008 Keynote Speaker, Sister Carol Cimino, brought humor to her insightful presentations.

## From the KAIRS President

**I**t is hard to believe a year has passed since our last Annual Meeting. While the economy has provided challenges to many of our schools, the determination to pursue their unique educational missions is as strong as ever. As an organization, we accomplished several goals:

- The KAIRS membership has increased this year. This has provided us with a wider diversity and increased resources for KAIRS.
- We partnered with Kansas North Central Accreditation (KNCA) and had a special session for private schools at the KNCA annual meeting. This will continue next year.
- CAPE (Council of Advanced Private Education) recognized KAIRS in one of its publications for our accreditation initiative.
- The independent and religious colleges in the State of Kansas have been welcomed into KAIRS as associate members. We look forward to great things coming from this mutually beneficial relationship.

We are excited about our upcoming annual meeting. The meeting promises to be both inspirational and informative. It will be fantastic to welcome our new KAIRS members and college associate members.



— Nick Compagnone, PhD

## Accreditation

*continued from page 1*

is to build bridges between the two groups for the future.

### 2008 Annual Meeting

Despite a frosty start to the Annual Meeting in Topeka, the attendees quickly warmed to keynote speaker Sister Carol Cimino's humor and keen insights. Sister Cimino, SSJ, Ed.D, is a Catholic nun, a former Catholic School principal, and a national consultant for the textbook publisher, William H. Sadlier Company.

Her keynote address focused on the challenges that schools are facing in the current educational climate. In her second and third sessions, she reflected on the present generation of parents, gave helpful recommendations concerning the marketing of private religious schools, the retention and recruitment of teachers, and the importance of having a mission statement for your school.

The remaining agenda was filled with additional outstanding speakers and topics. These included the Smoky Valley Virtual Charter School, an accreditation update, Pass Key technology assistance for remedial and accelerated students, EduConnect technology and the eDesign Learning Lab.

Other topics included a KSHAA discussion, *Sports as a Ministry* and creative science in the classroom.

As always, the Hall of Fame Banquet, which recognized the KAIRS Distinguished Teachers for 2008, was a highlight of the year.

### KAIRS Members Travel to See Pope Benedict

All four Kansas Catholic School Superintendents traveled to Washington D.C. to attend the visit of Pope Benedict, where he spoke to Catholic educators. Dr. Nick Compagnone chronicled Pope Benedict's

inspirational visit.

"Many of those who attended started the day listening to the Pontiff say Mass in (the Washington Nationals baseball team's) Nationals Park where 40,000 attended. Like many Americans, the first words I heard Pope Benedict say at the beginning of Mass was 'Peace be with you.'

"Later, participants met at The Catholic University of America for the 5 pm arrival of the Pope. Many in the room were acquainted with one another. Several participants have been in Catholic education for many years. As for many others, this was going to be a different kind of meeting. For me, it was unique. I did not bring my laptop on the trip, nor did I communicate or return e-mails to my colleagues. I considered this trip to be a pilgrimage.

"The Pope noted that Catholic education has helped generations of immigrants rise from poverty into mainstream society. He said this was made possible through countless sacrifices made by religious sisters, brothers, priests and parents.

"Clergy, religious orders, and laity were urged not to abandon schools, but to renew a commitment to schools, especially in

poorer areas. In his departing words, the Pope stated, 'To all of you I say: bear witness to hope. Nourish your witness with prayer. Account for the hope that characterizes your lives by living the truth, which you propose to your students. Help them to know and love the One you have encountered, whose truth and goodness you have experienced with joy.'

### KAIRS Communications

KAIRS continues to utilize technology to help better serve its membership. The Internet broadcasting of regular meetings was particularly beneficial when gas prices climbed in 2008. With the help of Marratech technology, Smoky Valley Virtual School software, and the expertise of Bob D'Andrea, Technology Coordinator for Salina Schools, members participated in meetings via the Internet.

The KAIRS website, [www.kairs.org](http://www.kairs.org), houses the KAIRS Hall of Fame, which recognizes outstanding, life-long educators. This is also where the annual Distinguished Teachers are permanently honored. Additionally, *KAIRS Today*, the organization's e-newsletter, provides KAIRS members with pertinent information throughout the year. ■

## [www.kairs.org](http://www.kairs.org)

The screenshot shows the KAIRS website homepage. At the top, the KAIRS logo is displayed with the tagline "Kansas Association of Independent & Religious Schools". Below the logo, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, About Us, Public Policy, Membership, KAIRS Today Newsletter, KAIRS Annual Report, Distinguished Teachers Awards, KAIRS Hall of Fame, Links, and Contact Us. A central banner features a photo of a young boy and text stating: "The Kansas Association of Religious and Independent Schools (KAIRS) is the state's largest organization of non-public schools. Now in its 35th year, KAIRS is committed to excellence in education and to maintaining unity within its membership and productive relationships with public school leadership. As it represents more than 38,000 Kansas school children and 2,700 teachers, KAIRS strives to ensure that children attending religious and independent schools are treated equitably in educational law, policy and programs." Below this, the KAIRS logo is repeated with the contact information: "The Kansas Association of Independent & Religious Schools, 785-827-4200, info@kairs.org". There are also buttons for "Census Registration 2008 Coming Soon! KAIRS" and "KAIRS Hall of Fame", and a "DOWNLOADABLE FORMS" button. At the bottom, the KAIRS logo and contact information are repeated: "KAIRS The Kansas Association of Independent & Religious Schools Contact us: info@kairs.org 785-827-4200 privacy \* legal".

## Alternate Accreditation

The move towards providing KAIRS schools with an alternative accreditation option, which would be accepted by the state of Kansas, was a critical issue again this year. As non-public schools, many KAIRS schools opt out of the state accreditation process, while others do dual accreditation. Currently, these options fail to provide an ideal situation for them. The goal is to provide a workable, alternate accreditation model that meets the state requirements without compromising the missions of our religious and independent schools.

The executive committee, led by Dr. Nick Compagnone, KAIRS President, studied other state models that recognize alternative accreditation for private and religious schools. This past year KAIRS committee members began working closely with representatives from North Central Accreditation (NCA) — one component of the unified organization, AdvancED — and the Kansas Depart-

ment of Education, to discuss alternative options for KAIRS members to consider.

Among the many meetings that were held to discuss this issue, last September NCA sponsored a special half-day session specifically for KAIRS members at the end of the Annual Kansas NCA convention. Eddie Krenson, Senior Vice President, AdvancED East Region, along with Dr. Nancy Bolz, Director, Kansas NCA CASI gave presentations and fielded questions regarding the accreditation issue.

Meetings continued throughout the winter of 2008 and into 2009, with the concerned parties working through the pertinent issues. NCA and KAIRS hope to have a proposal to the Kansas State Commissioner of Education and the Kansas State Board of Education in 2009 or 2010. ■

## KAIRS 2008 Distinguished Teachers

Each year, KAIRS recognizes outstanding teachers in each of its six divisions and recognizes them at the Annual Meeting's Hall of Fame Banquet. Since 2003, 35 teachers have now been recognized. In addition, these teachers are permanently posted on the KAIRS website, [www.kairs.org](http://www.kairs.org). The winners for 2009 are featured on page four. ■



KAIRS recognized the 2008 Distinguished Teachers during the Annual Meeting's Hall of Fame Banquet. Winners were (from left): Karen Wilgers, Lutheran Schools; Cori Eck Schad, Diocese of Wichita; Trudy Cole, Diocese of Salina; Leroy Busenitz, Christian Schools; Jody Neuman, Diocese of Dodge City; and Susan Ensz, Independent Schools.

## KAIRS Statistics at a Glance

In 2008, KAIRS began the process of gathering their Census statistics on line. In an effort to reduce paperwork and mailing costs, the schools entered their information via the Internet.

### 2009 Statistics

Enrollment of all  
 KAIRS Schools ..... 34,205  
 Number of Members  
 Schools ..... 139  
 Savings to Kansas  
 Tax Payers\* ..... \$205,230,000  
 (Foregone State Aid estimated at  
 \$6,000 in general state aid per pupil.)

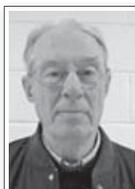
\*If all KAIRS children were enrolled in public schools.

## KAIRS Hall of Fame

The KAIRS website ([www.kairs.org](http://www.kairs.org)) is also the location of the KAIRS Hall of Fame, where KAIRS honors its outstanding educators who have made 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 career as educators. ■



Vincent DeCoursey



Robert Eggold



James Thiessen



Bunny Hill



Karen Norton



Jean Ross



Edward Bierbaum

### KAIRS Hall of Fame Members

**Founders:** Vincent DeCoursey  
 (1917-1991)  
 Robert Eggold  
 James Thiessen

**2005:** Bunny Hill  
**2006:** Karen Norton  
 Jean Ross  
**2007:** Edward Bierbaum

# KAIRS Distinguished Teachers 2009

## Christian Schools



**Delonn Anderson** is committed to Christian education and has served joyfully as a third grade teacher at Maranatha Academy in Shawnee since 1998. She excels at imaginative activities such as hosting an “Author’s Tea” where students read their completed books to their parents. In addition, she is a consultant for city-wide reading projects.

“Mrs. Anderson not only teaches her students in a way that captivates their interest and imagination, but she does it with great joy and a servant’s heart,” said Laura Burch, Elementary Principal, Maranatha Academy. “She is also a leader and encourager of other teachers.”

She began her teaching career in 1975 after earning her BA in Elementary Education from the University of Sioux Falls in 1971. Mrs. Anderson completed her master’s degree in Education from Mid America Nazarene University in 2005.

## Diocese of Dodge City



**Virginia Boyd** has faithfully dedicated nearly 40 years to elementary education, with the last 19 as a beloved kindergarten and first grade teacher at Sacred Heart Cathedral School in Dodge City. Currently, she uses her creative gifts to motivate her “busy” kindergartners. She is known at school for her inviting classroom, for her excellent instruction, for her loyalty to God, and for encouraging her peers.

“Virginia is a very organized teacher, and she spends many hours in preparation for her classes and activities. The children in her class always know that they are loved,” Bonnie Schuette, Sacred Heart Lead Teacher, said. “Sacred Heart Cathedral School is very lucky to have such a gifted teacher as Mrs. Boyd.”

Mrs. Boyd earned her BS in Elementary Education from St. Mary of the Plains College in 1968.

## Independent Schools



**Jamie Kennedy** has been an outstanding teacher at Wichita Collegiate for the past 20 years. Currently a sixth grade teacher and team leader, she has also taught first and second grade. Mrs. Kennedy’s artistic talents have helped to develop exciting curriculum, with her students simulating immigration through Ellis Island, and performing Shakespeare.

“Jamie’s professional achievements are many, but what is most impressive about her is not only the accomplishments, per se, but the person she is. She is a shining star not only to the children in her classroom, but to their parents and her colleagues as well,” said Ann Rai, Head, Wichita Collegiate Middle School.

Mrs. Kennedy began teaching in 1977. She holds a BS in Education from the University of Kansas (1977), and received her MS in Education from Wichita State University in 1983.

## Lutheran Schools



**Stella O’Brien** is a beloved kindergarten teacher at Zion Lutheran School in Independence. She began teaching at Zion Lutheran in 1998, but her teaching career started in 1988. As an innovative teacher, she includes a cooking project in every unit, maintains a class greenhouse, and her students even have a worm farm. She looks for potential in every student.

“The greatest strength of Mrs. O’Brien is her ability to connect with our students, and model Jesus in all she does. She is, by nature and by determination, an encourager and additionally serves as a mentor for new teachers,” Dawn Oldenettel, Principal, Zion Lutheran School, said.

Mrs. O’Brien earned an AA in Education from Labette Community College in 1986, and a BS in Education in 1992 from Pittsburg State University. In 1997, she was given an Early Childhood Endorsement from Independence Community College.

## Diocese of Salina



**JoAnn Bean** has lovingly taught kindergarten and preschool at Sacred Heart Grade School in Plainville since 2002. During her tenure at Sacred Heart, she has enhanced the reading and math programs, and her students consistently score above grade level. She is also instrumental in providing after-school tutorials for children, and leadership among her peers as School Improvement Team (SIT) Chair at Sacred Heart.

“JoAnn has proved to be one of the most incredible early childhood teachers I have had the pleasure of knowing. She is compassionate, understanding, and wise with students, parents and peers. Many of her former students seek her out after they enter the upper grades,” Carol Parker, Principal, Sacred Heart Grade School, said.

Mrs. Bean first began teaching in 1975. She received a BS in Elementary Education from Kansas State University that same year.

## Diocese of Wichita



**Joy Kirk** has been devoted to teaching at St. Patrick Catholic School in Wichita since 1990, and has skillfully taught a variety of subjects and grades during her 27 years in education. Reading is her passion, so in addition to serving as the school librarian, she is also the Success for All (SFA) Reading Facilitator. She is committed to helping her students broaden their love of reading through helping them to select the right reading material.

“Joy wears many hats at St. Patrick Catholic School, and she takes on all challenges with grace, poise, and a grand smile, spreading joy to everyone,” said St. Patrick Principal, Theresa Lam. “She puts 110 percent into everything she does.”

Mrs. Kirk received her BA in Elementary Education in 1971 from Friends University, and earned her MS in Education (Emphasis in Reading) from Wichita State University in 1974.

## 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 college. 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.