



## Faculty and staff work to improve students' 'last chance' for success

By Cathy Lindsey  
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How do you define success in a school that was once considered a "dumping ground" for students with behavioral problems? At the Martin Luther King Jr. Academy for Excellence (MLK) in Fayette County, success is defined by progress.

In 1999, the three alternative schools in Fayette County were combined to form MLK. Four years ago, MLK graduated only two students. The daily attendance rate was less than 63 percent. Seventy-two percent of the student body was suspended at least once.

Now in its fourth year under the direction of Mark Sellers, the school boasts higher attendance rates, fewer suspensions and rising test scores. Last year, MLK helped 119 students to graduate, and this year is on track to improve on that mark.

"Every day was a battle zone that first year," said Sellers, "but by streamlining the process and getting back to the basics, we have managed to create a supportive environment that teaches kids to look beyond their grasp."

Encouragement is evident from the time visitors arrive on campus. The sign near the school entrance reads, "Dream high, set goals and take it one step at a time." The walls of the school are filled with inspirational posters. Faculty members wear shirts that read, "No excuses, find a way."

MLK serves several populations. The regular day program has approximately 200 middle and high school students attending classes. The night school component is for high school students with high abilities who left school because they had fallen behind. The students who qualify for the night school program must agree to keep a part-time job or be enrolled in a vocational/technical program, and participate in the computer lab program four nights a week. Students use individualized computer programs to earn high school credits and complete their requirements for graduation while receiving real-world experience.

The goal for the day program is to teach students with behavior problems how to function in a socially acceptable way so they can return to their home schools. "Our role is to support them and get them back on track," said Sellers.

A third program addresses problems students have with middle-to-high-school transition. This is a credit redemption program for students 15 years or older who have not mastered middle grade level work.

Students enrolled in this fast-track day program must have high reading scores to be accepted. The class meets for nearly seven hours in a self-contained classroom. Students earn credits through the PLATO computer lab.

The program is not just about academics, but also teaches students the social and



Teacher Billy Sanders uses a model plane to explain velocity and acceleration to Aarion Howard, left, and Kelli Brown in a Physical Science class at Martin Luther King Academy for Excellence in Fayette County.

vocational skills needed to perform successfully in the regular high school setting. The goal is not to graduate these students from MLK, but rather to get these students back into a regular high school setting on track for graduation, Sellers said.

"We work on a three redirect behavioral system here," said Sellers, "but for all students we focus on remediation, acceleration and graduation."

Sellers believes a major key to the progress of the school is a new referral  
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## It's all about improvement

Title I schools and their districts get extra help to meet NCLB goals

By Faun S. Fishback  
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This school year, the Kentucky Department of Education has increased the assistance it offers to districts with Title I schools that have been identified for improvement for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act purposes. Eight District Support Facilitators (DSF) are working to help these districts improve and meet their NCLB goals of providing high-quality educational services to all students.

Each DSF serves districts in a designated part of the state:

**Mitch Bailey** is a former Highly Skilled Educator and a former special education teacher in Bell County. He is assigned to districts in southcentral and southeastern Kentucky.

**Debbie Campbell** is a former Highly Skilled Educator and served as an

administrator with Jenkins Independent Schools and teacher in Letcher County. She works with eastern Kentucky districts.

**Carol Christian** is a former Highly Skilled Educator and has served as a school administrator and teacher in Bourbon County. She works with Jerry Meade in northern Kentucky districts and is assigned to Fayette County and Jefferson County districts.

**Darlene Gee** is a former Highly Skilled Educator and has worked in Carter County Schools. As a DSF, she serves districts in northeastern Kentucky.

**Ann French**, a former district administrator for Logan County Schools, is assigned to districts in western Kentucky.

**Ruth Hatterick** is a former Highly Skilled Educator and served as an

## France and Kentucky schools forge culture and language exchange

By Joy Barr  
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Did you ever have a pen pal with whom you corresponded by letter? And, did you wonder if you would ever meet that person?

In Jefferson County schools, pen pal relationships have definitely moved up a notch. Through international collaboration and technology, teachers and students in this district are developing lifelong relationships with

teachers and students in France.

This summer, several Jefferson County educators will travel to Dijon, France, to participate in a continuing collaboration between Kentucky schools and schools in that country's Burgundy region. As part of an Improving Teacher Quality grant, Western Kentucky University also will be sending seven teachers from across the state. Gregory Fulkerson, world language specialist with Jefferson County Schools,

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# Bulletin Board



Photo by Rick McComb

## Conferences

### KYSPRA

The Kentucky School Public Relations Association (KYSPRA) will hold its spring conference May 5-6 at Barren River State Park.

Contact: Don Sergent at (270) 781-5150, [dsergent@warren.k12.ky.us](mailto:dsergent@warren.k12.ky.us)

### Kentucky Child Now!

Kentucky Child Now! is holding its second annual conference July 13-15 at the Galt House in Louisville. The Great Kids Summit is designed to promote the health, safety and well-being of children and youth.

[www.kychildnow.org](http://www.kychildnow.org)

### Folklife Festival

The 2005 Kentucky Folklife Festival is set for Sept. 15-17 in Frankfort. This event includes music, crafts,

food and other traditions from across the state. Students can talk with artists and demonstrators, taste regional cuisine, try traditional dances and listen to musical performances. Admission is \$2 per person. Scheduling for school groups is on a first-come, first-served basis.

[http://history.ky.gov/Teachers/Scheduling\\_School\\_Tours.htm](http://history.ky.gov/Teachers/Scheduling_School_Tours.htm)

### PD opportunity

The Badgett Regional Cooperative for Educational Enhancement will host a professional development workshop, Gardening in the Minefield, on June 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Byrnes Auditorium in Madisonville. Author Laurel Schmidt will share time management and stress helps for educators. The workshop cost is \$150 and includes a book.

[www.badgettcoop.org/](http://www.badgettcoop.org/)

## Events

### Celebrate Earth Day

The All Wild About Kentucky's Environment (AWAKE) partners are encouraging Kentuckians to read nature writing throughout the year, but especially to celebrate Earth Day, which is marked during Earth Week, April 18-24.

Go to [www.kentuckyawake.org](http://www.kentuckyawake.org) and click on "Wild About Reading and Writing" at the top of the page or on the Earth Day icon. Students and adults can select a book from the drop-down menu and after reading it, submit a book review for posting on the AWAKE Web site.

Also during Earth Week, the Salato Wildlife Education Center in Frankfort has scheduled programs that include readings related to conservation heroes and heroines.

Contact: Carol Hanley at [chanley@uky.edu](mailto:chanley@uky.edu) or Venita Bright at [venita.bright@ky.gov](mailto:venita.bright@ky.gov)

park and museum. To schedule, call Goldsmith Vigneri Productions at (859) 734-4395.

### Thoroughbred Center Production

The next production at Thoroughbred Center in Lexington will be a large-scale puppet performance, "Aesop's Fables," on May 5 and 6 at 10 a.m. and noon. The production features famous fables such as "The Lion and the Mouse," "The Tortoise and the Hare" and "The Fox and the Grapes," as well as the music of Scarlatti, Beethoven and Chopin.

Contact: Box office at (859) 293-1853

[www.thethoroughbredcenter.com/theatre/schedule.asp](http://www.thethoroughbredcenter.com/theatre/schedule.asp)

### Math & Science Days

Kings Island Math & Science Days are May 13 and 18 at Paramount's Kings Island near Cincinnati. The 300-acre theme park is transformed into a learning laboratory exclusively for students and teachers.

[www.pki.com](http://www.pki.com)

### Child abuse prevention

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. For statewide resources and information promoting child abuse awareness, visit [www.pcak.org](http://www.pcak.org).

### Idea of America essay contest

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) invites all high school juniors to enter the 2005 Idea of America essay contest. The author of the winning essay will receive \$5,000. Five finalists will each receive \$1,000. Deadline for entries is April 15.

[www.wethepeople.gov/essay](http://www.wethepeople.gov/essay)

### Frontier Tales

Students in grades 3 through 5 can participate in Frontier Tales at Old Fort Harrod State Park in Harrodsburg. The interactive performance is based on original narratives, folk tales and songs that depict the early history of the Kentucky frontier. The Monday through Friday performances are set from April 11-May 27. Cost is \$7 per student and includes admission to the performance, the

## Resources

### Kind Acts

The Kind Acts Foundation sends a certificate and lapel pin to students nominated by PK-12 teachers for acts of kindness.

[www.KindActs.org](http://www.KindActs.org)

### Show me the money

Outside funding in the form of grants allows teachers to provide students with educational experiences that their own districts cannot afford. Tips and Resources for Successful Grant Writing gives helpful information to teachers applying for grants.

[www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/profdev/profdev039.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev039.shtml)

### Unsung Heroes

The ING Unsung Heroes program recognizes innovative and progressive thinking in education with up to \$25,000 in awards. K-12 educators with effective projects that improve student learning may apply by April 30.

[www.ing.com/us/about/connect/education/unsung\\_heroes.html](http://www.ing.com/us/about/connect/education/unsung_heroes.html)

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# Commissioner's Comments

## Rigor and relevance will prepare our graduates for college or workplace

By Gene Wilhoit  
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Success for our public school students is the goal of every educator in Kentucky. I know you are working hard to guide students to the proficiency goals set by state and federal lawmakers.

You are making steady, measurable progress with every student population in our schools regardless of race, gender, family income or learning need. Kentuckians know teachers in schools throughout the state are making it happen. We have proof of progress.

But, if there's one thing we've learned during the 15 years of education reform in Kentucky, it's that there will always be new challenges in educating students. We can never get comfortable enough with what we're doing to say, "We're doing all we need to do to ensure student success."

We have only to look at the elementary, middle and high schools that already have reached or exceeded proficiency on their 2002-2004 combined indices on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). In my visits to these 23 schools over the past few months, teachers and administrators tell me they remain determined to move every single child to even higher levels.

These schools have posted an index of 100 or more on their CATS tests, yet educators continue to look for ways to improve teaching and learning in their schools. They continue to anticipate the skills and knowledge that their students will need as adults in the 21st century. And, they are providing it.

The world in which we live is changing dramatically. If we think about the changes we've seen in our professional careers, it's almost hard to imagine how fast the changes will come for our students during their life's work.

Our challenge remains to keep students in school and provide them with a firm education foundation on which they can build a love for lifelong learning as working adults.

For much of the 20th century, a high school diploma guaranteed a good job. Those were the days of single family incomes and opportunities to provide a better lifestyle for future generations. Sixty percent of the work force was unskilled labor. By 1997, only 15 percent of the jobs were open to unskilled labor.

It now takes two incomes for most families just to get by from paycheck to paycheck. Today's jobs that are open to high school graduates often are low paying. Our high school graduates are finding themselves with less income than their parents and poorer prospects for their own children.

We must continue to be persistent about graduation from high school, but we can no longer view high school graduation as "the destination." Our new benchmark must be to prepare graduates for a next level of learning tied to a career — whether that is a work force certification, a two-year associate's degree or a traditional four-year college education.

We know that one or two years of post-secondary work will add at least \$8,000

per year to a person's income. Don't we owe it to our students to raise expectations beyond the high school diploma?

Many Kentucky educators already have answered that question with action. Over the past two years, the Kentucky Department of Education has been working with selected high schools throughout the state to refocus secondary education on expectations beyond graduation.

These schools have been involved in innovative and exciting programs to make high school more relevant to students and to excite them about career preparation. These "Vanguard Schools" are discovering strategies, policies and activities that provide a more rigorous secondary education experience for students. They report success and achievement for their students.

Many other middle and high schools have committed to changing how they prepare students for life through a variety of similar initiatives. The Kentucky Scholars Program, hosted by the Partnership for Kentucky Schools in conjunction with the Center for State Scholars, brings business and community leaders into conversations with middle and high school students about the changing world of work, global competition, employer expectations and how best to prepare for successful careers after graduation.

Based on research that documents a striking correlation between course work and student success after high school, the Kentucky Scholars Program provides a course of study that strengthens student abilities to compete in today's rapidly changing work and college environments. Uniquely delivered by the very business representatives and employers likely to hire students, the Kentucky Scholars' message generates a sense of team that helps communities actively relate the critical link between education, economic vitality and personal success to tomorrow's work force.

Other initiatives in our schools are using different approaches to make those same connections for students. Schools participating in High Schools That Work, GEAR UP, Small Learning Communities, State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) and Project Lead the Way are giving students better academic and career/technical skills to prepare them for success in postsecondary studies, the military and the workplace.

We already know the basics of what works:

- Schools have high expectations for all students.
- Schools support every child — from middle school forward — by creating an Individual Graduation Plan to help him or her plan a course of study to prepare for a fulfilling career.
- Schools personalize education for every student to ensure opportunities for intervention as well as accelerated

learning with the goal of making each student college and work force ready.

In March, I announced a new partnership between the Kentucky Department of Education and the International Center for Leadership in Education. This partnership will help accelerate the pace of improvement in selected secondary schools — high schools and their feeder middle school — through the newly created Kentucky Successful Practices Alliance.

The Alliance offers top-down support for bottom-up reform. Three 21st century Rs are central to the work — rigor, relevance and relationships. All participating schools are committed to making strides toward providing a more rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students.

The American Diploma Project, a national initiative to restore value to the high school diploma, has shown that the needs of the workplace and postsecondary education are at the same rigorous level. We must begin working on a single, challenging, connected curriculum for all students — no more distinguishing between general studies and precollege. That single curriculum must be aligned to college and workplace expectations, as well as state and national content standards.

Placing a child in a general track that limits his or her options immediately after high school limits options for life. We cannot shortchange our students' futures. We must do everything we can to keep a child from selling his or her future short by making poor decisions in these early years.

We must prepare our students to read technical manuals, possess 21st century

technology skills, understand complex information, distinguish between good and bad information, and use critical thinking to solve problems.

We all know how rapidly technology is changing our daily lives and the jobs that are available. Today, skilled trades people at the entry level require higher levels of mathematics and literacy than many of the people who supervise them.

Economists predict that the students who are in middle school today will change careers seven to eight times as they adapt to changes in the workplace. We can only imagine the future for which they are preparing! They must love to learn and learn to learn.

For years, schools and districts have called for a way to hold their students accountable for their learning. What better way than to explicitly show them how their high school classes are relevant to their success in college or the workplace?

We must give them opportunities to demonstrate their readiness and to use their skills in interdisciplinary programs, magnet programs, community service and other nontraditional activities. We must tie our assessments of student progress with college admission and job placement.

Adviser/advisee programs built around the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) are helping middle and high school students discover the relevance of their studies to preparing for adult life. The IGP also gives educators the opportunity to work with students and their parents.

And, the resulting, meaningful relationships that develop during the IGP process provide evidence that teachers and the school are committed to meeting the needs of that individual student.

We have exciting work ahead of us. It will be challenging, but also rewarding. The Kentucky Successful Practices Alliance will be a resource for all secondary schools — not just the participating schools — to exchange ideas and information, facilitate partnerships among schools and districts with similar demographics, and match schools and students with opportunities for rich learning experiences.

As we work to make secondary education more rigorous and relevant, we must remember that the work is not about reforming schools. Rather it is about helping schools and their communities find ways to assure that every student graduates ready to succeed in college or the workplace.

Kentuckians know that teachers are working harder than they ever have to help students achieve. The department will be working just as hard during these extremely challenging times to provide teachers with more classroom tools and resources, such as end-of-course and classroom assessments, curriculum materials and teaching and learning aids to accomplish the goal.

To comment on this topic, e-mail the commissioner at [gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us).



Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit joins early primary students as they listen to teacher Amy Robinson conduct a mathematics lesson at Hacker Elementary. The Clay County school posted a 101.3 combined accountability index on the 2002-2004 Commonwealth Accountability Testing Systems.

Photo by Rick McComb

# Teachers honored nationally for work with family literacy

By Joy Barr  
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Two Kentucky educators have been recognized for excellence in teaching within the family literacy field. Vanda Guffey with the Even Start and Adult Education Family Literacy programs in Clinton County and Melcenia Sprows-Shelton with Adult and Family Education in LaRue County are runners-up in the 2005 Toyota Family Literacy Teacher of the Year program. Each received a \$500 prize for their programs.

Both teachers have dedicated their professional careers to helping families in their communities gain the literacy skills they need to be successful. Each is an advocate of literacy skills and a believer that by finding the right supports, all children and their families can achieve.

## Vanda Guffey

Vanda Guffey taught at the high school level for five years and loved teaching, but says she felt she had not found her education niche. She then began coordinating grant programs for Clinton County Schools and soon was hooked on family literacy.

She compiled and received a Youth Empowerment Grant and a Barbara Bush Family Literacy Grant for the district. Under her leadership, innovative instructional techniques, special literacy events and a strong community focus on reading have become hallmarks of the Adult Education Family Literacy program in Clinton County.

Next, the district applied for and received an Even Start Family Literacy Grant. Guffey has been working with parents and their children in this endeavor ever since. For the past three years, Adult Education Family Literacy has been blended with the Even Start program, which provides her the opportunity to work with more than 60 Clinton County families each year.

Guffey also is a Reading First district coach. This allows her to focus on reading with the teachers and students at Albany Elementary.

"It is a privilege not only to teach adults and children to read, but also to train child care providers, elementary teachers, family literacy staff and parents on the latest scientifically based reading research," said Guffey. "My philosophy of teaching is to prevent and, if necessary, catch those falling through the cracks and propel them to success."

Paula Little, adult education program director in Clinton County, nominated Guffey for the Toyota recognition program. "She is a champion of literacy, whose organizational and instructional abilities are matched only by the size of her heart," said Little. "Vanda has helped infuse the joy of reading into a community that has for generations suffered from low literacy rates."

Several times each week, Guffey conducts adult education classes that focus on reading and writing skills. She uses

research-based techniques and materials to evoke greater responsiveness from adult learners.

During her lessons, she uses real-world examples and includes workplace and citizenship skills when possible. From reading campaign materials to preparing a job application, Guffey makes the learning relevant and immediately applicable to her adult students.

Lisa Melton, an adult student in the



Vanda Guffey reviews professional development materials for adult education instructors with Toni-Ann Mills, assistant director of the Collaborative for Literacy Development, during a recent meeting in Frankfort.

Clinton County program has nothing but praise for Guffey. "Mrs. Guffey introduced the importance of family communication and togetherness. Being a student involved in the Even Start program, I have learned that not only an education is important for one's life and family, but also that family living, communication and family interest also make a good home a healthy home."

## Melcenia Sprows-Shelton

Melcenia Sprows-Shelton is an adult education instructor and parenting

facilitator with the Adult and Family Education program in LaRue County. The program prides itself on its flexibility and attempts to accommodate families by offering classes, field trips and family events during the day, during the evening and on Saturdays.

"Melcenia takes this one step further as she teaches an ESL class every Saturday evening and offers private, unpaid tutoring to individuals who do not feel comfortable in a group setting," said Sarah Hornback, director of Family Services with LaRue County Adult and Family Education.

Sprows-Shelton strives to use an integrated curriculum that is both individualized for the student and appropriate for group learning sessions. All aspects of the program are integrated to maximize learning. For example, when students create a family educational plan, they also study academic, parenting and job skills in relation to the students' individualized plans.

According to Hornback, 100 percent of primary children and 75 percent of older children enrolled in the LaRue County Even Start/Family Literacy program demonstrated continuous progress in school for the 2003-2004 school year.

"This is a tremendous testimony to the impact that family literacy, in partnership with schools and teachers, has in helping families change their perspective about academic success and the importance of family literacy in changing the future," she added.

Sprows-Shelton is an avid quilter and often plans lessons for her students that incorporate the practical skills of quilting with the symbolic representation of families' many dimensions. One unit on quilts included lessons on goal setting, incremental progress, geometry, teamwork, family traditions, storytelling and problem solving. Students take great pride in having their handmade quilts displayed on the walls of the classroom.

"Melcenia literally and figuratively helps students transform 'nothing' into something beautiful and unique as she helps students understand the value of planning, hard work, pride and integration both in their lives and in the quilts they design, piece by piece, square by square," said Hornback. "She



Melcenia Sprows-Shelton talks with Angie Sloan, a student at the Adult and Family Education Center in LaRue County, about a mathematics assignment.

is flexible and creative when it comes to helping students learn. By making learning fun, with meaningful connections to real life, students remain in the program and make progress toward their goals."

Robin Bilyeu, an adult student in the LaRue County program, knows how Sprows-Shelton helps families. "When I started taking the classes, I had no confidence in myself at all; she encouraged me each and every day. She had confidence in the fact that I could get my GED and that I was a good parent," said Bilyeu. "Well, thanks to Melcenia, I do have my GED. Not only did she help me improve communication with my sons but she encouraged me to continue my education to set a good example for my kids."

For more information about these district programs, contact Vanda Guffey at (606) 387-9772, vguffey@clinton.k12.ky.us, or Melcenia Sprows-Shelton at (270) 358-8334, msprows@larue.k12.ky.us.

## More about literacy

The National Center for Family Literacy, headquartered in Louisville, creates educational and economic opportunities for at-risk children and adults. Their services include professional development for practitioners who work in children's education, adult education, English as a Second Language and related literacy fields. The annual national conference on family literacy will be held April 25-27 in Louisville. For more information about the Center's programs or the conference, go to [www.familit.org](http://www.familit.org).

Studies have shown that literacy programs such as Even Start and adult education help schools grow academically as parents support a child's success in school. Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) family literacy programs are available in all 120 counties.

Kentucky has 38 Even Start programs. They provide intensive family literacy services that integrate learning activities for both parents and children — helping parents become active partners in their children's education and helping children achieve a high level of success in school and life. Even Start offers educational opportunities to families, as defined by levels of literacy, income, poverty, English as a Second Language (ESL) and other related factors. The family literacy programs provide services to help parents of students with reading and writing, getting a GED and other skills.

For more information about early childhood and family literacy programs available to Kentucky public schools, contact Bill Buchanan, Kentucky Department of Education consultant for Even Start and Family Literacy programs, at (502) 564-7056, bbuchana@kde.state.ky.us or go to [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov), click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the upper right-hand corner and select the "Even Start" or the "Family Literacy" link.

## Three middle schools named Schools to Watch for 2005

F.T. Burns Middle School (Davies County), Northern Pulaski Middle School (Pulaski County) and Olmstead School (Logan County) have been selected 2005 Kentucky Schools to Watch. They are among 15 exemplary middle-grades schools throughout the country to receive the designation as part of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform's Schools to Watch State Program.

Other recognized schools are located in California, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia. Teams of education leaders in each state selected schools for this recognition because of their academic excellence, responsiveness to the developmental needs and interests of young adolescents, and commitment to helping all students achieve at high levels.

During site visits, the teams observed strong leadership, teachers working together to improve curriculum and instruction, a positive learning environment for all students, and a commitment to assessment and accountability to bring about continuous improvement. Teams interviewed school staff, students and parents, looked at lessons and student work, observed classrooms and examined numerous school documents.

In Kentucky, the Schools to Watch program is coordinated by the Center for Middle School Academic Achievement at Eastern Kentucky University in collaboration with the Kentucky Department of Education, Collaborative for Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Middle School Association and The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

In 1999, the National Forum began a national program to identify outstanding middle-grades schools. Barren County Middle School was named a National School to Watch in 2000.

In 2002, the National Forum launched its Schools to Watch State Program. Kentucky is one of 11 states that now identify high-performing middle schools through a state program. Three schools were named Kentucky Schools to Watch in 2004: Adairville Elementary School (Logan County), Auburn Elementary School (Logan County) and Mahaffey Middle School at Ft. Campbell. The selected schools serve as models for other schools to learn from and visit.

For more information, contact Fran Salyers, director of the Center for Middle School Academic Achievement at Eastern Kentucky University, at (859) 792-8404 or visit [www.middle-schoolhouse.eku.edu](http://www.middle-schoolhouse.eku.edu) and click on "Schools to Watch."

## MarcoPolo 2004 Field Trainer of Year helps teachers learn to use online resources

Susan Lancaster is an educator with a mission: She wants every Kentucky teacher to be aware of the quality, Kentucky-aligned free lessons available on the MarcoPolo Web site. And she's working hard as a MarcoPolo Certified Field Trainer to make sure that happens by showing teachers how to use the site to enrich their instruction.

In recognition of her efforts, Lancaster was named 2004 MarcoPolo Field Trainer of the Year from among trainers throughout the United States. Last year, she trained 165 teachers and received a satisfaction rating from those teachers of 4.7 out of 5.0 for the quality of her training sessions. She previously has been recognized as a Field Trainer of the Month several times between 2000 and 2004.

Lancaster and Kentucky's three other MarcoPolo Certified Field Trainers — Bev Paeth and Lois Mullins (Covington Independent) and Terri Stice (Green River Regional Educational Cooperative) — help teachers and MarcoPolo field trainers integrate the Web site's content into the classroom.

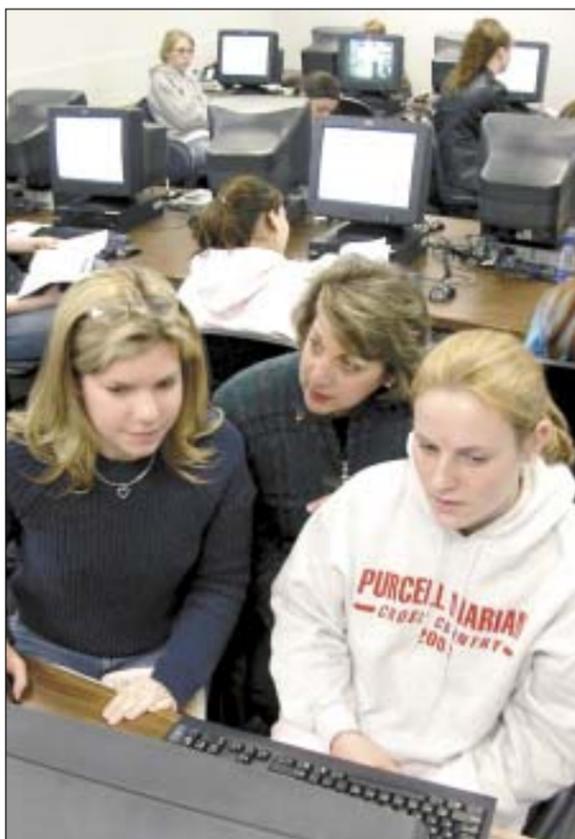
A former classroom teacher and instructional technology consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education, Lancaster now teaches at Bellarmine University School of Education in Louisville. Whether working with preservice teachers or training classroom veterans, she stresses the value of using MarcoPolo to avoid "reinventing the wheel" when they plan lessons, design curriculum and instruction, and develop appropriate assessments. The MarcoPolo Web site is located at [www.marcopolo-education.org](http://www.marcopolo-education.org) on the Internet and can be reached from the Kentucky Department of Education Web site by entering "MarcoPolo" in the keyword/search box on any page.

"MarcoPolo provides teachers with so much richness to share with their students!" she said. The MCI Foundation sponsors the MarcoPolo site. Seven content partners — national and international education organizations — support the Web site and offer resources for arts, mathematics, economics, humanities, reading and English, science and geography.

The partners ensure a wide variety of high-quality, standards-based, discipline-specific classroom resources for K-12 teachers such as:

- lesson plans
- lesson extensions
- assessments similar to open-response questions
- downloadable worksheets
- links to panel-reviewed Web sites
- student interactive content
- safe portal for searching

In addition, MarcoPolo offers a variety of



Susan Lancaster, 2004 MarcoPolo Field Trainer of the Year, helps education students Raechel Davis, left, and Elizabeth Frede with a class project at Bellarmine University School of Education where she teaches.

"Research shows that successful technology integration can change the way students learn and teachers teach," Lancaster said. "MarcoPolo provides a compelling way to engage teachers — even those still working on their technology skills — with Internet-based content resources. Each resource is designed to move students to higher levels of learning."

Since last February, Kentucky content teachers have been recommending lessons to the MarcoPolo site that are aligned to Kentucky's Program of Studies and Core Content for Assessment. These lessons can be accessed on the MarcoPolo Web site and the Kentucky Department of Education's MarcoPolo Web page at the Web addresses listed above.

Lancaster encourages teachers to participate in MarcoPolo training and to consider the possibility of becoming trainers for the Web site. "MarcoPolo provides so much wonderful information and so many terrific resources and activities," she said. "Each training session rejuvenates me, and increases my enthusiasm for the MarcoPolo online environment."

For more information about becoming a trained MarcoPolo educator, contact Michael Dailey, (502) 564-4474, [mdailey@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:mdailey@kde.state.ky.us) or Donna Eustace, (502) 564-7168, [deustace@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:deustace@kde.state.ky.us). To register for MarcoPolo training and professional development, go to <http://marcopolo.education.ky.gov>.

onsite and Web-based professional development. "Science Netlinks Internet Content for the Classroom" recently became the first content-specific training that the MarcoPolo program has offered. Other content-specific courses, as well as other new programs, will soon be available.

## KET education programs win national awards

Two education projects produced by KET (Kentucky Educational Television) recently received top awards from the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA). KET brought home a total of five awards.

The Drama Arts Toolkit received the "Best of the Best" award and an award in the Instructional Media-Instructional Media Product category. Teachers throughout the state use the toolkit as a resource for teaching drama in the classroom.

The toolkit includes videos, video excerpts, and accompanying teaching and informational materials to help teachers address Kentucky academic standards for drama as well as to build their own knowledge of drama.

Partners for the project include the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Center, the Kentucky Arts

Council, Stage One, and other Kentucky arts and education organizations.

"Promise Not to Tell: A Teacher's Guide to Recognizing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse" won in the category of Instructional Media-Inservice/Staff Development. The professional development program features mental health and law enforcement professionals, teachers and adult abuse survivors. The program is designed to give teachers insight and advice on dealing with child sexual abuse.

"Promise Not to Tell" is a collaborative effort of the Kentucky Department of Education, Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, Child Victims Trust Fund of Kentucky, KET, Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

NETA awards provide annual recognition to stations throughout the country for excellence in public broadcasting.

# Carroll County students turn cash into compassion

By Jeffery M. Fremin  
Carroll County Schools

The waves of the tsunami that devastated parts of Asia and India and swept away more than a quarter of a million people last December are still spreading. They have reached Kentucky classrooms, like those in rural Carroll County, where students are raising funds for survivors of the disaster while learning about economics, geography, history and mathematics.

About half of 285 fourth- and fifth-graders attending Cartmell Elementary qualify for the free- or reduced-price lunch program. Yet, they raised \$2,131 in eight days to help tsunami survivors.

"The students used different economic principles to try and create the most profit so that they could donate that money to the victims," said Cartmell Principal Bonnie Northcutt.

Students made and sold products such as hats, bracelets and snacks. Some classrooms, she said, also sold services for 50 cents, such as the privilege of wearing hats or pajamas to school. Northcutt said she charged teachers a dollar a day to wear blue jeans to school.

"I paid my \$8 and wore jeans every day," said instructional coach Judy Leep, who organized the activity.

Vickie Meister's fourth-grade class used an assembly line to prepare a snack for sale. Meister even used economic terms to remind students of proper workplace behavior.

"If you're talking, you might get fired," Meister said, with a wink and a smile. "I had to lay off some students this morning."

To purchase supplies for the project, Meister's class borrowed money from the school's bookstore at 1 percent interest. After expenses, the class earned a profit of \$59.75.

Jonica Ray's fourth-grade class quickly learned about supply and demand when the 100 neon bracelets they made sold out in 15 minutes.

"Students decided to sell their own bracelets back to the class to satisfy their customers who didn't get one," said Ray.

Besides the mathematics involved in figuring interest, subtracting costs and adding profits, students also learned about probability. Fourth-grade teacher Megan Broyles' class sold chances to sit at the teacher's desk and use her supplies to do their assignments.

"I explained to students that those who bought more chances had a greater probability of winning," said Broyles. The class raised \$94.10 for the tsunami relief project.

Amanda McCoy's fifth-graders received the award for raising the most money. Her students attributed their success to spending their money on their own projects.

"People who work for you shouldn't buy the stuff from the other factories," said fifth-grader Jacob Becraft when discussing what students had learned from the project.

Although McCoy said she hadn't formally covered the concept of "protectionism" in the curriculum, she introduced the idea when the class was creating its

business plan.

"I didn't tell the students not to spend their money on the other classes' projects," said McCoy. "I just asked them how spending their money would affect them reaching their goal."

McCoy said her students decided to boycott the other classes' projects. As a result, they surpassed their goal of \$250 and raised \$388.70.

McCoy said her class did not ask for outside donations. However, when families and friends of class members learned about the project, they donated \$100 toward the class total.

Northcutt, the school principal, said the competitive capitalism was all in fun and for a worthy cause. "We had fun while learning about economics, mathematics and geography — many kids had never heard of a tsunami or Sri Lanka."

Fifth-grade teacher Marie Hill's class was second in sales. Students sold Mardi Gras beads for 25 cents each. Hill said the fifth-graders learned about more than just money; they learned about "philanthropy."

In answering an open-response item about the project, Melody Hawkins, one of Hill's students, wrote, "We sold over 1,200 beads, raised more than \$350 and still came in second place. But, you know what? That was OK because it was all for a good cause. Our school raised over \$2,000 and now these people will have a better life!"

To learn more about this schoolwide, multi-disciplinary unit, contact Cartmell Principal Bonnie Northcutt, (502) 732-7085, bnorthcu@carroll.k12.ky.us.

(Jeffery M. Fremin is public relations director for Carroll County Schools.)



Photo by Rick McComb

## Read Across Magoffin County

Laura Perkins and her son Jonathan claim a spot on the Salyersville Grade School gym floor to read a book during the Magoffin County Schools Read Across America event in March. Parents and community volunteers spent 20 minutes reading with every kindergarten student during the district's annual celebration of reading.

## 2005 Critical Technologies Research Symposium in July

To help science educators put the world of tomorrow into their students' hands today, the University of Kentucky's (UK) College of Agriculture and Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment are holding the 2005 Critical Technologies Research Symposium July 12 - 14 on the UK campus. Sessions will provide opportunities for educators to work directly with research scientists on the cutting edge of technologies that will fuel tomorrow's economy.

Participants will attend lectures supplemented by lab experiences and one-on-one discussions with UK faculty. Educators will receive the tools to bring these essential technologies in biosciences, energy and the environment, human health, information systems and materials science into their own classrooms.

The symposium offers four tracks: Information Technology and Communications; Materials Science and Advanced Manufacturing; Biosciences, Health and Human Development; and Environmental and Energy Technologies. The sessions will demonstrate the relationship between the critical technologies and revised core content.

Schools are encouraged to send teams of teachers and have participants in as many tracks as possible. Professional development credit is available.

The \$150 registration fee is due from all applicants by June 10. For more information, contact Anna Goodman Hoover at the Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment, (859) 257-1299 or e-mail Anna.Hoover@uky.edu.



## Talk to Us!

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# Students take flight with mathematics lessons



Second Street Elementary mathematics teacher Tim Smith goes through a pre-flight checklist with students as part of a unit on mathematics and flight.



Second Street students David Doyle, copilot, left, Aaron Wilson, pilot, and navigator Amy Miller get tips from fourth-year Air Force Academy Cadet Jeremiah Carlson as they use a flight simulator in their mathematics class.



Mathematics teacher Tim Smith shows Brenden Sullivan, a Second Street eighth-grader, the location of the compass in the cockpit of the plane he will fly.

By Cathy Lindsey  
clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

Behind the glamour of this year's hit movie, "The Aviator," is the story of a man determined to succeed. The same can be said for a group of students in Frankfort.

Eighth-grade students at Second Street School (Frankfort Independent) may not yet have had the Howard Hughes experience of becoming aviation magnates, but they have had a real-life experience of what pilots need to know to take an airplane into flight.

Tim Smith's mathematics class put the principles of linear algebra and geometry and the science of flight to the test during a unit of study that allowed them to spread their wings and become junior aviators.

A pilot himself, Smith recognizes the value of mathematics in the principles of flight.

"I think it's important for students to take on the role of a mathematician such as aviator, engineer and scientist," said Smith. "Students should have more than a basic knowledge of content. Students need to apply, analyze and synthesize content in order to understand its relevance in their world."

Students studied the art of flight and crafted a wind tunnel lab to determine what kind of wing creates better lift. The students then had to complete ground school. This included passing a written test covering the basic mathematic principles needed for flight.

The next step was flight planning. The young aviators were required to plan a flight to two locations and back to the Capital City Airport in Frankfort. Students had to map a course by using angle rulers and find the distance by using the map scale.

Students used linear algebra to ascertain the rate of ascent and descent. They then had to determine the time the flight would take and the fuel consumption for the length of that flight.

The junior pilots were then ready to take flight. With flight plan in hand, each student clocked time on a flight simulator. Using flight simulator software on

a computer in Smith's classroom, the students had to fly their flight plans without getting lost.

Students took turns on the simulator and even came after class to practice their flights. Smith was pleased with the students' enthusiasm for this project.

"Students take much more interest in a subject when they take an active role in completing a task that requires a bundle of standards," said Smith.

To learn more about the history of aviation, the group visited the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. Students toured hangars that illustrate the technology of flight from the early inventions of the Wright Brothers to modern airplanes.

Air Force Academy Cadet Jeremiah Carlson visited the class and shared a slide show of his experiences. He answered questions about what a good aviator needs to know.

"It's important for me to share with students that what they are learning now will be useful in their future," said Cadet Carlson.

To end the unit, interested students who had parental permission took a real flight with Eagle Wings Air from the Frankfort airport.

Smith used this unit to show the value of mathematic principles in real-world applications and careers. He also has taught a unit on civil engineering. During that unit, students surveyed the property of the school and drafted their own blueprints.

"We're preparing these students for the workplace," said Smith. "We need to show them the future possibilities when you achieve at higher levels."

For more information about the aviator unit, contact Tim Smith at (502) 875-8658 or tsmith2@frankfort.k12.ky.us. For more aviation resources in Kentucky, visit the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Aviation Education Web site at <http://transportation.ky.gov/Aviation/education.htm>.

# Reaching out to families is a strategy for student success

By Diane W. Kyle and Ellen McIntyre  
University of Louisville

We all know that students whose families are involved in school do better academically, and state and national research confirms this view. However, studies also show that while parents care about their children's education and want them to be successful, some are unsure how they can become involved in school or feel misunderstood when they visit.

Often poor or working-class families are the least involved in their children's education. Parents may feel intimidated, especially if school was not a good place for them.

Experts on family involvement offer alternative, state-of-the-art ways of connecting with families, such as creating more "family-like schools." They attempt to make each student feel included through work with families. This is a particular challenge with migrant children or others whose cultural backgrounds are different from the school community.

Yet, knowing that families play a key role in developing students' educational and career goals gives educators an important reason to connect with and involve all families.

Our experience in working with families has shown that when educators help students feel known, cared about and expected to achieve, they do achieve. We have worked with teachers in several Kentucky counties to show them how to learn about students' outside-of-school interests and their families' cultural backgrounds, hobbies, jobs, home routines, and literacy practices. Luis Moll and Norma González refer to this as families' "funds of knowledge." It relates to the various social and linguistic practices and knowledge essential in students' homes and communities.

In our work with Kentucky teachers, we used family information to connect to the ongoing classroom instruction. As a result, teachers worked to help more students feel better about their schooling experiences and positive about themselves as learners.

How can this be done? Begin by finding out the talents, hobbies, skills and professions of the families. Surveys, interviews, and home or community visits provide useful ways of discovery. Teachers also can gather student information by at-

tending students' out-of-school events or simply asking students about those experiences.

Below are several ideas that have been used successfully by Kentucky teachers as ways of learning from and with families. Many of these strategies are working in high-poverty schools, where teachers previously struggled to get families involved.

- **Establish trust.** Everything builds from this. How does it happen? Sometimes just small acts of kindness and interest help. But, more explicit attempts are needed with some families. Starting the year by communicating that parents are the experts about their children, and seeking to learn from them will go a long way! A family that feels as if the teacher makes a sincere and obvious effort to know about their child is more likely to stay involved. The Kentucky Early Learning Profile (KELP) is a wonderful tool for this purpose. It can be used with

ing postcards at the beginning of the year, quick "How are things going?" notes throughout the year, and a brief phone call to say something positive about a student can reap many benefits.

- **Hold Family Nights.** One effective way to involve families in school is to hold an event they can attend with their child. Family Nights offer a wonderful opportunity to get to know families in a more informal setting. Promoting these events in the classroom, making sure they are on topics of interest (and academically meaningful), providing activities that engage all family members, asking for feedback, and making sure to follow up in the classroom can help these events be successful. We have found that families begin to ask, "When's the next Family Night?"
- **Rethink homework ideas.** We all know that often homework can be less

With some redesigning, could they?

- **Make family visits.** This can be one of the most powerful ways of getting to know families. You can learn from them and build connections to involve them in your classroom. However, family visits are time-consuming and must be approached with careful planning and the right purpose in mind. We have worked with many teachers who are strong advocates of family visits. However, they agree about precautions. In no way do we want teachers to come away from family visits with new, lower expectations of students. We must train ourselves to see strengths in students and families, especially those whose cultures differ from our own. We must not allow ourselves to expect less of students because of what we might find, such as low-literacy parents or high poverty. Also, we strongly believe teachers should do family visits only if they want to and feel comfortable. We don't recommend family visits for teachers who truly do not want to do this because families might misinterpret their stress or anxiety in a negative way. (There are other ways of involving families.)

Finally, we want to emphasize that getting involved with families is not just a "feel-good" idea. Family involvement is not the goal. Student success is the goal.

Getting to know families in more meaningful ways can help educators begin to understand the barriers to school success some students face. It's then that educators can begin working to remove those barriers. Above all else, we just need to get started in trying out some new approaches.

(Diane W. Kyle and Ellen McIntyre are professors at the University

of Louisville Department of Teaching and Learning. They have authored numerous publications on education, including family involvement. They co-authored a book on their work in Kentucky, "Reaching Out: A K-8 Resource for Connecting Families and Schools," with Karen B. Miller and Gayle H. Moore. The four are awaiting printing of their latest book, "Bridging Schools and Homes through Family Nights." Contact: Ellen McIntyre at [ellen@louisville.edu](mailto:ellen@louisville.edu) and Diane W. Kyle at [diane@louisville.edu](mailto:diane@louisville.edu))



Larry Lagoy of Frankfort helps his fourth-grade son Jean-Luc with mathematics homework that uses multiplication and division skills. Studies show that students perform better academically when their families are involved in what they do at school.

families of students of all ages.

- **Work on two-way communication.** So often, communication occurs only when there's a problem, and it tends to be from the schools to the families. There often is little opportunity for the reverse. You might try such two-way ideas as: Suggestion and compliment boxes, comment sheets for homework or on students' planners, and family response journals. What is sent home also can communicate an interest in establishing connections. Welcom-

than meaningful. However, by designing some new approaches, homework can be a helpful way to get to know families better and involve them. Some teachers have done this through "Me" boxes or "shoebox biographies." Some teachers have invited students to prepare and present "Expert Projects" or "Invention Projects." Others have planned activities focused on interviewing and involving grandparents. Do your homework assignments tap into families' funds of knowledge?

Photo by Rick McComb

## FRANCE from Page 1

and Jacque Van Houten, world language specialist with the Kentucky Department of Education, will accompany the group. They will be instructors at the summer professional development workshop there.

This professional development initiative is just one of the many ongoing activities with the Kentucky-France collaborative. The collaborative began in 2001 when a delegation from France came to Kentucky to meet with then-Gov. Paul Patton, Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit and representatives from the University of Louisville, the University of Kentucky and Northern Kentucky University. The meeting formalized a collaboration between Kentucky schools and the Académie de Dijon and created a partnership between the two countries to share resources and to provide professional development and classroom collaboration opportunities.

The collaboration created a means for middle and high school French teachers to develop units of study that connect to other content areas and allow students opportunities to reinforce their learning and skills in other disciplines.

"This collaborative effort is an opportunity for teachers to take their skills out of the classroom, out of the textbooks and into the real-world," said Van Houten.

"Students can make that real-life connection as they engage with students from another country," said Fulkerson. "Students often find they have much in common and begin the development of a lifelong relationship."

Teachers who have participated in the professional development workshop in Dijon have injected new energy and a variety of new lessons in their French language instruction.

Students at Meyzeek Middle are developing 21st century pen pal relationships with middle school students in Dijon. The classes have been communicating via computers and recently had an online chat. The Meyzeek students chatted in French and the students from France in English. At some point, the students plan to participate in a videoconference where they can actually "see" their new friends.

"It has been fun talking with people from other countries," said Rabia Buridi, an eighth-grader at Meyzeek. "They are usually much better at speaking English than we are at speaking French. But it is still a really great learning experience."

Michèle Randolph, a French teacher at Meyzeek, has designed a unit of study with her counterpart in France. The unit concerns physical fitness for her students and their French friends. Both groups will learn about each other's nutritional habits, diet and exercise.

Meyzeek Principal Keith Look has been very supportive of the collaborative effort. "Our world languages program here at Meyzeek is excellent. With our diverse



Michèle Randolph, Meyzeek Middle French teacher, spoke with her counterpart teacher in Dijon, France, to demonstrate to her students how the online chat would work. Meyzeek students corresponded in French while students in Dijon chatted in English as part of a collaborative world language program between Kentucky and France.

student population it becomes more and more valuable."

Deborah Fitzmaurice has designed a unit of study around the food habits of both countries for her students at Barret Middle School. As part of the unit, students in both countries will keep food diaries for a week. Then they will exchange diaries and compare similarities and differences in the diets of students in both countries.

Cathy Green, a French teacher at Atherton High, gathered classroom resources during her trip to France last summer. "Visiting France was a tremendous experience that helped me to hone my own language skills and gave me access to cultural realia. Realia are

real-life items, like actual menus, transportation schedules or photos of different aspects of daily life that are not usually presented in textbooks. They make textbook learning more real to the students," said Green.

During the two-week French Teachers' Academy in Dijon, she said she settled

into a routine of long days. She filled most days meeting fellow teachers from Dijon and the surrounding region of Burgundy. They collaborated on interdisciplinary units of study and she played cultural investigator, gathering cultural realia at the tourist sites.

Atherton High students

will host a group of 20 students and two teachers from France April 2-16. During

the school's spring break, the Burgundian students will tour Louisville and outlying areas of the Bluegrass State. Several French students also will get to visit other places, like Washington, D.C., or Chicago, because their Kentucky hosts have planned out-of-town trips.

After spring break, the Dijon students will shadow their host students for at least two days before being allowed to attend other classes at Atherton. Many of the French students have studied English for four years by the time they enter this program as third-graders (which is the equivalent of 10th grade in Kentucky's education system) so their level of proficiency in English is usually better than Kentucky students' proficiency in French, said Green.

A group of 10 Atherton and 13 Manual High School students will travel to Dijon during May and June, along with teacher-chaperones Green and Rob Fabing. "Much of a student's success on these student exchange programs centers around his/her willingness to be open to anything and to take risks, just opening one's mouth and speaking, without regard as to whether the verb is properly conjugated in the correct tense and such," said Green.

"The experience has been a wonderful opportunity to aid in my professional growth," said Tom Ludwig, another participant in the teacher collaboration. One of the French teachers at Central High, he said that he has learned numerous new teaching strategies from his colleagues who have participated in the program.

"Most importantly, the program has created a partnership for my students," said Ludwig. "We work regularly with our partner school in France. The learning of language has so much more meaning to a student when they can apply new knowledge in a real setting." The Central High students have set up a Web page for the two schools to discuss various topics.

Administrator involvement is another example of how the partnership is growing to new heights, said Carl Schaefer, the other French teacher at Central High. He plans to return to France with the program this summer along with Principal Daniel Withers.

"Since our high school has a large African-American population, my students wanted to learn about different racial groups in France," said Schaefer. Students at both schools will study cultural issues and write portfolio pieces on their findings. "The students from France are typically much more politically savvy than are our students. They like to ask questions about current events and this has encouraged our students to 'beef' up their skills."

For more information, contact Gregory Fulkerson, world language specialist with JCPS, at (502) 485-3409 or send e-mail to gfulker1@Jefferson.k12.ky.us or Jacque Van Houten, world language and international education consultant with the Department of Education, at (502) 564-2106 or send e-mail to her at jvanhout@kde.state.ky.us.

### The Year of Languages

*Gov. Ernie Fletcher proclaimed 2005 as "The Year of Languages. Citizens are urged to become familiar with the services and benefits offered by education programs in Kentucky and to support and participate in these programs to gain proficiency not only in English, but in other languages as well."*

## FACULTY from Page 1

process. Students are no longer sent to MLK at the first signs of behavior trouble. Other schools in Fayette County must now document attempts to address behavior issues for students for at least six weeks before sending them to MLK.

"Behavior is like an iceberg," Sellers said, "there's a lot going on underneath the surface. Schools need to determine the cause of the troubling behavior and have a plan to deal with it to change it."

The new referral process encourages schools to get at the root of behavior and address problems in a less restrictive environment. This makes MLK the absolute last alternative.

"When kids come here, they know it's their final opportunity to get back on track," Sellers said. "The skills we teach and instill in them here provide them to be successful in their home school environment."

Last spring, 37 students from MLK returned to their regular schools.

"The program has done a complete U-turn," said MLK special education teacher Brian McIntyre. "The kids know what is expected of them, and there is consistency in those expectations."

### Teachers are key to success

Recently, MLK received the nation's outstanding alternative school honor from the International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention. The award recognized the school for staff empowerment, professional development and cutting-edge leadership.

Working with students in an alternative education setting is no easy task for

educators. They are responsible for the continuing education of students, but they also must keep student behaviors in check.

"Somewhere along the way, in some traditional school settings, the concept of 'academic-engaged time' has been lost for behaviorally challenged youngsters," Sellers said.

He believes that a good behavior plan starts with a good lesson plan. "If you want to control their behavior, then you have to capture their minds," he said. "The materials are there, you just have to be creative in how you present them."

He encourages teachers to "look in the mirror and see how others see you." At MLK teachers learn not to take inappropriate comments from students personally and get caught up in counter-aggression. Instead, they will seize upon the teachable moment and take the opportunity to introduce a replacement behavior in a positive and safe manner, Sellers said.

Teachers at MLK use a "With-it-ness Scale" to mentally measure how effectively they use their personality, wit and intervention skills to improve student learning and handle problem situations.

According to Sellers, "While formal training provides a solid foundation, there is no substitute for guided hands-on experience, with support of capable peers, because at MLK we truly believe that successful teachers are successful learners."

Teachers and support staff – counselors, social workers, behavior management specialists – get specialized professional



MLK Academy teacher Kathleen Reese helps Joaquin Diaz understand a reading problem in mathematics.

development to help make them more responsive and attentive to student needs, Sellers said. He expects adults at the school to earn the respect of students by offering support and encouragement "from the git-go."

To support student learning, Sellers and his staff follow Maslow's hierarchy to meet student needs. While no school is equipped to meet all of the physiological needs of the students, staff at MLK connect and collaborate with outside agencies to provide wrap-around services. In addition, the faculty works to provide a safe, nurturing school environment.

Once students begin to feel a sense of

belonging, teachers can build trusting relationships to bolster self-esteem among the students. That's when students respond with a desire to achieve, he said.

Sellers hopes to continue the progress that is in the works at MLK. He would like to see the school take advantage of programs like GED preparation, online course work and dual credit opportunities in combination with cooperative and career/technical studies.

"It is my intent to prepare every student for success in life," he said.

For more information, contact Mark Sellers at [MSELLERS@Fayette.k12.ky.us](mailto:MSELLERS@Fayette.k12.ky.us) or (859) 381-4040.

## IT'S from Page 1



District Support Facilitators meet monthly as a team to discuss the progress of their work helping districts develop leadership teams to work with Title I schools on meeting No Child Left Behind goals.

Skilled Educator and retired educator and administrator in Harrison County. She serves as liaison for the other seven DSFs and works with Carol Christian in Fayette County Schools.

**Jerry Meade** is a retired teacher, principal and central office administrator in Pike County. As a DSF, he works with Carol Christian in northern Kentucky districts.

**Anthony Sanders** has worked as an elementary and middle school teacher, principal and central office administrator

in Christian County. He was a superintendent intern in Daviess County during the 2003 school year. As a DSF, he works with districts in western Kentucky.

According to 2004 test data, 286 Kentucky schools did not meet 100 percent of their NCLB goals for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading and mathematics. Schools that fail to make AYP in the same content area for two or more consecutive years are identified for improvement and become subject to corrective actions. In Kentucky, 130 Title I schools are taking corrective actions this school year.

The DSFs provide support to school districts in several areas, according to Hatterick, the DSF liaison. First, each DSF helps the district analyze assessment data from the Kentucky Performance Report. The report is published each

year to give schools and districts detailed information about student performance on the Kentucky Core Content Test, writing portfolio, norm-referenced test and other components of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

The DSFs also help districts build district capacity to determine strategies and activities to use when working with Title I schools that are identified for improvement. Districts get assistance from the DSFs in these areas:

- Using the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SISI) to review and analyze all facets of a school's operation
- Analyzing student work to identify and address problems in instruction
- Developing and implementing effective parent involvement policies and activities to improve student achievement and school performance
- Identifying and implementing professional development, instructional strategies and methods of instruction that are founded on scientifically based research
- Analyzing and revising the Title I school's budget to more effectively coordinate and allocate resources to

the activities most likely to increase student achievement and remove the school from school improvement status

- Developing and implementing equitable policies, practices and procedures

The DSFs meet monthly as a team. They also have regular meetings with Highly Skilled Educators assigned to schools in the targeted districts, the assessment gap coordinators, staff from regional cooperatives and special education cooperatives, audit and review teams, and the Instructional Support Network members.

As part of a larger team, these educators work to build leadership capacity at the district level — helping districts develop leadership teams or strengthen existing teams. "Collaboration is the key," Hatterick said. "We do our work with that in mind."

For more information about the District Support Facilitators or to request services for your district, contact Roger Cleveland, director of the department's Division of Federal Programs and Instructional Equity, (502) 564-3791, Ext. 4046, [rcleveland@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:rcleveland@kde.state.ky.us).

# Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr  
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

## High school standards to get boost in Kentucky and nationwide

During the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher was one of 13 governors who committed to making high school classes and tests more rigorous in their states. The governors also agreed to match their states' graduation standards with the expectations of employers and colleges.

The undertaking will support the American Diploma Project, an effort launched in 2004 to prepare every high school student for college-level work. High school standards and tests will be aligned with the skills needed in college and the workplace. Every student will be required to take rigorous mathematics and English regardless of career plans. Students also will take a test of their readiness for college or work to get help where needed while still in high school. (See Page 3 to find out about programs already under way in Kentucky.)

## AP online exam review

Students preparing for the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) exams in May now have help from the Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) through an online exam review. The AP Exam Review is a special online test-prep program that diagnoses students' trouble spots and then prepares personalized study plans and review materials for them.

Available 24 hours a day, the AP Exam Review allows students to begin their exam preparation by completing a diagnostic assessment. Assessment results are used to create an individualized study plan.

Also available online are study materials, previous AP exam questions, sample answers and a discussion center with subject-area experts. The exam review can be accessed now through June 1 from any computer with Internet access.

With the assistance of a federal Advanced Placement Incentive Grant, KVHS is able to offer the online exam review for \$15 per student. Students must register through their schools to take advantage of the discounted rate. Schools will be billed \$15 per student for each subject.

The local school sets policy on whether the school will bear the cost or pass that cost on to the student or family. All students currently enrolled in an online AP course through KVHS will automatically be enrolled in the corresponding online AP exam review at no cost to the school.

KVHS scholarship students receive free access to the review site as part of their scholarship. KVHS is offering free access to any student (not just KVHS students) who agrees to participate in the review for at least five

hours and agrees to complete a survey after taking the AP exam. Any student who qualifies for free- or reduced-price lunch also can receive fee waivers for AP exams taken.

Online exam reviews are available in 14 subjects: English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Biology, Chemistry, Physics B, Calculus AB, Statistics, Spanish Language, U.S. History, U.S. Government and Politics, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Psychology and French Language.

For additional information, contact the KVHS toll free at (866) 432-0008 or visit online at [www.kvhs.org](http://www.kvhs.org).

## Principals leadership institute

The National Principals Leadership Institute is scheduled for July 9-16 at Fordham University's Lincoln Center Campus in New York City. Creating Great Schools is the theme for the eighth annual conference. It will focus on the redesign of existing schools and design of new schools.

[www.fordham.edu/gse/programs/npli.html](http://www.fordham.edu/gse/programs/npli.html)

## KASA conference is July 13-15

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) 36th annual conference is set for July 13-15 at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. Registration for "Courageous Leadership Advances School Success" can be made online at [www.kasa.org/conf\\_general\\_2005.htm](http://www.kasa.org/conf_general_2005.htm).

## High Performance Schools workshop offers energy info

The Kentucky Division of Energy and the Kentucky National Energy Education Development (NEED) project will host a High Performance Schools workshop, May 10-11 at the Holiday Inn Capital Plaza in Frankfort. School board

members, superintendents, facilities managers, architects and engineers are invited to learn strategies on implementing energy efficiently. To register, visit [www.energy.ky.gov/events/calendar/download+files+workshops+2005.htm](http://www.energy.ky.gov/events/calendar/download+files+workshops+2005.htm).

## Teachers' beliefs indicate success for their students

A study finds that top-scoring Kentucky schools with large numbers of poor children succeed because teachers believe all children can learn and they repeatedly test their student's progress. Completed by The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, the review focused on eight elementary schools that had 50 percent or more low-income students and moderately high state test scores.

The participating elementary schools were: Brodhead in Rockcastle County; Cuba in Graves County; Drakesboro Consolidated in Muhlenberg County; Lincoln and McFerran Preparatory Academy in Jefferson County; Lost River in Warren County; Morgan in Paducah Independent; and Oak Grove in Whitley County.

Common characteristics found in the schools included:

- Belief that all students could succeed academically
- Caring, nurturing atmosphere
- Strong academic, instructional focus
- Regular, frequent student assessment
- Collaborative decision-making process
- Strong faculty work ethic and morale
- Careful and intentional manner in which teachers were recruited, hired and assigned

To download "Inside the Black Box of High-Performing High-Poverty Schools," visit [www.prichardcommittee.org/](http://www.prichardcommittee.org/).

## KCEE to study finance program in grades 3-12

The Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE) at Eastern Kentucky University has received a \$23,000 grant to study

"Financial Fitness for Life." The grant will allow teachers in grades 3-12 to teach the curriculum to their students in the eastern Kentucky region. For more information about the study, visit [www.econ.org](http://www.econ.org).

## High school graduation and college readiness

Kentucky high school graduation rates decreased from 74 percent in 1991 to 68 percent in 2002. Nationally, high school graduation rates for all public school students remained flat over the last decade, going from 72 percent in 1991 to 71 percent in 2002, according to a report by the Center for Civic Innovation presented at the recent National Governor's Conference winter meeting.

Nationally, the percentage of students who left high school with the skills and qualifications necessary to attend college increased from 25 percent in 1991 to 34 percent in 2002. Kentucky's high school students who were college ready increased from 27 percent in 1991 to 37 percent in 2002. The growth is likely the result of the increased standards and accountability programs over the last decade, which have required students to take more challenging courses required for admission to college without pushing those students to drop out of high school.

## State board members serve at national level

Three Kentucky Board of Education members will participate in study groups and committees of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE).

Dorie Combs of Richmond is a member of the middle and secondary school literacy study group. The group will examine the need for adolescent literacy support, identify items to guide policy formation and decision-making, identify promising ways to address the needs of adolescent readers and discuss emerging trends and focus for current research in the field.

Hilma Prather, Somerset, is a member of NASBE's study group on value-added assessment. This group will examine issues surrounding value-added models for teacher evaluation, which provide comparisons of actual student achievement from year to year and the expected amount of growth. The group will focus on value-added assessment as an element of state data and information systems, a way to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and a tool to help schools and districts close achievement gaps.

David Webb of Brownsville is a member of NASBE's government affairs committee. The committee is designed to help its members understand, influence and plan for federal education policies. The committee also provides information to the U.S. Congress and the current administration on how federal policies affect the states.



## Providing a helping hand

Lost River Elementary Principal Mike Stevenson helps fifth-grader Kara Orange with an open-response question during her mathematics class. Stevenson works alongside the faculty at this Warren County school to let students know that teachers and staff care about them and their successes in school.

Photo by Rick McComb

# Southern Middle emphasizes the sciences in CSI

By Joy Barr

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The scene is set: A middle school library filled with the sound of suspenseful music and sectioned off with yellow police tape. Students are gathered around a large video screen intently watching news footage of an actual crime scene.

Is this CSI: New York?  
CSI: Miami?

No, this is CSI: Southern, as in Southern Middle School, Lexington, Ky.

Southern Middle, located in Fayette County, is giving its eighth-grade students a unique opportunity to take a fascinating look into how science is used by the criminal justice system to solve crimes.

Donna Ebelhar, an eighth-grade science teacher at Southern, wanted to challenge her stu-

dents with an innovative way to take science principles and use them in solving crimes. Ebelhar and co-teacher Lexi Sheets previously had designed a simple "Who Dunnit" investigation that used pictures of suspects, hair samples, shoe prints and carbohydrate testing.

Students seemed excited about applying scientific problem-solving techniques, and the teachers wanted to expand the program. Ebelhar shared her idea during a chance meeting with Ray Larson of the Fayette Commonwealth Attorney's Office and received enthusiastic support for the program. A partnership soon ensued.

Several volunteer groups helped develop a realistic picture of how the criminal justice system works. Southern Middle eighth-grade science teachers, the Fayette Commonwealth Attorney's Office, detectives from the Lexington-Fayette County Police Department, retired scientists from the Kentucky State Police Crime Lab and representatives from a local television station became partners in the unit of study.

"I was amazed at the amount of time and effort the community volunteered to do this," said Ebelhar. Larson used his many contacts in the community to bring in some of the top people from the community to help with this endeavor.

CSI: Southern is designed for the students to meet as a group once a week for nine weeks. Students also have additional classroom and lab work. The students explore how forensic science is used during criminal investigations, apply the principles of forensic science to actual crimes and use the scientific process to solve a crime.

For this class to happen, other eighth-grade teachers



have re-arranged student class schedules on Wednesdays to accommodate the schedules of the volunteer groups that present information to the students. This also keeps students from missing the same class each week.

"An integral part of teaching science is to have students recognize how science plays a role in everyday life," said Larson.

Jane Dreidame, principal at Southern, said, "CSI: Southern has been a unique opportunity for our students. It has given them an opportunity to see firsthand the connection between what they are doing in the classroom and the real world. It has given them tremendous insight into the great things that can happen when our school and community work together."

Interest in the forensic sciences has grown dramatically over the last few years largely in part from the many crime scene investigation shows currently on television. Even interest in forensic sciences as a career has bloomed.

Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond is one of only four nationally accredited universities offering a course of study in forensic sciences. An instructor in the program at Eastern, Barbara Wheeler, has been working with the Southern science teachers to develop meaningful forensic experiments.

The middle school students, or crime scene investigators, learn to gather and analyze samples of trace evidence. Several classroom investigations will be completed that align with

science content standards and safety requirements. Students will analyze hair — distinguishing differences between human and animal hair — by studying samples under a microscope.

Another lab activity will allow students to take samples of actual collected evidence — windshields from vehicles — and analyze crack patterns to determine the location and order of multiple impacts. Students also will use their knowledge of chemistry to identify unknown powders and liquids.

Students carefully record statistical data and information in their blue CSI: Southern folders. They gather data, think critically and logically about relationships between evidence and explanation, analyze explanations, and communicate scientific arguments.

Although crime scene investigating may seem exciting, the core of the material centers around concepts and skills that are already emphasized in a science classroom. The forensic unit serves as a bridge between science and real-life applications.

"Learning about the crime scene is important, but we also are learning important safety concepts that will help us later in life," said Logan Sowell, an eighth-grader and CSI: Southern investigator.

For more information about the CSI: Southern program, contact Donna Ebelhar at (859) 381-3582, or send e-mail to [debelhar@fayette.k12.ky.us](mailto:debelhar@fayette.k12.ky.us).



Photos by Rick McComb

Rachel Herring, an eighth-grader at Southern Elementary, listens intently beneath yellow police tape as John Smoot, a collision reconstruction specialist, describes to her CSI classmates how he uses science theory, geometry and technology in his daily work.



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