

KAIRS Executive Committee 2009-2010

President

Dr. Nick Compagnone
Superintendent of Schools
Catholic Diocese of Salina

Vice President

Terry Tilson
Superintendent
Berean Academy, Elbing

Secretary

Michelle Bolin
Professional Development Director
The Independent School, Wichita

Treasurer

Holly Goodwin
Assistant Superintendent
Catholic Diocese of Wichita

Annual Meeting Secretary

Shelli Kadel
Head of School
Wichita Friends School

Member at Large, Lutheran Representative

Neal Kurtz
Principal
Linn Lutheran School

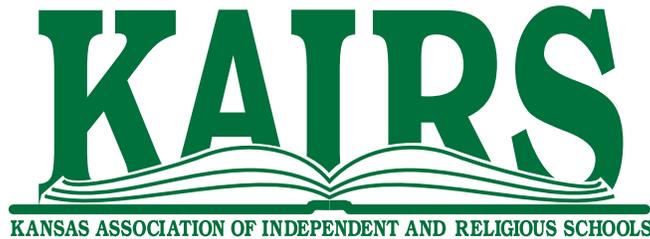
Staff

Corey Nason Reese
Communications Director
crkairs@yahoo.com

www.kairs.org

Dr. Nick Compagnone
President
Phone: 785-827-4200

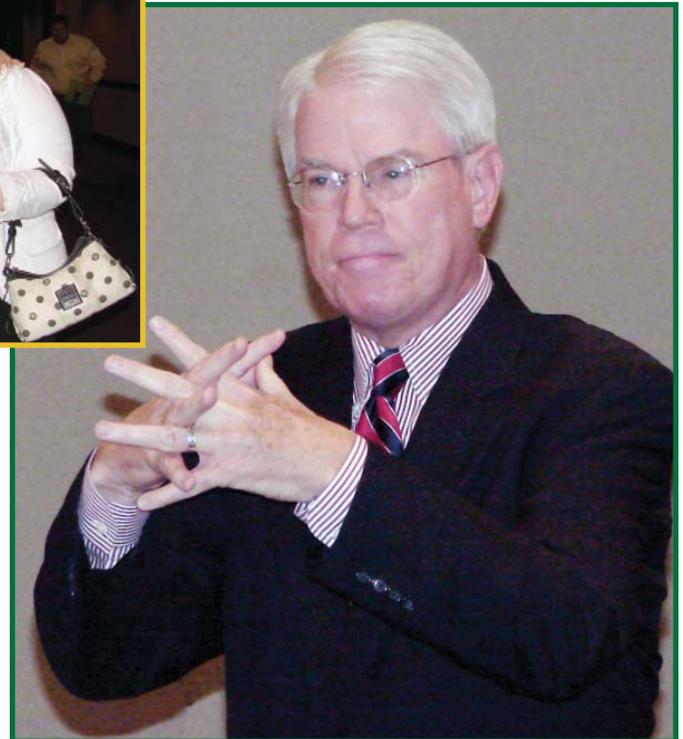
Terry Tilson
Vice President
Phone: 316-799-2211



February 2010, Vol. 8



Barbara Mertens, Principal, Bethany Lutheran in Wichita (left) and Jennifer Turner, Principal, Topeka Lutheran, enjoyed time with fellow administrators at the 2009 Annual Meeting.



Holly Goodwin, (left) Diocese of Wichita Assistant Superintendent and KAIRS Treasurer, appreciated what national education consultant and Keynote Speaker, John Findlater, (above) brought to the 2009 meeting.

KAIRS Addresses Public Policy Issues

Public policy concerns dominated much of the past year for KAIRS (Kansas Association of Independent and Religious Schools). In addition to the pursuit of an alternative accreditation model that the state might accept, KAIRS public policy stances were also re-examined and re-written. Perhaps most significantly, last fall, KAIRS Executive Committee members personally contacted members of the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) in order to bridge

existing gaps in communication. These one-on-one interviews reaped significant rewards, including KAIRS President, Nick Compagnone, PhD, being invited to make a presentation directly to the entire board.

Alternative Accreditation Process Moves Forward Slowly

During the past several years, the KAIRS Executive Committee has heard from its members that dual accreditation, for both the

State and each member's specific accrediting association, is both repetitive and a burdensome consumer of time. In hopes of assisting the membership, the Executive Committee has continued to work on formulating an alternative accreditation position.

In working toward this goal, several ideas have been proposed to the KAIRS membership at large. Conversations have been held with former Kansas Commissioners of Education. Through these processes, a

potential alliance has developed between KAIRS and the accrediting body of North Central Accreditation/AdvancED (NCA), which already accredits more than 50 percent of Catholic schools in Kansas, and a large number of the Lutheran schools. The alliance has led to a more specific proposal for a possible alternative accreditation system for KAIRS schools. This past year, however, several additional steps

See Public Policy on page 2

Public Policy

continued from page 1

have been taken that may prove to move this process forward.

Meeting with Members of KSBE

The first promising step was to begin to educate the KSBE members concerning KAIRS as an organization. Many KSBE members were unfamiliar with KAIRS itself, and were also unfamiliar with the specific additional accreditation requirements that are imposed on non-public schools in Kansas.

Beginning last Fall, KAIRS Executive Committee members made appointments with various KSBE members. While meeting face to face, KAIRS members provided board members with an updated KAIRS Public Policy brochure. This can be downloaded from the KAIRS website, www.kairs.org.

After meeting individually with the board members, a second hopeful event occurred when KAIRS President, Dr. Nick Compagnone, was invited in January to give a 50-minute presentation to the entire Board. He included the KAIRS stance on alternative accreditation that would formalize the use of

NCA as an accepted accreditation model, and indicated that numerous other states use the NCA vehicle for accreditation.

According to Nick, a number of the board members indicated they were hearing much of his information for the first time. The Board then requested that KAIRS commit the proposal to writing and include possible options to be presented at future Board meetings. Several board members approached Nick after the presentation to ask additional questions, and indicated that they looked forward to future discussions.

Year in Review 2009 Annual Meeting

Education consultant, John Findlater, provided animated and thought-provoking sessions throughout the 2009 Annual Meeting. He encouraged administrators to sharpen the focus on their missions and the initial inspiration for their schools, particularly during tough times. Mr. Findlater also highlighted the potentially challenging differences between the generation of students that are currently in school, and the faculty and administrators that are instructing them.

With a theme of *Money and Mission*, additional speakers addressed the topics of tuition

payment systems, estate and charitable gift planning, and ways to build a successful endowment program. As with each year, the Hall of Fame Banquet, where the 2009 Distinguished Teachers were honored, was the inspirational highlight of the meeting.

Dodge City Installs New Diocese Superintendent

Bill Biermann became the first new Kansas Catholic Superintendent of Schools in more than a decade, when the Diocese of Dodge City hired him last summer. Bill assumed the position while continuing to work as the Assistant Executive Director and CFO of the Southwest Plains

Regional Service Center in Sublette. He served as a high school principal prior to his position at Southwest Plains.

KAIRS Communications

Each year, KAIRS strives to take advantage of the increased technology services available to the benefit of its membership. Numerous meetings were held via Internet meeting software, which allowed additional members to attend when prevented by distance.

For the first time, KAIRS also began utilizing its website exclusively to distribute the revised Public Policy brochure and the 2010 Annual Report. Both are available at www.kairs.org. ■

KAIRS 2010 Statistics at a Glance

Enrollment of all KAIRS Schools	35,006
Schools:	
Elementary/Middle Schools.....	116
High Schools.....	23
Early Childhood Center	1
Full-time Teachers	2,390
Families	22,260
Savings to Kansas Tax Payers*	\$210,036,000
(Foregone State Aid estimated at \$6,000 in general state aid per pupil.)	

*IF all KAIRS children were enrolled in public schools.

From the KAIRS President

Recently I was reminded of a quote by Les Brown: "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land amongst the stars."

The economic challenges in recent times have been significant for our schools. Our job as administrators is to provide a vision that maintains the highest standards possible, while striving to keep our educational costs affordable. We are continually looking for ways to support parents in paying for their children's education, and are thankful that parents continue to value what we have to offer.

One of the ways we are exploring cost containment is to examine the possibility of an acceptable alternative accreditation model that the state will approve. This would allow our faculty and staff to spend less time on dual accreditation, and more time on educating our students. We began this project several years ago, and during this past year, we have made significant strides in that direction. Just this past month, I was invited to present our views to the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE). We hope this is the beginning of an exciting dialogue with members of the Board. The KSBE now

knows more about our organization than ever before.

Our upcoming annual meeting will focus on public policy issues – and specifically on school choice. Some of the issues being considered will empower parents to make better, and perhaps more affordable, school choices for their children. Choice does enhance educational quality, which is beneficial for everyone.

I have had the privilege of having served on the Executive Committee for several years and as president for the past three years. The experience has been rewarding as we are blessed with an outstanding Executive Committee. As we move into a new decade, our member schools continue to be enthusiastic about the privilege of educating more than 35,000 students across the state of Kansas. It is time that our schools take a more proactive stance in promoting our schools. Paraphrasing the above quote, "If we shoot for the moon and miss, we will still shine among the stars!!"

— Nick Compagnone, PhD, KAIRS President

KAIRS Hall of Fame

The KAIRS Hall of Fame recognizes and honors outstanding life-long contributors 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.



Keith Jopp

Keith Jopp spent his entire distinguished, 43-year professional career thriving as a small town teacher and administrator at St. Paul Lutheran School in Cheney. His students say they were truly blessed by him as a teacher, but as adults he became their trusted mentor and a true friend.

Keith's educational philosophy was founded on his personal Christian faith, and he dedicated his life to helping children learn. He believed strongly that Christian schools should provide a place for children to affirm their faith before they become part of the world at large.

He set the bar high for his students, and they responded admirably. Keith was also a highly innovative educator who, for example, as an avid outdoorsman shared his love of nature through his concept of a school campout. This student-planned event remains a favorite St. Paul tradition.

Keith began at St. Paul in 1965 with a one-room school, and 19

students. He was instrumental in a million dollar development that expanded the school to five classrooms of pre-K through eighth grade, a gymnasium and family life center. In 2005, the school purchased a nearby building for the preschool and youth center.

Beyond his academic responsibilities, Keith was active with the youth in his church, and developed community-wide programs that promoted positive intergenerational activities. He became a certified lay minister in the Lutheran church in 2008.

Originally from Minnesota, Keith attended a Lutheran school through eighth grade. He completed an AA in education from Concordia College in St. Paul, Minnesota (1963), a BS in elementary education from Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska (1965) and his master's of education degree in curriculum development from Wichita State University (1974). Keith is married to Janet. Between them they have four grown daughters and four grandchildren.



Suze Anne Norton

Suze Anne Norton will long be remembered for greeting all her young students by name and sending them off with a smile. As the Head of the Lower School at Wichita Collegiate School for 25 years, her gift of making a personal connection with the students helped

create a love of learning that has fostered continual academic excellence.

An encourager and leader by nature, once she discovered the personal fulfillment of teaching children, it became her lifelong passion. She firmly believed that students learned best when they were *doing*.

Beginning at Wichita Collegiate first as a teacher in 1975, Suze Anne was energetic and engaging in the classroom – always making sure that her students were attentive and on task. Later, as an administrator, she moved her faculty towards a project-based curriculum, with teachers leading actively involved students.

Suze Anne's gifting extended to her ability of hiring and supporting outstanding teachers, which have become a hallmark of Wichita Collegiate. She constantly encouraged her teachers to take their own initiative to improve the educational experience for all students.

In addition to her dedication to high academic standards, Suze Anne was committed to teaching the whole child. She helped implement character

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

strengthening units, and encouraged parental involvement at Wichita Collegiate. Outside the classroom, Suze Anne was instrumental in the founding of her church, Chapel Hill, helping them to meet at her school's auditorium until it could build its own facility.

A native of Kansas City, Kansas, Suze Anne attended Emporia State University, graduating in 1967 with her BS in elementary education. In 1989, she attained her master's degree in school administration at Wichita State University. Suze Anne is married to John, has two grown children, both of whom graduated from Wichita Collegiate, and five grandchildren. ■

KAIRS 2009 Distinguished Teachers



KAIRS recognized the 2009 Distinguished Teachers during the Annual Meeting's Hall of Fame Banquet. Winners were (from left): Stella O'Brien, Lutheran Schools; JoAnn Bean, Diocese of Salina; DeLonn Anderson, Christian Schools; Joy Kirk, Diocese of Wichita; Virginia Boyd, Diocese of Dodge City; Jamie Kennedy, Independent Schools.

KAIRS Distinguished Teachers 2010

Christian Schools



Beth Smith is an original and dedicated history teacher at Maranatha Academy's high school in Shawnee, and is highly respected for her ability to connect with her students. In her seventh year at Maranatha, Mrs. Smith is known for her creativity. She recently designed a unique Berlin Wall lesson where students were free and non-free citizens and experienced the consequences or blessings of their predicament.

"Mrs. Smith is the consummate professional, meeting goals for her department, for the principal, and for the masters program she is pursuing," Mark Hoduski, Maranatha History Department Chair and director of Teacher Development, said. "She is also an innovative teacher."

Mrs. Smith also taught at Berean Academy 1998 to 2003. She earned her BA in history from Mid-America Nazarene University in 1986, and will complete her MA in teaching from Avila University in May 2010.

Diocese of Dodge City



Linda Conkle is devoted to her students' academic and spiritual life as she teaches fifth grade part time and has the responsibility of Lead Teacher for Sacred Heart School in Pratt. She began her teaching career at Sacred Heart in 1992, and since 2006, in her administrative position, also teaches religion to several grades. Her commitment to instilling Catholic faith values includes leading all her students in daily prayer, and helping them to understand the Bible for their school Mass.

"Linda exemplifies the life of a Catholic Christian to her students and staff at all times," said Bill Biermann, Superintendent, Diocese of Dodge City. "She also faces her many tasks with an enthusiastic smile."

Prior to Pratt, Mrs. Conkle taught at Bucklin and Hays, Kansas and also Woodward, Oklahoma. She earned her BS in education from Fort Hays State University in 1974.

Independent Schools



Joy Burton is an outstanding multi-grade teacher and principal at Enterprise Adventist Elementary School. Since 2006, Ms. Burton has utilized her expertise to help her students excel. To expose her students to unique enrichment activities, she brought in expert scientists and authors, and visited a working farm to pick apples to make apple cider.

"Ms. Burton cares deeply for the academic progress of her students, and she works diligently to inspire her students to be successful in life," Gary Kruger, Superintendent, Seventh-day Adventist Kansas-Nebraska Conference, said. "Additionally, she teaches her students that each person has value and should be treated with respect and dignity."

Ms. Burton has been a principal and a teacher at Adventist schools in Louisiana, Nebraska, and Topeka, beginning in 1986. She received her BS in elementary education from Union College, in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1981.

Lutheran Schools



Kathy Starr works faithfully as a Kindergarten teacher at Faith Lutheran School in Derby, to educate each child as a unique gift from God. Mrs. Starr first started in 1989 as the pre-school director and teacher for Faith Lutheran. In 2001, she moved to the elementary school and served as acting principal for six years. As an educator, Mrs. Starr is particularly talented at identifying the specific needs of her students and finding solutions to meet those needs.

"Kathy has the special gift of making each child feel loved and special," said Paul Mieger, Faith Lutheran Principal. "Her organization skills are beyond compare as seen both in her classroom and in her work in other areas of the school."

Mrs. Starr began her career in 1975 as a first grade teacher in Pratt and Haysville. She earned her BS in elementary education from Kansas State University in 1975.

Diocese of Salina



Sandy Nilges has been at Manhattan Catholic School (MCS) since 1994, and is a devoted fourth grade teacher. In addition to her commitment to helping her students excel in math, reading and religious education, she has chaired numerous school committees. Her unique perspective has been shaped in part by teaching first grade in Germany (1991-92)

for the Department of Defense.

"When you observe Sandy with her students, you easily see the care and devotion she has for them. Through her teaching and volunteering, she provides our school and parish with the expertise in academics and the teachings of Jesus," said Linda Roggenkamp, MCS Principal.

Mrs. Nilges has taught in Germany, Washington, and Minnesota. She received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from St. Benedict College in St. Joseph, Minnesota in 1979.

Diocese of Wichita



Benita Cox genuinely loves teaching and encouraging her first grade students at St. Mary Catholic School in Derby. For the past 20 years, she has created tremendous excitement in her students for a variety of subjects – particularly reading. A highlight of each day is when she gathers her students and reads aloud in her rocking chair – stopping to ask questions, all the while using stories that clearly teach right from wrong.

"Mrs. Cox is without a doubt one of the finest reading teachers I have ever worked with in my 30 years of education," Richard Montgomery, St. Mary Principal, said. "She is always looking for something different, improving on what she does in the classroom."

Mrs. Cox has also taught in Topeka and Wichita prior to coming to St. Mary's School. She received her BS in education from Fort Hays State University in 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 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.