

48 schools in assistance

## 661 schools meet or exceed their biennial CATS goals

By Lisa Y. Gross

lgross@kde.state.ky.us

Results from the 2002-2004 accountability cycle of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) show that more than half of the state's public schools met or exceeded their individual goals. Fewer than 50 schools are in the assistance categories.

Scores from the April 2004 administration of the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and the school accountability performance judgments based on the 2003 and 2004 results were released in mid-October. Non-academic data, which also is a component of school and district account-

ability indices, was released in August.

"Each grade level has registered gains since CATS was fully implemented in 2000," said Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit. "This year's gains are especially encouraging in basic core subject areas, such as reading, mathematics and science.

"I'm very pleased with our elementary schools' performance, particularly in the area of science. Overall, science scores have gone up almost six points since 2002, and schools are moving their students from the lower performance levels to higher ones — more than half of our elementary students scored at the proficient or distinguished levels in science."

See 661 on Page 10



Photo by Rick McComb

Kentucky Commissioner of Education Gene Wilhoit announces the results from the 2002-2004 accountability cycle of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System during a press conference on Oct. 13.

## State board approves secondary GED program

By Cathy Lindsey

clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

At its October meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education gave final approval to the secondary GED program regulation and the application to the GED Testing Service. The board also reviewed the 2005 legislative agenda and continued discussions about the upcoming Request for Proposals for a new state testing contract.

As required by House Bill 178, passed by the 2004 legislature, a secondary GED program will be made available to schools.

The board stressed that this should be used as the "last best hope" for students who are going to drop out of school. Students who are enrolled in the program must be credit deficient and academically able.

The in-school GED program provides wrap-around services for students who are at least 16 years old, are two years behind students they entered high school with and have earned at least four credits toward graduation. Students must have exhausted all steps available for success in courses before the secondary GED

becomes an option.

A public hearing on this proposed administrative regulation will be held Nov. 29 at 10 a.m. in the state board room in Frankfort. Anyone interested in attending should refer to the Kentucky Department of Education Web site at www.education.ky.gov. Type "Public Hearings" in the keyword/search box and click on "Scheduled Public Hearings."

The board reviewed possible legislative initiatives for the 2005 General Assembly. These include:

- a recommendation for school principal selection
- the provision of concise rationale for making changes in the statute relating to non-resident student contracts
- proposed changes related to the instructional leadership requirements with the Education Professional Standards Board
- a review of critical dates for budgeting, including school council staffing and reporting, to determine if other dates need to be changed

See STATE on Page 9

### What's Inside

End-of-course exams hold all students to same standards.....	3
West Knox 5th graders mind their manners.....	4
Literary journal solicits student work .....	5
'Help! I'm Teaching Middle School Science'.....	6
Sue Fountain encourages students, teachers .....	7
These 'early birds' learn to write.....	12

## Two Kentucky teachers named Milken Educators

Greta Casto, a media/technology teacher at Russell Primary School (Russell Independent), and Annette Rouse, a reading/English/language arts teacher at Central Elementary (Johnson County), are Kentucky's newest recipients of the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. Both teachers will receive a financial reward of \$25,000 from the foundation.

Casto and Rouse learned of their awards when Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit visited their schools in mid-October for the surprise announcements.

Casto has been a teacher for 12 years and is a National Board Certified teacher. One recommendation on her nomination form for the award noted that "The students and staff look toward Greta's knowledge to lead us in literacy and technology."

She earned an associate's degree from Ashland Community College, a bachelor's degree from Kentucky Christian College and master's degrees from Morehead State University and the University of Kentucky.

Rouse, who has taught for 11 years, "provides a no-nonsense,

yet fun-loving presence that her students respond to with high achievement," according to her nomination form. Colleagues and supervisors describe her as a professional educator whose knowledge of subject matter leads her students to high levels of achievement. Rouse earned a bachelor's degree from Pikeville College.

The two Eastern Kentucky educators will receive their \$25,000 checks at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference in Los Angeles next May. There are no restrictions on the use of the award — the winners may use the money in any way they choose.

The award provides public recognition and a cash reward to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other education professionals. The foundation was established in 1985, and the first awards given in 1987. Kentucky has had 44 recipients of the award since first participating in the foundation's program in 1993. This year, 100 educators from 47 states and the District of Columbia were selected as

See TWO on Page 9

# Bulletin Board



Photo by Rick McComb

## Conferences

### KMEA

Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA) will hold its annual in-service/professional development conference Feb. 2-5, 2005, at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville.

[www.kmea.org/conference/](http://www.kmea.org/conference/)

### KCTE/LA

The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts (KCTE/LA) will hold its annual conference Feb. 11-12, 2005, at the Holiday Inn University Plaza in Bowling Green. "Lighting the Imagination: Teachers Inspiring Teachers" is the theme.

<http://conference.kcte.org/>

## Events

### R.E.A.C.H. Camps

Explore your nearest Kentucky State Resort Park as part of a hands-on environmental field trip through the R.E.A.C.H. (Recreation, Environment and Cultural History) Education Camps. Programs are offered Labor Day through Memorial Day and include meals, overnight lodging and staff-led activities.

[www.parks.ky.gov/events/reach.htm](http://www.parks.ky.gov/events/reach.htm)

### Toyota Teacher Study Tour

High school teachers can apply for a fully funded two-week study tour of Japan. The program, sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., sends 60 full-time secondary teachers from 10 different states on the study tour. Participants learn first-hand about Japan's education, culture, environment and technology, and how these affect industry and society. Interested individuals can apply by Jan. 10, 2005.

[www.iie.org/programs/toyota](http://www.iie.org/programs/toyota)

### Field trips to Fort Harrod

Newly renovated Old Fort Harrod State Park in Harrodsburg is open for school field trips. The museum and gift shop are open this fall through Nov. 30. The historic site reopens for school groups in the spring.

[www.ky.gov/agencies/parks/i75frames/oldftharrodfieldtrips.htm](http://www.ky.gov/agencies/parks/i75frames/oldftharrodfieldtrips.htm)

### Marine education workshop

Educators, naturalists and others interested in the marine environment can plan to attend a Marine Education Workshop, Feb. 18-21, 2005, at the Lower Florida Keys near Miami.

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

### Promising young writers

The National Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts is accepting nominations for the Promising Young Writers program. Guidelines can be found on the organization's Web site.

[www.ncte.org/about/awards/student/pyw/](http://www.ncte.org/about/awards/student/pyw/)

### EngineerGirl!

The National Academy of Engineering's Engineer-Girl! program announces a new essay contest, "Save the Dolphins," for boys and girls in grades 5-12. Engineer-Girl! promotes participation in science and engineering. Entries are due by Dec. 31. Winners receive cash prizes. Individuals or teams of up to six students may apply.

[www.engineergirl.org](http://www.engineergirl.org), click on "2005 EngineerGirl Contest — Save the Dolphins"

## Resources

### Reading teacher award

The International Reading Association recognizes an outstanding P-6 reading/language arts teacher through the Eleanor M. Johnson Award, which honors the founder of *Weekly Reader*. Applicants may apply for the \$1,000 award before Nov. 15.

[www.reading.org/awards/eleanor.html](http://www.reading.org/awards/eleanor.html)

### K-5 mathematics teacher grant

The Mathematics Education Trust of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) announces the Irene Etkowicz Eizen Grant for Emerging Leaders in Elementary School Mathematics. The grant will award up to \$6,000 to help educators teach mathematics more effectively at the elementary level by deepening their mathematical content knowledge and teaching abilities. Application deadline is Dec. 3.

[www.nctm.org/about/met/eizen.htm](http://www.nctm.org/about/met/eizen.htm)

### KCEE resources

Students may learn about Kentucky businesses and economics through several programs offered by the Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE). Teacher resources and materials are available to registered classes.

[www.econ.org/smg](http://www.econ.org/smg)

### Teachers lose tax deduction for class expenses in 2004

The \$250 federal tax deduction that has been available to help teachers defray out-of-pocket spending has expired. According to an Internal Revenue Service press release, the teacher deduction was for the 2002 and 2003 tax years only. Teachers cannot use the deduction on their 2004 tax returns. They still are entitled to write off business expenses, like other taxpayers, but the amount teachers spend often does not meet the threshold for taking that deduction.

Bulletin Board is compiled by Joy Barr  
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

# Commissioner's Comments

## End-of-course exams would hold all students to same high, agreed-upon content standards

By Gene Wilhoit

gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us

In my October column for *Kentucky Teacher*, I outlined the “Seven Steps Forward in Assessment” that I support for improving curriculum, assessment and instruction in Kentucky public schools. Many of you have responded with questions and comments, and I thank you.

One of those steps — end-of-course exams — has potential to move our schools forward in preparing high school students for success in postsecondary education and the work force.

The end-of-course exams we are considering would differ from locally developed final exams because they are standardized across classrooms, schools and districts. These end-of-course exams would be administered at the time the student completes a course, and they are associated with a specific course and course level.

Teachers could use these exams to increase the rigor of high school classes, measure student mastery of content skills against an agreed-upon standard, and inform teaching and learning. At the state level, end-of-course exams could help assure Kentuckians that our students are meeting the same high standards in each content area regardless of where they attend school.

Since these exams would measure student learning against state content standards, they have the potential to increase your ability to hold students accountable and drive instruction toward better alignment with Kentucky's core content standards and the Program of Studies.

The Kentucky Department of Education is working with teachers from across the state to develop these tests. Our staff is reviewing end-of-course exams already being used by schools and districts, as well as individual test items aligned with our standards. We will begin with end-of-course exams in mathematics and expand to other key high school academic areas.

We currently have too many Kentucky students “successfully” completing our minimum high school mathematics curriculum, and even the precollege curriculum, who must take developmental or remedial courses because they were not prepared for postsecondary coursework. We also hear all too frequently from employers who say our high school graduates do not have a grasp of the mathematics knowledge they need to perform well in the work place.

There are several factors that contribute to high remediation rates. Part of the solution to this problem lies in much greater clarity between K-12 and postsecondary educators on the alignment of what high

school and higher education institutions expect students to know and be able to do. Also, we know that curriculum slippage is greater at the higher-grade levels and that expectations often are different for different groups of students.

I view end-of-course exams as one tool to ensure that all students have the same opportunity to learn and to achieve because they are held accountable to the same high standards.

Many educators realize that just adopting a certain curriculum or specific course-taking sequence does not produce higher levels of learning for all students. However, if all students, schools and teachers know that the successful completion of a course is dependent on the student's performance against an agreed-upon standard, local curriculum would be closer aligned to the state's rigorous standards.

### How would it work?

We envision providing these end-of-course exams to schools and districts via an online repository. The repository, which we call “Teaching Tools,” already offers many instructional resources for teachers. When complete, the Web site will contain the end-of-course exams, curriculum maps, units of study, snapshot assessments, and other tools for teachers and administrators.

Districts could access the site and then decide if and how to use these assessments — at the time a student masters the material or when a student completes a course. These assessments can be used with individual students, groups of students or all students at any time throughout the school year.

The department would collect and report results from the end-of-course assessments. However, these exams would not be part of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Rather, the exams would provide a mechanism to measure the achievement of students across the state against the same high standards in specific courses, Algebra II for instance.

### Student accountability

The typical end-of-course exam would be CATS-like — that is, the exam would contain multiple-choice and open-response questions. We also envision applied learning tasks as part of the assessments so that students have opportunities to demonstrate how they can apply what they have learned.

We believe these exams will create a system of incentives and accountability for students that will drive higher levels of achievement. These exams would allow schools to move away from sole dependence on Carnegie units — which



Photo by Rick McComb

### *Focused on results*

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit is surrounded by data showing the 2002-2004 accountability cycle results of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. During a press conference held in mid-October to release school scores, flags given to schools that pass recognition points also were displayed.

measure the amount of time a student studies a subject — for graduation credits. Schools would be able to credential students when they are ready to demonstrate competency, not necessarily at the end of a semester or course.

There is the potential to use end-of-course exams for college admissions and placement by reporting the results on a student's Individual Graduation Plan or transcript. Students also could obtain an advanced diploma or qualify for credentialing not offered in their district by successfully completing an end-of-course exam.

### Inform teaching and learning

The department has in place an initiative to help our high schools refocus on instruction that will take our students to proficiency and beyond by graduation, as well as prepare them for success in postsecondary education and the work force — not simply one or the other. This is not an easy task, but I believe it is achievable!

We public school educators must work to raise the number of students who receive postsecondary degrees if Kentucky is to have a viable future and robust economy. We know that college graduates earn on average 70 percent more than high school graduates. We also know that high school dropouts are four times more likely to be unemployed than college graduates.

The availability of end-of-course exams will not magically improve dropout rates, graduation rates or Kentucky's budget problems. However, it is a step toward making our high schools more attune to addressing the learning needs of each student to keep him or her in school, learning at high levels and on target for success after high school.

Personalizing the secondary school experience — beginning in middle school — is important. Today's students want to

know the expectations, work at their own pace and receive credit for their learning, not for the time it takes them to learn. End-of-course exams help schools respond to these student needs.

Teachers also can benefit by studying the student results from end-of-course exams. Data from the exams about student learning can help inform instruction and each teacher's Individual Growth Plan. Does the school's curriculum need further aligning to state standards? Are there gaps in learning that indicate the need for better vertical alignment across the district? Do scores indicate the teacher's need for deeper content knowledge, additional supports for teaching specific students or professional development in certain areas?

### Looking for feedback

As part of the state's refocusing secondary education initiative, several high schools will likely be among the first to use end-of-course exams as the basis on which credits are awarded to their students. Linda Pittenger, coordinator for the initiative, and her staff will be working closely with these schools and monitoring their results.

However, Linda also would like to hear from educators not yet involved in the initiative about the kind of support and professional development you believe you'll need to make decisions on using end-of-course exams in your schools and districts.

She'd also like to hear from schools already using common finals. She wants to know how your programs are working and what testing items you might have to contribute to the state's end-of-course exams.

You can reach Linda with your feedback by sending e-mail to lpitteng@kde.state.ky.us. If you'd like to comment on this topic to me, send e-mail to gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us.

# West Knox teachers show 5th graders how to ‘mind their manners’

By David Cole

Knox County Schools

When teachers at West Knox Elementary (Knox County) tell 5th graders to mind their manners, these students know just what to do. They have had hands-on experiences to prepare them to behave properly in social situations as well as feel comfortable about dining out or entertaining.

Teachers designed “Manners, Etiquette & Southern Hospitality,” a 5th-grade course at the school, to teach specific practical living skills to nearly 100 students each year. LeeAnn Strunk, West Knox elementary physical education teacher, teaches the unit with the help of the 5th-grade teachers and the district’s itinerant arts and humanities teacher, Lynn Prichard.

West Knox started the etiquette program seven years ago when the school received a minigrant to buy inexpensive china, crystal, silverware, table linen and floral decorations. Teachers use the table settings to create a simulated dining room experience at the school.

Students take a pretest to measure their beginning knowledge about etiquette and manners. They receive three to four hours of instructional time in the simulated dining area.

At the conclusion of the unit, they take a post test to measure what they have learned. They then participate in a formal dining experience at Cumberland College’s Cumberland Inn in Williamsburg. Teachers and parents who have

gone through the same simulated dining room training as the students also attend the culminating meal.

The “Manners, Etiquette & Southern Hospitality” unit is aligned to the “Kentucky Core Content for Assessment.” It most closely relates to the health subdomain under the practical living/vocational studies domain at the elementary level, said Strunk, the physical education teacher. These connections include Health 1.1.1, which involves individual behaviors — including etiquette — and Health 1.4.2, which involves the food pyramid and number of recommended food servings.

There also are significant connections to the visual arts subdomain of the arts and humanities domain through the art of tabletop decoration and food display, for example. Connections can be made to the culture and society subdomain of the social studies domain through historical traditions. Students learn such things as why salad plates usually go on the left side of the main plate: England’s Queen Anne was left-handed; and why the cutting edges of knives are always turned toward one’s own plate: a consideration developed by our more warlike ancestors.

West Knox teachers also make additional social studies, arts and humanities, and science connections during the dining-out trip. While half the students are dining, the other half tours the Cumberland Inn’s museum. The two groups then switch places.



Photos by David Cole, Knox County Schools  
Lynn Prichard, Knox County itinerant arts and humanities teacher, standing, explains the placement of flatware in a formal table setting to West Knox Elementary 5th graders Andrew Mills, Samantha Bright and Caitlin Davis during a “Manners, Etiquette & Southern Hospitality” lesson.

“We’ve had so many compliments on this program,” said Strunk. Praise for the program has come from educators, teachers, parents and restaurant personnel. The highest compliment came last March during the 5th-graders’ dining-out trip to the Cumberland Inn.

“About 40 educators were eating their lunch the same day we were there,” Strunk said. “One of them was a former principal, who told us how impressed he was and that we should share this learning experience with other students and teachers throughout Kentucky.” The educator also sent a flattering letter to the group and donated \$100 to the school’s “etiquette program.”

Cumberland Inn Manager Jim Coscarelli is also a fan. “It’s a real pleasure to have the group from West Knox each year. I’ve commented to the teachers that the kids were actually better behaved than some of our regular guests.”

West Knox teachers call Coscarelli several months in advance of the student meal at his restaurant. He works with them to plan menus that children would enjoy and to plan table arrangements based on what’s being taught.

According to Strunk, the hands-on training at West Knox is the core of the unit. “We teach them about the many different rules of dining, including which utensils to use, how to act and what to say, as well as give them instruction on table decoration and planning and serving their own meals.”

One aspect of the unit that makes it different from other manners and eti-

qu Coast Hospitality. “That’s where we live — in the South,” explained Prichard, the district’s itinerant arts and humanities teacher. “We’re trying to teach the students what they need to know to be comfortable in dining throughout life, especially in this part of the country.

“We’re trying to get the students ready to go out into the world and be socially correct, so that they don’t have to overcome obstacles, such as which fork to use, where to place their napkins and how to approach a dining experience so that it will become automatic.”

Both students and parents have told Prichard about how the course has made them more comfortable with dining out. “A few years ago, a student flagged me down at Wal-Mart,” she said, “and told me about going to Georgia and eating in a fancy restaurant and how she showed her parents how to eat.”

There are many similar anecdotes from former students. Andrew Fore said he’s used what he learned through the course during his family’s outing to area restaurants such as Cracker Barrel. “To be honest with you, I didn’t know all that stuff before I had the class,” he explained.

Another former West Knox student, Kayla Friend, said, “I think it was a great program because a lot of kids were introduced to manners and etiquette, and they got a chance to be a part of a great thing.”

“The program has an extremely high achievement rate,” Strunk said. “There’s a 95 percent scoring average on the post test that we give to the students after the training. The post test is exactly the same as the pretest, only the second time around the children know through experience the correct answers.”

Anyone interested in learning more about West Knox’s “Manners, Etiquette & Southern Hospitality” unit can contact LeeAnn Strunk by e-mail at lstrunk@knox.k12.ky.us or Lynn Prichard at prichprich@aol.com.

(David Cole is public relations director for Knox County Schools.)



West Knox Elementary 5th grader Andrew Mills demonstrates his manners in using a soup spoon to teacher Lynn Prichard.

## Literary and arts journal solicits student work

The *Mad Hatter*, a journal of student creativity produced by the Hopkins County Gifted and Talented program, is now accepting material for its eighth issue, which will be released in April 2005. The journal showcases outstanding original work of students in grades 4-12 in the creative arts.

Students can submit original poetry, humor, song lyrics, translations of student work in other languages, and black-and-white artwork. Submissions are returned to students with comments when a self-addressed, stamped

envelope is provided.

Each issue of "The Mad Hatter" contains about 60 pages. Copies of the journal are professionally bound, and each published contributor receives a free copy. Past issues have featured work by students from 48 schools in 10 states and three foreign countries.

The deadline for all submissions is Feb. 28, 2005. For more information about "The Mad Hatter" and to see entry guidelines and samples of student work, visit [www.hopkins.k12.ky.us/gifted/mad\\_hatter.htm](http://www.hopkins.k12.ky.us/gifted/mad_hatter.htm).

## Teacher Advocates activated to support economic education

Through its corporate giving program, Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Kentucky's support of economic education is helping the Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE) activate the "Teacher Advocates" program. These experienced economic educators will introduce to other teachers and community groups economic education programs that can impact student success with assessment in social studies, practical living and mathematics.

"The Toyota/KCEE Teacher Advocate Program is a reactivation of an initiative that KCEE had in the late 1990s that was very effective in outreach to schools," said Jan Mester, president of KCEE. "Teacher Advocates showing best practices and high-quality classroom materials to other teachers will increase economic literacy, and that's good for schools, teachers and students in the entire commonwealth."

The Teacher Advocates will work from KCEE's regional Centers for Economic Education, located on the following college and university campuses. Elaine Littler, a

teacher at Woodland Middle School, will work from the Northern Kentucky University center. Teresa Moore and Janice Duncan, teachers at Stonewall Elementary, will work as a team from the University of Kentucky center.

Susan Thomison, a teacher at Warren Central High School, will work from the Western Kentucky University center. Tina Hayes, a teacher at Farley Elementary, will work from the Murray State University center. Becky Stacey will network with teachers at the Morehead State University center.

Betty Sue Johnson, a teacher at South Oldham County Middle School, will lead outreach for the University of Louisville center. Wanda Moore will do field work for the Union College center.

KCEE programs have reached more than 33,000 teachers and impacted the economic education of nearly 1.3 million Kentucky students over the past 30 years, Mester added.

For more information, visit the KCEE Web site at [www.econ.org](http://www.econ.org) or call (800) 436-3266 (I DO ECON).



Photo by Rick McComb

### Living history lesson

Social studies teachers from across the state watch reenactor Chris Board demonstrate the rifle stance of a Civil War militiaman as Frankfort parks spokesman Russ Hatter, upper right, describes the battle of Fort Hill. Last summer, many Kentucky social studies teachers traveled to historic sites and developed standard-based units of study, lesson plans and other activities that will bring Kentucky and American history to life in their classrooms.

## International poster contest seeks entries from Kentucky

Kentucky students, ages 6 through 17, can participate in an international aviation art contest. The theme for the contest is "Create an Air Show Poster: More than 100 Years of Human Flight." The contest is being sponsored in Kentucky by the Transportation Cabinet's Department of Aviation.

Students will compete in three age groups: 6 to 9, 10 to 13 and 14 to 17. The top three entries in each age group will advance to the national competition. National winners and the runners-up in each age group will advance to the international contest.

Artwork must be 11 inches by 17 inches and cannot be framed, mounted or outlined with borders. Only indelible media may be used. No computer-generated or collage work using photocopies will be allowed.

Entries must be postmarked by Jan. 10, 2005. All entries become the property of the Department of Aviation.

For more information or to obtain an entry form and the certificate of authenticity that must accompany each entry, contact the Department of Aviation at (502) 564-4480, [kytc.aviation@ky.gov](mailto:kytc.aviation@ky.gov).

## Videoconferences involve students in Kentucky history from a distance

A series of videoconferences for public school students on Kentucky heritage themes will begin in November. The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) is using grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to conduct programs via the Kentucky Tele-Linking Network (KTLN). Working with an advisory group of teachers and technology coordinators, KHS educators are developing the content for seven conferences, each of which will take place twice during the 2004-2005 school year.

Each hour-long program will include several components, such as museum theatre performances; video segments; opportunities to interview an expert; and student activities based on artifacts, primary sources and creative dramatics. A maximum of three schools can participate in each conference, which will originate in Frankfort.

Elementary-level programs scheduled for November will include "Adena Traders" (Nov. 10 and 18), "Prehistoric Kentucky" (Nov. 5 and 17) and "Lewis and Clark and the Land" (Nov. 3 and 12). Fall programs at the middle school level include "Kentucky Folklife: Latino Dance" (Nov. 30 and Dec. 7).

Programs planned for 2005 will include a middle-school program on "Songs of the Underground Railroad" and secondary-level programs on "Coal Culture in Depression-era Kentucky" and "Civil Rights and the Cold War in Kentucky."

The Kentucky Historical Society is an agency of the Kentucky Commerce Cabinet. For information, contact Vicky Middleswarth at (502) 564-1792, Ext. 4425, or [vicky.middleswarth@ky.gov](mailto:vicky.middleswarth@ky.gov). To find out the location of the KTLN facility nearest your school, visit the KTLN Web site at [www.ktln.org](http://www.ktln.org).

## Talk to Us!

*Kentucky Teacher* wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

**E-mail:** [kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us)

**Phone:** (502) 564-3421 or  
(800) 533-5372  
(toll free in Kentucky)

**Fax:** (502) 564-6470

**Write:** Kentucky Teacher  
1914 Capital Plaza Tower  
500 Mero St.  
Frankfort, KY 40601



# Read & Discuss

## 'Help! I'm Teaching Middle School Science'

By Jackie Hensley

jhensley@kde.state.ky.us

If you are a middle school science teacher who has ever uttered the words of this book's title, "Help! I'm Teaching Middle School Science," you can breathe a sigh of relief. Help has arrived from experienced middle school science teachers and authors C. Jill Swango and Sally Boles Steward.

Their help comes in the form of a must-have, must-keep book that will find its place on top of the stack of resources already on your desk. This book is a middle school teacher's dream because of the material it contains. You will find reproducible appendices for your classroom or workshop such as tests and forms like "Measurement Work Stations" and "Lab Report Forms;" recipes for crystal gardens and "Fun Putty;" and information about Web sites, books and other resources.

Material in each chapter is aligned with the National Science Education Standards (NSES). The NSES vision for science teaching says: "What students learn is greatly influenced by how they are taught." (National Research Council 1996)

If you as a teacher are working with standards and their alignment, this book encourages you to use the "Atlas of Science Literacy" (AAAS and NSTA 2001).

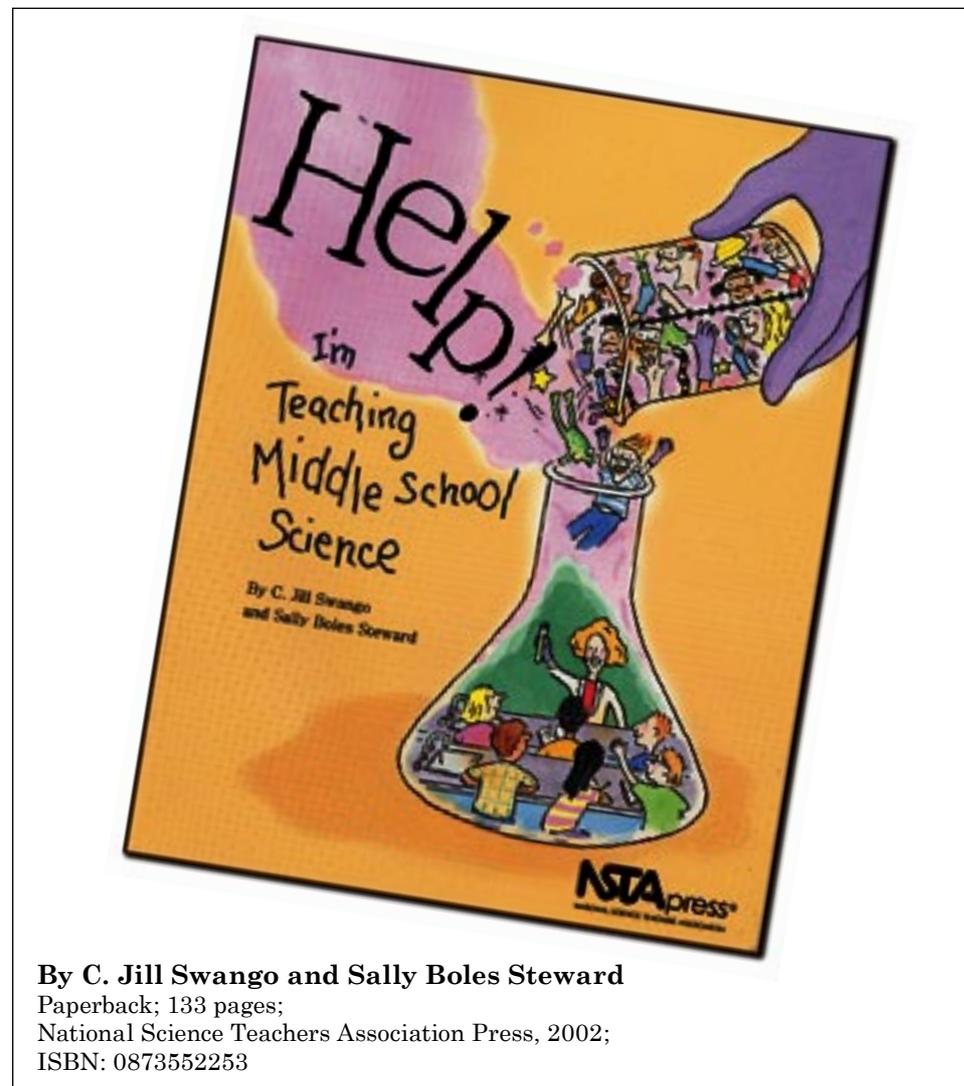
This important resource uses strand maps constructed from national benchmarks as well as learning goals that graphically represent the importance of vertical articulation and progression in science, mathematics and technology by connecting the ideas and skills learned from kindergarten through grade 12.

The authors' main purpose in writing this book is to get middle school science teachers off to a good start with their instruction. They show teachers how to develop a wide repertoire of teaching methods that will inspire students to seek their own learning opportunities.

For instance, the Internet resource, SciLinks, is referenced throughout the book. SciLinks is designed to help provide inquiry-oriented instruction for middle school students. I encourage *Kentucky Teacher* readers to check out the resource at [www.SciLinks.org](http://www.SciLinks.org).

Middle school science teachers frequently ask, "What if I don't have the budget or space to let each student work through this project individually?" In response, the authors offer ideas with "The Science Teacher's Rules of Grouping." The authors also include cooperative learning methods and information about how to assess individual learning, as well as group work.

In keeping with the National Science Teachers Association's (NSTA 1990) rec-



By C. Jill Swango and Sally Boles Steward

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National Science Teachers Association Press, 2002;

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ommendation that 80 percent of middle school classroom science instruction involve inquiry based, hands-on experiences, this book provides readily useable techniques and strategies for teachers. The authors suggest that middle school

science teachers scan the abundant supply of labs now in use in elementary and high schools to plan how their students can use these labs. Sometimes only a minor change or two is necessary.

If you would like immediate and practical help in your middle school science classroom, then this book is the resource!

(The reviewer, Jackie Hensley, is a science consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education.)



Photo by Rick McComb

### Making time to read

Mariah Justice and her classmates make time to read for fun during a 15-minute DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) session at Bowling Middle School in Owen County. Reading by people of all ages will be celebrated during November with National Family Literacy Day, Nov. 1, and National Children's Book Week, Nov. 15-21.

## Have something to read and discuss?

Have you read a book or article you'd like to review for *Kentucky Teacher*? What about new software you've found helpful in your classroom or a Web site that provides good resources for teaching and learning?

Share your discoveries with teachers throughout the state by submitting a review about what you like — or don't like — about the publication or resource. For submission guidelines, contact [kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us).

# Sue Fountain encourages students and teachers to achieve higher goals

By Joy Barr

jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

Take a combination of innovation, a sense of humor, an expert knowledge of mathematics and an ability to inspire student creativity. What do you get? Sue Fountain.

Fountain's skill at motivating students in higher-level mathematics has made her one of two Kentucky high school teachers honored with the 2003 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The award is the nation's highest commendation for work in science and mathematics classrooms. The National Science Foundation administers the awards program for the White House.

Fountain teaches Excel Algebra II and AP Statistics at Louisville Male Traditional High School in Jefferson County. She also sponsors Mu Alpha

Theta, the school's mathematics honor society. Most of her classes are for juniors and seniors, but she does teach some sophomores.

Louisville Male offers a traditional program with high academic standards for all of its students. The school's mission is to create proficient, lifelong learners, critical thinkers, problem solvers and communicators, with a uniquely structured environment emphasizing student success, discipline, patriotism and traditional values.

"Our students are highly motivated to learn, and they have families who believe in a good education," said Fountain.

Pam Argabrite, a teacher at Brown School in Jefferson County and a past PAEMST winner, nominated Fountain for the award. She and Fountain often travel to professional development workshops and conferences together, sharing many good ideas.

"Sue is an outstanding teacher who gives 100 percent inside the classroom as well as professionally. She understands the teaching process that students must follow to develop concepts in mathematics," said Argabrite.

Fountain encourages other teachers to attend conferences and workshops to gain insight into the mathematics field. "I would never have grown as a teacher without workshops. They are a wonderful investment," she said.

Fountain likes to involve her entire class in discussions and then move students into small groups to experiment, collect data and look for solutions. The students learn best with Fountain's real-world applications because they are able to see mathematics in action.

"I use discovery lessons as much as possible. Some time ago I read a book 'Discovering Geometry,' and this was my 'ah ha moment!' I found the techniques in this book were what I believe in," said Fountain. She says she is good at collecting and adapting ideas for use in her classroom.

Visitors will see lots of colorful posters in her room that provide students with mathematics strategies and tips. Writing posters along the classroom walls assist students when Fountain incorporates other core content subjects such as English and practical living into her class work.

Chelsea Johnson, a senior, wants to become a pharmacist after graduating from Male. She had Fountain in Excel Algebra II and now is in Fountain's AP Statistics class. "I believe it is very important to Mrs. Fountain that she reach each student in her classes.



Photos by Rick McComb

Presidential award winning teacher Sue Fountain helps sophomore Tonya Branch find the solution to an Excel Algebra II problem using a graphing calculator.

## Sue Fountain



### Teacher:

Louisville Male Traditional High School (Jefferson County) since 1986

### Education:

Bachelor of Science from Oklahoma Baptist University;  
Master of Arts in Education from University of Louisville

### Recognition:

Mathematics Department Chair at Louisville Male Traditional High School; National Board Certification

### Contact:

(502) 485-8292  
sfounta2@jefferson.k12.ky.us

She wants everyone to understand and works hard to help us understand," said Johnson. "She keeps everyone involved and is very hands-on."

Elizabeth Page, another senior, plans to become a nurse. She also had Fountain in Excel Algebra II and now in AP Statistics. "Mrs. Fountain is very positive and encouraging. She is always there to help us understand how and why something works."

Senior Nick Parks remembers how Fountain taught Excel Algebra II. "She didn't just 'tell us' how to solve a problem, we had to figure it out on our own," said Parks. "It really helped us to better

understand."

Fountain has been involved in writing practice open-response questions for Jefferson County's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) question bank. She has conducted professional development sessions on open-response writing and served on a district task force to study ways to improve K-12 mathematics education.

"There are many wonderful teachers out there that deserve recognition for all their work," said Fountain. "Teaching is hard work but oh-so rewarding! I just love to engage students and allow them to experience the thrill of discovery."

## About the PAEMST

For information about the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching visit [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org) on the Internet or call mathematics consultant Ann Bartosh or science consultant Jackie Hensley at the Kentucky Department of Education, (502) 564-2106 or e-mail [abartosh@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:abartosh@kde.state.ky.us) or [jhensley@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:jhensley@kde.state.ky.us). The program recognizes elementary and secondary teachers in alternating years.

# Grief groups can help students refocus on academic success

By Cathy Lindsey

clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

Falling autumn leaves signal the coming of year-end holiday celebrations. Traditionally, the holidays are a time of joy and celebration with family and friends. But for those who've experienced the loss of a loved one, it can be a lonely and depressing time.

Children are not exempt from feelings of grief — at holidays or any other time. Every day, students across the state are dealing with grief.

It is a common belief among educators that healthy children are optimal learners. This means children with complete physical, mental and social well-being. In an effort to meet the special needs of all learners, some Kentucky schools are making grief counseling available to their students — not just in crisis situations but throughout the year for those who need services.

"Many times kids who are grieving are the 'forgotten grievers' in our society," said Melinda Simpson, a grief counselor with Hospice of the Bluegrass. She leads school-based grief groups for students.

Simpson meets with students who have lost parents or siblings because of terminal or sudden illness as well as unexpected deaths from car accidents, suicides and homicides.

She finds that often survivors at home are dealing with so many issues it's very important for students to get extra support at school.

"Attending a school-based grief group gives students the opportunity to connect with other kids who are on the same journey," Simpson said. "It is also helpful to hear that grieving peers are having the same thoughts, feelings and issues."

When Shirley Duane, a school counselor at Bowling Middle School in Owen County, realized the number of her students that had suffered a loss, she was concerned about them both in and out of the classroom.

"Every holiday, birthday, report card, basket scored — every accomplishment — hurts because someone is not there to celebrate with the student," Duane said.

Even everyday occurrences may trigger grief responses in students, causing them to lose focus in the classroom, Duane explained. "I see the grief in outbursts, grades dropping, a drop in personal appearance and depression," she said.

Duane contacted Hospice to provide counseling services in the school. Simpson visits the school for a group session every other week. She meets with the students that Duane has identified as needing services. Parents and guardians

have agreed to allow the students to participate.

"The group experience can be a powerful educational tool in helping a grieving child acquire healthy coping skills to handle the changes in life as a result of death and grief," Simpson, the Hospice counselor, said. "The kids learn from each other, listen to each other and help each other."

Simpson's rules for the group are simple. Respect her, respect others in the group and respect yourself. Beyond that, students have free reign to talk about anything in any manner. It is considered a safe place for students to share.

"I couldn't share anything with people I don't know," said an 8th-grade member of the grief group at Bowling Middle. "After I started here with Melinda, I found trust with her and the group of people I meet with here. I can express myself more because I'm with people I trust, and they know what I'm going through."

Kate Higgs is another school counselor who arranged grief groups for students. Higgs wanted to provide a neutral place at Bondurant Middle School in Franklin County for students to process their grief.

At Bondurant, the school counselors meet periodically with teachers. They monitor grades, discipline referrals and attendance.

"Our school is divided into grade-level teams that meet weekly to share information and plan instruction," Higgs said. "Team meetings are a great time to share information with small groups of staff that deal directly with the child."

Simpson and the students she counsels for Hospice agree that respect plays a major role in transitioning students back into mainstream activities, including classroom instruction.

"Teachers should maintain high expectations, but keep in mind that these kids are processing emotions that impact every aspect of their world," Higgs, the Bondurant Middle counselor, said.

Grief counseling groups can help students recognize that while grief will never be resolved, it is possible to live with loss and continue to be successful in school and in life, Simpson said.

For more information about grief counseling, contact Joni Johnson, Hospice of the Bluegrass, at (800) 876-6005 or [jjohnson@hospicebg.com](mailto:jjohnson@hospicebg.com) or Nijel Clayton, Kentucky Department of Education, branch manager in the Division of Student, Family and Community Support Services, at (502) 564-3678 or [nclayton@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:nclayton@kde.state.ky.us).



Photo by Rick McComb

Melinda Simpson, who leads school-based grief counseling for Hospice of the Bluegrass, says young people are the "forgotten grievers" in our society. By providing a safe place for students to discuss their grief, schools can help students learn to live with loss and continue to be successful in school and in life.

## Helping students cope with grief

Whether or not grief groups are available in a school, there are many things classroom teachers and school administrators can do to help students cope with grief. While different students and different situations may call for different treatments, Melinda Simpson, a grief counselor with Hospice of the Bluegrass, recommends the following tips to school professionals:

- Be aware of deaths in your community and if there are any student connections to these deaths.
- Be careful not to minimize a student's relationship with the deceased.
- Privately let the student know you are aware of the loss and offer condolences.
- Realize that this death will have a ripple effect throughout the student's family. Many times a family's basic ability to provide food, shelter, supervision and other needs can be compromised by a death.
- Prepare classmates for the return of the bereaved student. Educate the class about the grief process. Make sure students have the facts about the death and squelch any rumors.
- Watch for personality changes, work habit changes, inability to concentrate, depression or increased hyperactivity.
- Understand that it can be hard to concentrate on academics when a family member dies. Be patient and understanding, and initiate arrangements to help the student, if necessary. Bereaved students and parents may be too overwhelmed with grief to arrange for help with school.
- Research local resources to assess the availability of bereavement counseling. Hospice bereavement services vary by program area. Although all Hospice chapters may not provide in-school services, many will be able to provide printed information and referrals to other counseling services.
- School professionals also should assess the interest level of students and parents before arranging for counseling services. Not all bereaved people want counseling.
- Schools also should be able to provide a private meeting place for grief groups. Students should feel comfortable sharing freely for counseling services to be effective.
- Learn about the grief process and the differences between child and adult grief. Realize that grief is extremely individual and everyone will react differently.
- Learn the symptoms of grief and realize that sometimes they can complicate the learning process.
- Ask the student regularly how he/she is doing.
- Realize that shock and numbness are normal for several weeks or months after a death.
- Understand that there is not a timetable for grief. A student can experience an intensification of grief feelings at different stages of life. Holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, etc., often trigger intense grief responses.
- Never use the memory of a deceased parent or caregiver as motivation for a student to change behavior.

For more information, go to [www.americanhospice.org/griefzone/kids.htm](http://www.americanhospice.org/griefzone/kids.htm).

**TWO** from Page 1

winners.

The Milken Educator Network is a voluntary association of nearly 2,000 Milken Educators and other exemplary educators and business leaders from across the

country who are dedicated to improving teacher quality and utilizing research and expertise to shape education policy at state and local levels.



Casto



Rouse



Photos by Rick McComb

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit watches Russell Primary students react during a quick mathematics lesson as they learn how large a monetary award is attached to being named a Milken Family Foundation National Educator. Greta Casto, a media/technology teacher at their school, was about to receive the award.

## Changed your address?

*Kentucky Teacher* receives mailing addresses for all Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are employed by a Kentucky public school, you can change your address in one of two ways:

1. Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at <http://ktrs.ky.gov/ktrsresources/MEMinfo/chgaddrnew.htm>

2. Submit a written request that includes your old address, new address and your social security number.

Mail the form or your written request to:  
Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System  
Attn: Tammy Brown  
479 Versailles Rd.  
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to [kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us) or send your change of address information in writing to:

*Kentucky Teacher*  
1914 Capital Plaza Tower  
500 Mero St.  
Frankfort, KY 40601

# Digital textbooks available for students with disabilities

Kentucky teachers now have a new resource for obtaining computerized reading supports for students with disabilities who have difficulty reading their textbooks.

The Kentucky Department of Education has developed the Kentucky Accessible Materials Database (KAMD) to help teachers obtain copies of select textbooks in an accessible digital format. This new Web-based resource will allow qualified students with disabilities to read independently using textreader software and to increase their access to general curriculum content.

The KAMD is located on the department's Web site at <http://apps.kde.state.ky.us/kamd>. Click on 'Search Textbooks' to access a list of the digital texts currently available.

Digital textbook copies currently are available on CD-ROM for social studies, language arts, and practical living/vocational studies. More texts will be added throughout the year, such as language arts materials related to Reading First. Material for arts and humanities content will be available after adoption in spring 2005.

Schools must be using a print version of any requested book. However, use of the digital version cannot replace local provision of a hard copy of the book. Due to copyright restrictions, only qualified students with disabilities can

use these digital copies.

KAMD also provides Internet links to an extensive amount of non-copyrighted digital text that can be downloaded for direct use by any student. After accessing the Web site, click on 'Resource Links' to find the list.

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit sent a letter outlining the procedures for securing these teaching materials to all superintendents and principals in August. The Kentucky Accessible Materials Consortium, established by the department at the University of Louisville, will serve as a distribution center for these digital resources. The Web address for the consortium is <http://kamc.louisville.edu/kyecontent/>.

Anyone can view the online list of available digital materials on the KAMD Web site. However, each principal must designate a staff person to serve as the school's Digital Rights Manager. This person will keep track of all CD-ROMs received by the school, be authorized to submit requests on behalf of the school and track which teachers and students with disabilities are using specific individually numbered CD-ROMs.

For more information, contact Linnie Lee at (502) 564-2106, [lee@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:lee@kde.state.ky.us) or Preston Lewis at (502) 564-4970, [plewis@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:plewis@kde.state.ky.us).

## STATE

 from Page 1

The board also approved the inclusion of a joint resolution on coordinated school health for consideration.

The board heard a review of Kentucky's writing assessment, including input about potential modifications to both the writing portfolio and the on-demand portion of the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT). The board will hear further rationale and reasoning for making changes at its November meeting.

As part of the Seven Steps Forward in Assessment initiative, online testing and in-state teacher scoring are being analyzed and discussed as ways to improve turnaround time for reporting test scores. These proposals would enable schools and educators to more efficiently use the data from those scores.

The Office of Education Technology is conducting a feasibility study to determine the various levels of technology capabilities for online testing in schools across the state. A pilot program is being planned to evaluate the state's ability to administer large-scale assessments online and to generate some initial data on how different, or how similar, students perform taking assessments via the traditional paper and pencil mode as compared to the evolving online

method.

The Kentucky Department of Education reported that bringing in-state teacher scoring to Kentucky would build additional capacity within teachers across the state, and if enough teachers participate, could reduce scoring time. Members of the state board expressed support for this initiative, but advised the department to proceed with caution. The board does not want to sacrifice the quality of assessment in return for other benefits.

The department will seek advice from the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council, the National Technical Panel on Assessment and Accountability, the Office of Education Accountability and constituents on whether the Kentucky public, as well as the Kentucky educational community, would believe scores assigned by teachers for student work is credible.

The board will get a first look at the proposal on in-state teacher scoring at its Dec. 8-9 meeting.

The next meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education will be Nov. 3 in Frankfort. More information about the board and notes from this meeting are available at [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov). Enter "KBE" in the keyword/search box.



### *Putting their heads together*

Photo by Rick McComb

Elaina Callaghan and Mary Helen Lynn carefully study a map of Kentucky to find the location of Rooster Run during an activity in Alexis Rollins' 6th-grade Social Studies class at Maurice Bowling Middle School in Owen County. National Geography Awareness Week is Nov. 14-20.

## 76 percent of schools make Adequate Yearly Progress

By Lisa Y. Gross  
lgross@kde.state.ky.us

Updated data, released in mid-October, indicate that 76 percent of Kentucky's public schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Updated 2004 AYP results are based on the Kentucky Core Content Test's (KCCT) multiple-choice and open-response items in reading and mathematics. A preliminary report, based on the multiple-choice component only, was released in August.

Analysis of the updated data indicates that the AYP status of 78 schools has changed. Thirty-eight schools that were classified as not making AYP from the preliminary data are now considered to have made AYP. Forty schools that were classified as making AYP from the preliminary data are now considered to have not made AYP. Thirteen schools moved from Tier 1 of NCLB consequences to Tier 0; 15 schools moved from Tier 0 to Tier 1; one school moved from Tier 3 to Tier 2; and one school moved from Tier 2 to Tier 3. The other 48 schools whose AYP status changed did not experience changes in consequence levels.

Federal guidance indicates that, if a school offered the transfer option for students based on the preliminary data and that school's AYP status or tier of consequences changed, students may remain in the school to which they transferred for the remainder of the school year. Schools that were not required to offer the transfer option based on the preliminary data must offer it as soon as possible if they are now subject to the transfer consequences.

According to the updated data, 888 Kentucky public schools met 100 percent of their NCLB goals for AYP, while 288 schools did not. Schools that are funded

by the federal Title I program, which provides funds to ensure that disadvantaged children receive opportunities for high-quality educational services, will be subject to consequences if they do not make AYP in the same content area for two or more consecutive years.

Statewide, updated data show that 113 Title I schools are in Tier 1 of consequences; 12 Title I schools are in Tier 2; and 7 Title I schools are in Tier 3.

Consequences for the tiers are:

**Tier 1** (two years not making AYP) — Schools must notify parents, implement school choice, and write or revise the school plan.

**Tier 2** (three years not making AYP) — Schools must notify parents, continue offering school choice, and offer supplemental educational services to increase student learning.

**Tier 3** (four years not making AYP) — Schools must notify parents, continue offering school choice, revise the school plan, continue offering supplemental services and implement corrective action.

School districts also are held to the requirements of AYP under NCLB. Of Kentucky's 176 school districts, 111 districts, or 63 percent, met 100 percent of their target goals. For NCLB requirements, school districts are gauged on the total student population. This can mean that, even if every school within a district makes AYP, the district may not because of the total size of subpopulations and their performance.

Of the 288 schools that did not make AYP, 241 made 80 percent or more of their goals. As a state, Kentucky met 84 percent of the 25 target goals.

Detailed information on the AYP status of each Kentucky public school and district is available at [http://apps.kde.state.ky.us/secure\\_cats\\_reports\\_04/](http://apps.kde.state.ky.us/secure_cats_reports_04/).

## 661 from Page 1

At the elementary level, science scores show the lowest percentage of novices (6.94 percent). At the middle school and high school levels, reading scores show the lowest percentages of novices (8.31 and 14.40 percent, respectively).

"Although the performance of high schools continues to cause concern, they are making some progress," Wilhoit said. "In fact, overall, high schools gained in each subject area from the 2002 cycle to the 2004 cycle — from half a point to nearly 8 points.

"There are some other areas of concern," Wilhoit said. "While we are pleased that less than ten percent of our schools will receive some form of assistance, many schools are in the progressing area. This means they must achieve greater growth in the next two years to stay on goal."

There are three main performance judgment categories for schools and districts: Meets Goal, Progressing and Assistance. Those three are divided into subcategories.

### High-performing schools

Schools are expected to have accountability indices of 100 (on a 140-point scale) by the year 2014. During this cycle, 23 schools reached or exceeded 100 on their 2002-2004 combined indices.

By district, the 23 schools and their scores are **Anchorage Independent:** Anchorage Elementary — 106.2; **Clay County:** Hacker Elementary — 101.3; **Daviess County:** Deer Park Elementary — 111.5, East View Elementary — 100.4, Highland Elementary — 100.5, Philpot Elementary — 100.3, Tamarack Elementary — 102.6, Utica Elementary — 106.1 and West Louisville Elementary — 109.7; **Fayette County:** Maxwell Elementary — 100.4, SCAPA at Bluegrass Elementary — 106.4; **Ft. Thomas Independent:** Johnson Elementary — 101.6; **Graves County:** Farmington Elementary — 101.2; **Jefferson County:** duPont Manual High — 101.6 and Louisville Male Traditional High — 100.5; **Johnson County:** Central Elementary — 111.8; **Ohio County:** Southern Elementary — 110.0; **Oldham County:** Centerfield Elementary — 100.2, Goshen at Hillcrest Elementary — 103.3, Liberty Elementary — 103.7 and North Oldham Middle — 100.2; and **Rockcastle County:** Brodhead Elementary — 104.0.

### Recognition Points

When a school's accountability index passes 55, 66, 77, 88 and 100, the school receives a one-time recognition and a flag that is color-coded to the level passed. This testing cycle, 510 schools were honored for reaching recognition points. Thirty-seven schools passed two recognition points during the 2004 cycle.

### Pace Setter Schools

Pace Setter schools are the highest-scoring 5 percent of all schools that have reached the fourth recognition point (88) and met dropout rate and novice reduction requirements. Fifty-seven schools are Pace

Setters for this accountability cycle, with indices ranging from 92.6 to 111.8.

For a complete list of those Pace Setter schools, go to [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov) and enter "#pacesetters" in the keyword/search box.

### District Accountability

Under CATS, school districts also are held accountable for the performance of their students. School districts are not formally designated under the same classifications as schools. However, specific accountability requirements for districts begin this year. Some districts may be classified as follows:

**Exemplary Growth District** — all schools in the district are classified as "Progressing" or "Meets Goal" and have met the dropout and novice reduction criteria established for schools.

**Audit Level 1 District** — one or more schools in the district are classified as "Assistance Level 3" and were not classified as "Assistance Level 3" in the previous accountability cycle. The district will modify its comprehensive plan to include support for those Level 3 schools.

**Audit Level 2 District** — at least one school in the district has been classified as "Assistance Level 3" for two or more consecutive accountability cycles. A district evaluation team will conduct an audit of the school's curriculum and instruction to ensure that support for Level 3 schools is implemented.

Forty-five districts received the Exemplary Growth classification. That number is up from 22 districts in the 2002 cycle. Eight districts are classified as Audit Level 1, and two districts are classified as Audit Level 2. The remaining 121 districts received no classification.

Two regulatory changes took effect for the 2003-2004 school year. The changes affected requirements for testing of students with limited English proficiency and students who move from school to school during an academic year.

### Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills

Results from the 2004 Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) show that Kentucky students are making slow but steady progress in reading, language arts and mathematics. Schools administered the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills/5 Survey Edition (CTBS/5) in reading comprehension, language arts and mathematics last April to all students in the end of primary (3rd), 6th and 9th grades.

End-of-primary students (3rd graders) turned in the strongest performance, showing gains in average scores of up to three percentiles in all three subjects tested. Sixth and ninth graders showed improvement in most areas. Scores from CTBS make up 5 percent of school and district accountability indices.

To access test scores for individual schools and districts, go to [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov) and click on KDE QuickLinks in the upper-right hand corner. Select "Kentucky Core Content Test," "CTBS/5" or "Kentucky Performance Report" to access Kentucky's 2004 results.

# Leadership Letter

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

## Kentucky schools win Blue Ribbon honor

Four Kentucky public schools have been named 2004 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. The four are: Central Elementary in Johnson County, Morgantown Elementary in Butler County, Sacramento Elementary in McLean County and West Louisville Elementary in Daviess County. The NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools program honors public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

The program requires schools to meet either of two assessment criteria. It recognizes schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and have dramatically improved student performance in reading and mathematics over the last three years in accordance with state assessment systems.

It also rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Morgantown and Sacramento schools were in the first category; Central and West Louisville schools were in the second category.

## SchoolsMovingUp

SchoolsMovingUp is a new Web program that helps schools and districts address the challenge of raising student achievement in low-performing schools. The interactive program offers information to help educators make sound decisions and take tangible action in school reform efforts.

It provides high-quality resources, proven services and powerful tools that education professionals can use in their work with low-performing schools. Resources include profiles of schools from across the country that have improved student achievement, tips to assist in school improvement efforts, and articles, books and abstracts offering practical ideas and models for school improvement.

[www.schoolsmovingup.net](http://www.schoolsmovingup.net)

## Leadership conference

The Kentucky Educational Development Corp. is sponsoring a leadership and teamwork conference Nov. 17 at the Lexington Convention Center. John C. Maxwell, a nationally recognized author, is the featured speaker. For more information, contact Donetta Brown, (606) 928-0205, [dbrown@kedc.coop.k12.ky.us](mailto:dbrown@kedc.coop.k12.ky.us).

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

## Kentucky students to participate in NAEP testing in 2005

Kentucky students will participate in the state-level National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2005. NAEP, a program of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), is known as the Nation's Report Card. It provides information on how elementary and middle school students are performing compared to students nationally and in other states.

In Kentucky, a sample of 4th- and 8th-grade students from 135 public school districts and 287 schools will take the 2005 NAEP tests in reading, mathematics and science. The testing window is scheduled for Jan. 24 through March 4, 2005. Results are expected to be available in late summer 2005.

For more than 30 years, NAEP has served as the nation's only ongoing, nationally representative survey of what American students know and can do. State NAEP assessments were introduced in 1990 to provide states with reliable data concerning the achievement of their students. Prior to that, the national NAEP samples were not designed to support the reporting of state-level results.

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard.com>

## New HSEs selected

Fourteen Kentucky educators were selected in September to serve as Highly Skilled Educators (HSEs) for 2004. They joined 35 HSEs who have been helping low-performing Kentucky schools for the past year. All HSEs participate in rigorous training and are assigned to schools needing assistance in raising the achievement levels of their students. HSEs are selected in the fall and serve for two years, during which they are granted leaves of absence from their home school district. The application period for the 2005 HSE cadre concluded Oct. 31.

The 14 new HSEs are Deborah Buck and Tamara Darden, instructional coaches, Gheens Academy, Jefferson County; Jeanne Crowe, teacher, Estill Middle, Estill County; Angela Doyle, secondary curriculum coordinator, central office, Shelby County; Barbara Kennedy, director of federal programs for Lewis County; Ronald Lindsey, superintendent, Sheffield Lake City, Sheffield, Ohio; Carolyn Martin, teacher, South Floyd Middle, Floyd County; Kimberly Parker-Brown, associate principal, Lexington Traditional Magnet, Fayette County; Michele Reynolds, language arts curriculum specialist, East Jessamine Middle, Jessamine County; Michael Rowe, assistant principal, North Laurel High, Laurel County; Ruth Sorace, principal, Elizabethtown High, Elizabethtown Independent; Paige Stevens, principal, Bate Middle, Danville Independent; Sally Sugg, principal, Hendron/Lone Oak Elementary, McCracken County; and, Joyce Watson, director of instruction for Floyd County.

To become an HSE, applicants must

meet the following criteria:

- Kentucky certification
- A minimum of five years of experience as an educator (ten years preferred)
- At least three years of current experience as an educator
- Knowledge of current educational practice in Kentucky
- Awareness of Kentucky's "Standards and Indicators for School Improvement"
- Willingness to travel

Since 1990, the HSE program (known as the Distinguished Educator program until 1998) has identified and trained more than 300 educators to work with schools identified by the state assessment and accountability program as being in need of assistance.

The HSEs provide a number of services to low-performing schools. They help faculties and administrators assess the needs of the school/district, including analyzing test data and the Kentucky Scholastic Audit Report. They lead the School Improvement Team in amending the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and assure a focused use of Commonwealth School Improvement Funds within the school's budget. They also provide professional development for educators in the schools or districts.

Approximately 95 percent of schools served by Distinguished or Highly Skilled Educators have moved out of the assistance category by the end of two years of support.

## Center for Instructional Discipline opens

For nearly a decade dozens of professionals have been working to expand the use of positive, proactive and instructional approaches to student behavior and school discipline. As a result of their efforts, the Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline (KCID) is now a reality. The Kentucky Department of Education has supported four projects, several in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, to get to this position. From the lessons learned, an improved, thoughtful approach that is sensitive to the needs of adults and children is now being offered to schools and districts across the state through KCID.

The KCID is located at Kentucky State University in Frankfort and is affiliated with the Center for School Safety at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond. Both organizations will be working together closely to improve the culture and climate in schools throughout the state.

Kentucky superintendents and principals received information earlier this fall about how to get involved in the process of supporting schools, families and students to become self-disciplined, responsible and productive members of the community.

For more information, contact the center's director, Mike Waford, at (502) 330-3866 or send e-mail to [kcidiscipline@aol.com](mailto:kcidiscipline@aol.com).



## Increasing civic literacy

Bowling Middle School Assistant Principal Shannon Treece, above, shows 6th grader Bethany Moore how to use a voting machine to cast her vote during an October school election. Treece rented actual voting machines to give students the opportunity to vote as part of a schoolwide study of citizenship and the democratic process. At right, Jacob Smith casts his vote at the Owen County school.



Photos by Rick McComb

# These 'early birds' learn to write



Photos by Rick McComb

Principal Jeff Castle and 4th grader Kevin Booth discuss Kevin's memoir of his dog "Bogey" during a writing conference at Collins Lane Elementary in Franklin County. Castle works directly with students and teachers to improve writing at the school.

By Joy Barr

jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

Students at Collins Lane Elementary are learning to write as soon as they enter the primary program. "Early primary is a critical time to work with emergent writers," said Jeff Castle, principal at the Franklin County school.

Writing for these "early birds" is integrated into the classroom beginning with kindergarten students. "Our youngest students begin to express themselves through writing," Castle said.

Collins Lane has steadily improved its writing scores — nearly 17 points — since implementing a schoolwide emphasis on writing four years ago. Castle spends much of his time in classrooms with both teachers and students developing a culture of literacy at the school.

Castle is growing literacy leaders at Collins Lane. As an instructional leader at the school, he especially enjoys working with the newer teachers and students. "Being in the classroom helps me to know what the teachers need and what I can do to help provide support," said Castle. "Demonstrating writing techniques and strategies to teachers and students helps them to learn and know what is expected.

"My position as a principal is to lead teachers. Many times, in order to support interns or teachers with only a few years of experience, I find that modeling lessons in writing pieces in various genre or answering

open responses makes it easier for the teacher to see my expectations regarding instruction in writing," stated Castle. He models writing lessons with kindergarten students through the 4th grade.

One lesson that Castle likes to use with primary students results in a transactive piece for their writing folder. The lesson begins with Castle explaining the characteristics of an effective "how-to" piece of writing.

Then he uses published pieces of writing from children's magazines or other periodicals to highlight the use of details and to focus on the characteristics of "how-to" writing. He also uses student writing to demonstrate strong pieces of work and pieces of work that could be made stronger with better use of voice or supporting details.

This focus on writing is steadily helping many students become more confident communicators about what they are learning. "His presence in the classroom highly motivates the students," says Valerie Smith, a 4th-grade teacher. In turn, he is well aware of the progress students are making in their writing development, she notes.

Teachers provide skills and strategies each day to lead students to better communication through the written word. "There is definite improvement in our writing scores. Our students perform better in all subject areas and are becoming much more self-reliant," said Castle.

Smith's students were in kin-

dergarten when Castle came to Collins Lane as principal. "They enjoy writing, use the vocabulary of the scoring guide to edit their work, and often suggest ideas for writing for authentic purposes. They are comfortable with the writing process. Most of my students have come to the 4th grade writing on a high apprentice level. Some are already proficient. This makes my job of helping the students produce a writing portfolio much easier, as I do not have to start from scratch."

Collins Lane students learn and apply the writing process and criteria for effective writing. They develop strong structures and language patterns through visual and symbolic language. With writing beginning in primary classes, these students compile a collection of writing pieces for a variety of authentic purposes and audiences and in a variety of forms, including personal, literary, transactive and reflective pieces.

For more information, contact Jeff Castle, (502) 875-8410, jcastle@franklin.k12.ky.us.



Castle uses an overhead projector to show students the characteristics of an effective "how-to" piece of writing before they begin work on their own writing folder piece.



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