

Kentucky Teacher

Three middle schools
are 'Schools To Watch'
Pages 6 and 7



October 2005

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov



Photo by Rick McComb

For her ears only

Owingsville Elementary Principal Sharon Smith gives early primary student Hannah Darnell some individual attention by reading her a story in a quiet corner of the school media center. Hannah and her family left Slidell, La., after Hurricane Katrina to stay with Kentucky relatives. (See Page 3 for more information about how Kentucky public schools are helping displaced students like Hannah get back to learning.)

New drug prevention programs target eastern Kentucky school districts

By Cathy Lindsey

cathy.lindsey@education.ky.gov

Up to 18 eastern Kentucky school districts are eligible to participate in new substance abuse and prevention pilot programs. The programs, created for fifth graders, are the result of a partnership between the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, the Kentucky Center for School Safety and the Kentucky School Boards Association.

"Many schools understand the need for substance abuse education," said Heather Wainscott of the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, "but due to constraints on time and money — as well as the ever-present goal to reach high academic stan-

dards — substance abuse prevention programs have not been implemented."

With this in mind, the partnership will provide six drug prevention consultants to implement substance abuse prevention and education pilot programs in eastern Kentucky school districts with the highest number of drug violations and self-reported student drug use.

Officials in Clay, Floyd, Harlan, Johnson, Knott, Lawrence, Lee, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Rockcastle, Whitley and Wolfe counties will be contacted by the Office of Drug Control Policy to apply for services offered through the pilot program. There are 89 elementary schools in these districts that are eligible for the program.

Online learning opportunities for professional development

By Faun S. Fishback

faun.fishback@education.ky.gov

Rising gas costs, demanding professional and personal schedules, and changing lifestyles are causing Kentucky educators to change the way they look for professional development. More and more educators no longer want to spend their evenings commuting to and from a nearby college or university to work on rank change requirements, complete necessary classes for administrative positions, or attend professional development training sessions.

Instead, they are traveling the 21st century information highway — from the comfort of their own homes — to access professional learning opportunities at times that fit their own busy schedules.

Educators throughout the state are just a mouse click and log-in away from content-specific professional development, special education teaching skills,

classroom management skills, Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) committee training, study help for the principal's test and work on rank change requirements. A variety of quality professional development and school improvement courses, as well as school based decision making council training, are available online through the Web sites of the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) and the Kentucky Department of Education's Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS).

KyEducators.org

Educators can access KyEducators.org for a schedule of more than 100 online programs and courses, said Chela Kaplan, coordinator for the EPSB Web site. Educators can work with their school or district professional development coordinators to get approval for taking the courses and

See **ONLINE** on Page 9

includes refusal skills, anger management, conflict resolution, decision-making social skills and academic enrichment interventions."

The consultants will provide methods such as classroom-style presentations and one-on-one and support group interaction, she explained. The consultants also will offer professional development to raise faculty and staff awareness of the connection between prevention education and

See **NEW** on Page 9

KTLC '06 planners announce lineup

Kentucky educators will have the opportunity to hear and talk with some of the world's leading education experts during the 2006 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC '06). The conference, March 9-11, 2006, in Louisville, features programs and strategies that are moving students to proficiency and beyond.

Willard Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education, and Michael Hall, deputy

superintendent of information technology for the Georgia Department of Education, are among the featured conference presenters. Other national education experts will participate in the conference to provide information, strategies and research-based programs that teachers and administrators can implement in their own schools and districts. More about all KTLC '06 presenters will be posted on the conference Web site in October.

Daggett is closely involved with Ken-

tucky's efforts to refocus secondary education. He will address a general session of the conference and discuss how the trends that shape the future will impact what students need to know and be able to do. He also will describe the implications for students, schools and society if students are not prepared adequately for this changing world.

In addition, Daggett will lead a three-

See **KTLC** on Page 9

What's Inside

Kentucky schools offer stability to displaced students	3
Fayette County students create word problems for Internet	4
Student organizations promote success in school and beyond.....	5
Kenton County history teacher relies less on textbooks	8
Students find relevance in science classes.....	10
News for school leaders	11
Work experiences build independence for students	12

Bulletin Board



Photo by Rick McComb

Conferences

Counselors' conference

The Kentucky Counseling Association (KCA) hosts its annual conference Oct. 18-21 at the Executive West in Louisville. The conference theme is "Counselors: Enhancing the World and the People in it."

www.kyca.org

Physical Education and Health

The Kentucky Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance will host its annual state conference Oct. 27-29 at the Galt House in Louisville. Nationally known speakers will discuss brain research and the crossover from movement to success in academics and behavior improvement.

Contact: Randy Crist, (859) 622-1890, randy.crist@eku.edu

Gifted conference

The annual conference of the National Association for Gifted Children will be Nov. 9-13 at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville. More than 300 sessions, institutes, special featured speakers, forums, action labs and exhibits are planned.

www.nagc.org/coninfo/kentucky/preliminaryprogram.html

Science teachers meet

The Kentucky Science Teachers Association will meet Nov. 3-5 at the Convention Center and Hyatt Regency in Lexington.

www.ksta.org/

PD opportunity

The Center for Cultural and Professional Development and the West Kentucky Education Cooperative will host a professional development workshop, "Gardening in the Minefield: A Survival Guide for Administrators," on Dec. 6 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Grand Rivers (Livingston County). Author Laurel Schmidt will offer time management and stress helps for educators. The workshop cost is \$200 and includes a book.

Contact: Carolyn Ferrell, (270) 821-4909

KTLC

Plan now to send a team of teachers and administrators from your school to take advantage of the many professional development opportunities at the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC), March 9-11, 2006. Check the KTLC Web site for information about the conference or to make hotel reservations.

www.kentuckytclc.org

Events

Children's Theatre

The Lexington Children's Theatre announces its upcoming performance, "The Wolf and Its Shadows," written by Sandra Fenichel Asher, on Nov. 10, 11, 16, 17 and 18. The production is recommended for grades 4-8.

Contact: Box office for group rates and performance times, (859) 254-4546

www.lctonstage.org/plays05-06.htm

American Education Week

Activities in schools the week of Nov. 13-19 will recognize the work of educators and school staff in providing a healthy, safe learning environment in which students can achieve at high levels.

www.nea.org/aew/

Kentucky Book Fair

The 24th annual Kentucky Book Fair is Nov. 12 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center in Frankfort.

Contact: Connie Crowe, (502) 564-8300, kybookfair@ky.gov

www.kybookfair.com/

Poster contest

The Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) encourages Kentucky students to participate in a national conservation poster contest. The theme for the 2005 poster contest is "Celebrate Conservation." The deadline is Oct. 31.

Contact: Betty Barrick at KACD, (270) 678-4235, bbarrick2002@yahoo.com

<http://nacdn.net.org/outreach/awards/poster2005.htm>

Thoroughbred Center

The Thoroughbred Center in Lexington has several upcoming productions suitable for school field trips. Performances are at 10 a.m. and noon.

"Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great" is a musical based on Judy Blume's popular novel. The play is suggested for grades 2-6. Performances are Nov. 10-11.

"Walk Two Moons" is a new play, suitable for grades 5 and up, based on Sharon Creech's Newbery-Medal-winning novel. Performances are Nov. 17-18.

Contact: Box office at (859) 293-1853

www.thethoroughbredcenter.com/theatre/schedule.asp

Resources

Kids Voting Kentucky

Election Day is Nov. 8. One way students can learn about the voting process is through Kids Voting Kentucky. It is a nonprofit, non-partisan program dedicated to civics education. It currently operates in seven counties and is looking to expand in more schools and districts.

A part of Kids Voting Kentucky is a mock election

that brings children to the polls to vote with their parents. Another component of Kids Voting Kentucky is the Civics Alive curriculum. K-12 teachers may access lesson plans online or from a CD-ROM. The Web site, www.kidsvotingky.com, is being refurbished and will be available in late October.

Contact: Mark Neikirk, (513) 352-2783, mneikirk@cincypost.com

Bulletin Board is compiled by Joy Barr
joy.barr@education.ky.gov

Commissioner's Comments

Kentucky schools offer stability to displaced students

By Gene Wilhoit

gene.wilhoit@education.ky.gov

As I write this column in mid-September, I'm surrounded by the images and sounds of America responding to one of this nation's worst natural disasters. Like most of you, I am transfixed by what I'm seeing on television and what I'm reading in the newspapers.

Hurricane Katrina has boldly scrawled her name in our history books. The devastation caused in just a few hours by this storm will not be addressed for weeks, months and perhaps years to come.

In the days following this disaster – in the midst of human suffering and sorrow – I was struck most by hearing the demands of people in New Orleans' Superdome and folks standing in rubble along the Mississippi and Alabama coastlines. They wanted food, water, a clean place to stay, and they wanted their children back in school.

Despite all they had lived through, many of these parents realized that the return to some semblance of "normal" life would be triggered by their children's return to school. They looked to the nation's public schools for the stability and structure they felt their children needed.

Kentucky responds

Kentucky communities already are reaching out to thousands of displaced families from the hurricane-ravaged states to provide shelter, food and jobs, and to help replace personal possessions. Likewise, our public schools are responding by providing their children with a quality education.

Like most other states, Kentucky stands ready to receive its share of the more than 370,000 students who do not have schools to return to in the Gulf Coast.

I have been touched by the stories of the displaced families who were pleasantly surprised by the ease with which they enrolled their children in Kentucky schools. The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, a part of 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, guides our efforts to quickly accommodate these children.

Eighteen Kentucky counties already operate programs for homeless children that are funded by this federal law. Before the hurricane, more than 13,000 Kentucky students, ages three through 21, were receiving services under the law.

Mary Marshall, a Kentucky Department of Education consultant, coordinates this federal program for our state. She works with countless district homeless education liaisons to provide services to children displaced by family circumstances beyond their control.

Basically, the federal law says schools must immediately enroll homeless children and youth. Families do not have to

provide school records, proof of immunization or medical information. The federal law also makes available to these students all programs and services (preschool, special education services, free-lunch program and many others) that are available to other public school students. Once identified as a homeless student, each is eligible for these services for the remainder of the school year.



Wilhoit

Also, displaced students who cannot attend school because of illness or disability must be provided services through homebound programs or access to course work via Internet programs like the Kentucky Virtual High School.

Enrollment should happen immediately when homeless students arrive in our schools – even children who have been separated from their parents or guardians. Students who are unaccompanied by an adult can enroll themselves in our schools under this law.

The McKinney-Vento Act is very student-focused and is designed to get children back in school and learning. It seeks to provide the stability and structure that parents in the disaster area are desperately seeking.

As you can see, this program greases the bureaucratic wheels to simplify a process that could be extremely frustrating to families who did not flee for their lives carrying birth certificates, school records and copies of immunization forms. It is a ray of hope to so many who have experienced the worst of government red tape in the days immediately following this disaster.

Mary tells me there are several steps Kentucky public school districts need to take to meet the requirements of the federal law:

- Each district should identify a homeless education liaison. In communities receiving large numbers of displaced families, Mary cautions this could become a full-time job for the school district.

- Once the homeless education liaison is identified, that person's name and contact information should be sent to Mary at mary.marshall@education.ky.gov.

- The liaison will be responsible for maintaining an accurate count of students identified as homeless in the district and entering that information in the appropriate drop-down box on STI, Kentucky's school data reporting system.

- As schools enroll homeless students, Mary advises that they document the enrollment on school letterhead with a simple statement like: "John Doe was enrolled Sept. 15, 2005, in our school." The person who enrolls the student should sign and date the statement. A copy of the statement should be given to the student

or family member and a copy should be kept at the school in the student's file.

Mary is in constant contact with her counterparts in the affected southern states. She said the Louisiana Department of Education in Baton Rouge and education officials in Mississippi are helping her locate records and information on students from those states. Alabama also is helping although its data is not as readily available at the state level.

Providing services

As children from these displaced families enroll in Kentucky public schools, I know you are ready to meet the academic, emotional and social needs of each student. You are making students feel welcome and part of their new schools. You are helping students adjust to new circumstances and cope with new situations.

Without records to guide educators, each district receiving homeless students must devise ways of assessing proper grade levels so that students can continue learning. They also must determine services and accommodations for students who previously had Individual Education Plans.

Our schools are responding in many ways to the newcomers. In Jefferson County, the district is soliciting donations of school supplies for the homeless students. Fayette County has welcomed homeless students to football teams and other extracurricular activities. Family Resource and Youth Services Centers in many districts are reaching out to the new families to provide services and help them make connections to the schools. Classes and school organizations across the state are making donations to national and local relief efforts for the homeless families.

And, we must not forget Kentucky students and staff members who have been disturbed by this disaster. We must make certain their needs are addressed, also.

Funding for new students

Kentucky Department of Education staff is working with federal officials to determine if there are funding sources available to districts that have influxes of children from the disaster area. We know at this point that Title I set-aside funds can be used to provide services for homeless students and that schools will receive Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funds for students displaced by the hurricane. Those funds probably will not be reported until November.

A learning experience

As a former social studies teacher, I cannot help but imagine the many learning opportunities teachers can incorporate in their classrooms to help students understand the enormity of this event on our nation. In that content area alone, each day's news headlines provide geography, history, economics, and civics and citizenship lessons.

While this is a disaster of epic proportions, it is not one that can weaken the American spirit. As we all work together to help our fellow Americans, we will find strength. As we go about doing our jobs as educators to Kentucky students and those countless school-age children who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina, I am sure we will end the day knowing we are making a difference. It's good to be a citizen of the commonwealth! It's good to be a Kentucky educator!

(To comment on this column, e-mail Commissioner Wilhoit at gene.wilhoit@education.ky.gov.)

Change your address? Let us know about it.

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active 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 or mailing information in one of two ways:

1. Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site. Enter www.education.ky.gov/jumfto/?ktrs in your Web browser.

2. Submit a written request that includes your old address, new address, Social Security number and signature.

Mail the form or 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@education.ky.gov or send your change of address information in writing to:

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

Fayette students create word problems for other students around the world to solve

By Cathy Lindsey

cathy.lindsey@education.ky.gov

When students in Fayette County first heard they were taking part in an IMMEX project, they may have mistakenly thought they would be creating movies for the extra-large IMAX screen. Instead, they are creating word problems that nurture critical-thinking and reasoning skills that will appear on computer screens.

Members of the district's Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) are working in partnership with the Interactive MultiMedia EXercises (IMMEX) project conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). The STLP members are helping develop educational problem scenarios that are available online to students and teachers nationwide. These problem-sets enhance and assess the user's problem-solving skills while integrating concepts of real-life situations.

"These students are participating in a project that is very real-world," said Fayette County STLP Coordinator Paula Whitmer. "It requires higher-order thinking skills, teamwork, creativity and clear communication. These are skills our students need when they enter the work force."

It takes teamwork

The local project, known as the IMMEX Fayette Consortium, consists of teams of students, teachers, local business representatives and higher education faculty. Some members of the teams meet for a two-week summer training to learn how to construct the complex problem-sets on Web pages. Each team's mission is to create interactive, problem-solving simulations that provide students with a foundation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

At this summer's training, 2005 Henry Clay High School graduate Erica Snipes led the sessions on how to set up a Web page. Snipes attended last summer's training as a team member and returned this year as an instructor. She said she found both the students and teachers to be eager learners.

"It's fun," Snipes said. "They're so interested in what they're doing, it makes it easy for them. We need to get more teachers involved in how to do it."

Students and teachers in these sessions will take what they learned back to their own schools and teach other students and teachers. The school teams then will work together to create more problem-sets.

"One of the main goals of STLP is student leadership," Whitmer said. "What better way to be a leader than to work with a teacher and create something for students around the world?"

How IMMEX works

Each problem-set challenges the user

to investigate a problem. It then provides various Internet links to resources that will help the user develop, test and refine a theory to arrive at the solution to the problem.

For example, in the Fayette County problem-set called "Mowing For Speed," the task is presented: It's Friday. You have to mow the front yard before you can do anything with your friends this weekend. The yard is a simple rectangular patch of grass with no obstacles. You can choose a riding mower or a walk-behind. Find the most efficient way to get the mowing completed in the least amount of time.

This particular problem-set offers links to information to solve the problem. The links provide geometry formulas, dimensions of the yard, stats of the mowers available, input from local experts, timing results from previous experiments and hints to help the user. These links help steer the user through the thought processes required to reach a viable solution.

The Fayette County STLP members send their completed problem-sets to UCLA where they are added to the IMMEX Web site. Because of the national accessibility, the STLP members develop problems using both Kentucky and national standards.

The National Science Foundation has provided a three-year grant to Fayette County Schools to sponsor this endeavor. STLP members and teachers from seven middle schools and three high schools in Fayette County are creating problem-sets for the IMMEX Web site. The goal is to produce 42 problem-sets within the three-year grant period. Now in the second year of the grant, the teams have completed 17 problem-sets.

"They are helping students and teachers in the classroom by creating highly engaging and motivational instructional activities that call for higher-level thinking," said Whitmer. "The teachers have a new resource for teaching content, which they did not have before."

IMMEX in the classroom

When used in the classroom, the IMMEX problem-sets engage students in scientific inquiry, distinguishing relevant information, planning search strategies, gathering information and reaching decisions that demonstrate understanding.

K-12 teachers can access the large and varied Web repository of problems at no cost. The assessment component of IMMEX allows teachers to evaluate students' content knowledge and reasoning skills by using the search path maps generated by the Web-based software.

When infused as part of regular classroom practice, IMMEX can track each of the actions that students make when attempting to solve a problem. IMMEX then records these actions for the teachers to view and analyze. This illustrates

how well each student understands specific concepts, Snipes said.

"What's cool about this is the technology involved in the metacognition, high-level thinking skills," said Lucinda Sanders, a technology resource teacher in Fayette County. "We don't do enough of that in the classroom. IMMEX encourages that."

Teachers can access the Fayette County problem-sets in two ways. To see previews, go to <http://teach.fcps.net/immex>

and click on "Problemset Preview" at the top of the screen. Click on the problem-set name to view each problem. You also can sign up to use the problem-sets by visiting the UCLA Web site's IMMEX page at www.immex.ucla.edu.

Contact: Paula Whitmer, (859) 381-4000, pwhitmer@fayette.k12.ky.us or Lucinda Sanders, (859) 381-4000 or lsanders@fayette.k12.ky.us



Photo by Rick McComb

Fayette County STLP members Zach Alfred, left, Victor Castro and Greg Ragland begin work as a team during a summer training session to create a problem-set that will be posted on the UCLA Web site's IMMEX page.



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@education.ky.gov

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

CTSOs promote student success

The Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) may be among Kentucky's best-kept secrets for giving middle and high school students opportunities to make connections between their classroom studies and their success in postsecondary education, the work force or the military. An integral part of the state's career and technical education program, these organizations help students focus on academic achievement, allow career exploration and preparation, develop leadership skills and facilitate smooth transitions to life after high school.

CTSOs can be powerful instructional tools for educators to help students develop career and personal skills. More than 50,000 Kentucky students currently participate in seven CTOS. Those organizations are DECA (marketing, management and entrepreneurship students); Future Business Leaders of America; Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (family and consumer sciences students); Health Occupations Students of America; FFA (agriculture education students); SkillsUSA (industrial education students) and Technology Student Association (TSA).

CTSO activities and programs are tied to classroom instruction and teaching core content in real-world applications. Each organization develops an annual program that requires students to use both technical and academic skills to solve problems during hands-on, challenging skills and leadership development competitions. CTSO members compete in local, regional, state and national contests for awards, college scholarships and personal recognition.

Lowell Cantrell, Project Lead the Way (PLTW)/pre-engineering teacher at Morgan County High School, credits the PLTW course work and TSA activities with moving students to higher academic levels. "Students are exposed to a rigorous curriculum that is taught at college-entry level," said Cantrell, who is a TSA advisor. "The curriculum and TSA activities are designed to allow students to solve 'real-world' problems that engineers encounter. They see the relationship between their academic subjects because the backbone of the PLTW curriculum is high-level mathematics and science inte-

grated with technology."

Additionally, student members are involved in community service projects, such as fundraising campaigns for a variety of national charities, as well as the



Morgan County High School students, Travis Cantrell, left, Kyle Wright and Brian Johnson, work on a project they created for the Kentucky Technology Student Association robotics competition.

Unite to Read program. More than 10,000 students participated last year in Unite to Read, a statewide literacy program designed by CTSO members to encourage lifelong reading among Kentucky youth.

These activities and CTOS programs are an integral part of classroom instruction. Career and technical education teachers collaborate with academic teachers in developing lesson plans and classroom activities, and in providing instruction that helps prepare students for competitions.

"As academic and career and technical education teachers work together, students can truly see the practical application of theory and how formulas and concepts are united in real-life situations," said Cynthia Smith, marketing education teacher and DECA advisor at Grayson County Area Technology Center. "In preparing for Unite to Read, our districts' instructional supervisors and curriculum coordinators work together with the student organizations in providing a very successful community project."

Campbell County Schools Superintendent Anthony Strong says CTOS help students beyond the rigor and relevance of course work. "Career and Technical Student Organizations give our students the opportunity to expand upon the instruction they receive in the classroom," he said.

"I believe I'm living proof that FFA develops premier leadership, personal growth and career success," said state Rep. Steven Rudy of western Kentucky. "I would not be where I am today had I not taken advantage of the

opportunities my agriculture teacher and this wonderful youth organization offers to members."

In addition, business and community leaders and parents participate in many student organization projects. They provide partnerships, serve as mentors and give support in career and leadership development. They also offer work-related experiences such as internships, cooperative programs and job shadowing.

To learn more about career and technical education, go to www.education.ky.gov and enter "CTE" in the keyword/search box in the upper right-hand corner. Contact Henry Lacy in the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Career and Technical Education at (502) 564-3775 or henry.lacy@education.ky.gov for information about starting a CTOS.

KSCPA grants and scholarships offered to teachers, students

Do you need additional funding for high school accounting projects? Are your accounting students interested in scholarships? Look no further than the

Kentucky Society of Certified Public Accountants (KSCPA).

The KSCPA offers educator grants to purchase classroom resource materials. In addition, the organization awards scholarships to high school seniors and selects high school students to participate in its summer learning program, BASE Camp (Business and Accounting Summer Education Camp).

High school educators can apply for KSCPA grants of up to \$500 to fund programs designed to promote educational excellence and relevance by connecting students in the classroom with the real world of business. These grants should be used to develop and implement new and innovative learning opportunities that:

- Integrate accounting and business in the classroom
- Support instruction and Kentucky content standards
- Provide replicable models of best practices
- Foster community and business collaboration
- Improve student achievement and learning

Programs for students

Graduating seniors with an interest in accounting who plan to attend a Kentucky college or university may qualify for the KSCPA's \$500 scholarships. The application deadline is March 1, 2006.

Each summer, KSCPA offers a free campus residency pro-

gram for high school juniors and seniors interested in learning more about the opportunities in business and accounting. BASE Camp is a weeklong program held in Louisville. It is designed to help students learn career and professional development skills while exploring opportunities in business and accounting.

For more information about these and other KSCPA programs, go to www.cpa2be.org or call Jenni Buckner, manager of accounting careers and development, toll free at (800) 292-1754.

Free teaching tools for educators at Think Inc.

The Think Inc. conference for high school teachers looking to jazz up their business and economics curriculum will be held Nov. 3 in Louisville. The Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE) and the Kentucky Society of Certified Public Accountants (KSCPA) are hosting the one-day event at the Yum! Brands corporate offices.

During the conference, the KSCPA will hold a concurrent session on two free business-related curricula. The "Taking Care of Business" I-Pack curriculum is a set of 15 lesson plans developed to enhance a business teacher's curriculum in basic business, accounting and personal finance.

"Money Means Business" is a set of 10 lesson plans that takes both teacher and students through the development of a product, as well as the marketing and financial aspects of developing the product. Participants also will learn about KSCPA scholarships, grants and the BASE Camp program. (See related story on this page.)

KCEE will present its "Take Stock in KY" stock market game and provide information on all print and online resources available free to Kentucky educators.

In addition, a panel of CPAs and business leaders in the community will answer questions about opportunities in the world of business and accounting. A "business challenge" will provide an activity that participants can take back and use in classrooms.

For more information about this event or to register, contact Jenni Buckner at (800) 292-1754 or jbuckner@kycpa.org. Online registration is available at www.cpa2be.org.



Angling for answers

Seventh-grader Corie Rice studies at a lab table in her science classroom under the watchful eye of a tarpon. The fish, caught 15 years ago by teacher Lisa Newcom's grandfather, is part of a wall display that reminds Burns Middle School (Davess County) science students to look for different ways to solve problems.

Photo by Rick McComb

Three schools recognized for programs that

By Cathy Lindsey

cathy.lindsey@education.ky.gov

At a time when state education leaders are focused on restructuring the high school experience, high quality teaching and learning in the middle grades could not be more important. A student's success in middle school can go a long way to help create a successful transition to high school and beyond.

"Middle-level education plays a huge role in the success of stu-

dents at the secondary level and beyond," said Julia Harmon, Kentucky Department of Education middle school consultant. "Rigor, relevance and relationships are the core principles behind good middle schools. Without one of these three components, students can begin to be disengaged with education."

Kentucky education leaders know that middle schools have to be the rock on which students can build their future

educational experiences in high school, postsecondary studies and the work force. So when schools do an exemplary job of providing support and success for middle school students, the Kentucky Schools To Watch program recognizes them. Three schools were chosen last spring as models of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity and organizational structures that sustain dynamic improvement and reform in their

middle grades.

Those Kentucky Schools To Watch are F.T. Burns Middle School in Daviess County, Northern Pulaski Middle School in Pulaski County and Olmstead School in Logan County. Each school was recognized as a model program with diverse populations that are well on the road to implementing the middle school vision and concept. Each understands the value of rigor, relevance and relationships, Harmon said.



Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit, at podium, addresses the audience at F.T. Burns Middle School to recognize the school's accomplishments.

Success has many definitions at F.T. Burns Middle School

Anyone at F.T. Burns Middle School will tell you there is no secret to its success – it's the people.

"We have a caring, dedicated and deeply committed staff that makes the difference," said Principal Mark Owens.

At Burns, students succeed because they are nurtured in an environment that expects and supports success. Success has many definitions at Burns. Programs such as Character Education, PRIDE and Community Involvement teach students that service to others and personal standards are just as important as science and reading.

Numerous programs at Burns ensure that all students feel they belong, and each is given opportunities to experience success. The Success Program addresses the needs of students experiencing academic difficulties. Students in this program operate a balloon business to finance field trips and other reward activities.

The Burns teaching team knows the middle school years are crucial to student development. Some students – at that awkward adolescent age – may feel they don't fit in anywhere. That's why science teacher Lisa Newcom created the Friends Club for students who are not members of any club and lack that sense of belonging.

"We all need to belong somewhere," Newcom said. "My goal is to help students develop friendships within this group first, then help them discover their interests so I can introduce them

to one of the other clubs and activities available at BMS."

Extracurricular activities, social events and innovative instructional programs are in place at Burns to engage its students in the educational process. Community involvement and active engagement are emphasized in a variety of school-wide events including the Science Expo, Art Fair, Cultural Festival and Reality Fair.

"We know our success is a reflection of the tremendous support we receive from our par-

ents, along with our community involvement programs," Owens said.

Burns also prides itself in its academic success as they continue to climb. The school's test results for the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) have shown significant improvement over the long term, averaging gains of six points each of the previous two years. The 2004 accountability cycle shows Burns meeting its goal with a biennium academic index of 90.3. The scores demon-

strated improvement in all content areas.

"We attribute our success in testing to our students and our dedicated staff," Owens said. "Our students have bought in to working hard and working together toward a common goal."

The Burns staff believes that school pride and tradition go a long way in perpetuating success, and that this kind of "extra mile" work ethic and an "it's about kids" attitude have made Burns Middle School one to watch.



Simon Chiu, a student at F.T. Burns Middle School (Daviess County), records information during science class.

Northern Pulaski forges its path

Northern Middle has made a remarkable turnaround in just three years. A Level 2 school in assistance in 2002, Northern was chosen as a School To Watch in 2005!

Principal Angela Murphy had no doubt that the hard work of the entire faculty and staff could forge a path to proficiency. She says she knew the school could become a high-performing middle school.

"There are many contributors to our success," said Murphy. "It takes everyone in the building – all of us – from administration to instructional aides."

Parents are involved. And the faculty communicates with them in many ways. Parents attend parent nights and parent-teacher conferences. Teachers send "good news" cards and monthly newsletters.

Northern Middle has an exemplary parent volunteer program that involves parents in classroom academic activities, school council committees and extracurricular programs. The school has been recognized as having the Kentucky Middle School Par-

How can we help their students prepare for future



Photos by Rick McComb

Principal Ben Kemplin, talks with students, faculty and guests during an assembly at Northern Pulaski Middle School as a School To Watch.

Northern Pulaski Middle School Commitment to proficiency

Principal Ben Kemplin, Volunteer of the Year for three years.

Character Education is a strong program that rewards students for outstanding achievements. It has been recognized as a model program across the state.

“One of our school’s strengths is recognizing and rewarding student and staff success,” Murphy said. “Our Renaissance Program has been instrumental in helping us celebrate achievements.”

The Renaissance Program uses rewards and recognition to generate motivation and commitment. It encourages improved morale and attendance for the students and staff. Those with perfect attendance have the opportunity to receive gifts donated from local merchants.

The Rewards Plus discipline program is another component of the Renaissance Program. Students earning all A’s and B’s are awarded a silver card at the end of each grading period. This card offers special discounts at local businesses. Students earning straight A’s receive a gold

card. This card works as a hall pass as well as a special discount card.

Another component of the Renaissance program is the Straight A campaign. The goal is to keep everyone motivated to do their best by recognizing and celebrating student and staff success. The Straight A campaign promotes the notion that “Attendance + Attitude + Academics = Achievement.”

“The Renaissance Program is a great tool to help reward those students and staff who put the extra effort in their daily routine,” said Shelly Hargis, Northern Middle School assistant principal.

Northern Middle School is unique as a School To Watch in that it is a school in progression. Northern Middle surpassed its CATS goal for the 2004 biennium with an accountability index of 75.0. Northern Middle has moved from assistance to a Progressing Novice Reduction School, and that’s why it is a School To Watch.

Commitment to excellence for all students drives Olmstead School programs

Faculty members at Olmstead School say that dedication and a commitment to excellence in educating all students drives every activity, every school decision and every strategy for high achievement. This means nurturing the development of the whole student – academically, socially, emotionally and physically.

“A successful school is made by people who care about students and seeing them achieve,” said Principal Ben Kemplin. “We value the individual student, the whole child, and focus on our students’ individual needs, personal successes and feelings of self-worth.”

Olmstead’s early focus on teaching behavior sets the tone for learning school-wide. The school uses the CHAMPS behavior model that includes role modeling, peer modeling and exploring positive alternative behaviors to set the tone for learning school-wide.

“Having the students’ attention and respect is half the battle,” Kemplin said. “If you have that, then you can get them involved in the learning process.”

Olmstead is one of 10 pilot

sites for the Model Schools Program called KIDS. This program focuses on teaching positive behaviors to students by honoring individual differences. It also encourages building relationships among students and between students and teachers that support the values of dignity and respect.

High expectations for school success drive the entire Olmstead learning community to the ultimate goal of proficiency.

“Failure is simply not an option at Olmstead School,” Kemplin said. “Our teachers are dili-

gent in their efforts to see that every student reaches his or her fullest potential.”

countability goal with a score of 85.0 for the 2004 biennium. The school’s results exceed state and district averages in all content areas by as much as 23 points.

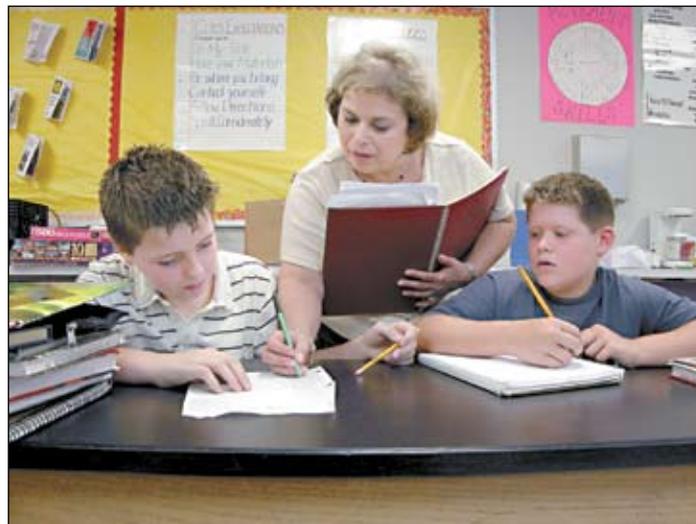
“To the public, these are mere numbers,” Kemplin said. “To us they represent more stories of student success.”

Instruction at Olmstead focuses on the student. Classrooms no longer have desks in rows, but rather clusters of desks to promote effective cooperative learning. The assignments are no longer generated solely from textbooks, but are often performance-based events that allow students the choice on how to demonstrate their mastery of the content.

“Students know that we are going to be behind them all the way and that our expectations are high,” Kemplin said.

Student-centered instruction, differentiation, student choice, inquiry and community support are just a few examples of the practices at Olmstead.

These strategies have sustained and further support student success and have made Olmstead a School To Watch.



Daniel Sharp, right, benefits from listening to Olmstead School (Logan County) mathematics teacher Mary Lou Harper explain an important step in solving a problem to Caleb Dawson.

Olmstead is approximately 10 points above its CATS ac-

Kentucky Schools To Watch program

In 1999, the National Forum to Accelerate the Middle-Grades Reform began a national program to identify outstanding middle schools.

In 2002, the National Forum launched its Schools To Watch state program. Kentucky is one of 11 states that now recognize high-performing middle schools through a state program.

The Kentucky 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 the Middle-Grades Reform.

The Schools To Watch program supports and recognizes exemplary middle schools that may serve as models of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity and organizational structures that sustain dynamic improvement and reform.

The deadline to apply for the 2006 Schools To Watch program is Oct. 17, 2005.

For more information about the Schools To Watch program, contact Kentucky Department of Education middle school consultants Julia Harmon at julia.harmon@education.ky.gov or Joni Crowe at joni.crowe@education.ky.gov or (502) 564-4772.

Kenton County teacher finds relying less on textbooks and more on other sources improves teaching, learning

By Kristy Molony

Kenton County Schools

I was trained to teach using textbooks. I lectured, and the students memorized. I gave tests, and then we moved on. I knew they memorized, but I always questioned if they retained.

Then I was invited to join the Kenton County School District Disciplinary Literacy Cadre of Teachers. The cadre is composed of teachers in all content areas from every school in the district to implement disciplinary literacy in all classrooms.

The premise was intriguing: that student learning would be more engaging and relevant. Using these strategies, we were told, would allow every student — not just the highly motivated — to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

During our sessions, we learned how to teach with primary sources and to rely less on textbooks. My first thought was, “How time-consuming this will be! I don’t have enough time to teach, prepare, grade papers, counsel students, sit on committees and meet with parents.”

However, I was intrigued by the assurances that I could teach students in a way that they would develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Could I get my students to mentally feel and experience the anguish and triumphs of past civilizations? Could I move students from reading textbooks full of historical events interpreted by various authors with differing viewpoints to interpreting the material for themselves?

Could the students experience and empathize with the primary source? As a social studies teacher, I am passionate in my belief that students need to understand that often history repeats itself. They need to understand that history can be directly associated to the present and, in some cases, predict the future.

So, I decided to give primary sources a try. I opened my textbooks and chose events that I thought would “grab” my high school students.

The Internet became my tool for finding primary sources. I was amazed and surprised at how easily I found good sources and how many primary sources I found. Google, Dogpile and Britannica are Web search engines I used to develop my library of primary sources. This part of the process was time-consuming because I had to choose sources carefully to make sure they are appropriate for my students.

I revamped my history notes and the

mation to conceptual. Students began to understand the mindset of the people they were studying. Students read devastating things, such as tyranny and revolution, and truly felt it.

The Romanovs weren’t fictional characters; they were real people. We cannot empathize with historical figures unless we are able to experience their feelings. Using primary sources is as close as we can get to understanding those feelings.

My students asked questions: What drove the peasants to stand up for themselves against the elite and how can that event relate to today? What would it have been like to be the Czar’s daughters during their teenage years? What would it have been like to fear for their lives because of their lineage?

Although teenagers seem to focus on the assassination of the Romanov family,

the account of one of the assassins, Yakov Yurovsky. He wrote in vivid detail about how the murders were planned and carried out.

It was riveting to watch students react as history unfolded, especially once they understood that these were real people. This is the major difference between teaching from a textbook and teaching with primary sources. The students are active learners, deciphering and conceptually understanding for themselves. They become the historians.

Imagine their excitement last spring when the Romanov family treasures were on exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum. My students got to view first-hand many of the documents we had examined in class!

I want to encourage teachers to try teaching with primary sources. Begin by taking one of your most favorite units and read about it more in-depth. Chart the concepts students can experience and then research them. Collecting the documents is a challenge, but worth the work.

Go to the Internet; don’t reinvent the wheel. The sources are out there. The Kentucky Department of Education and Kenton County Schools’ Web sites have links to many content resources.

Have an open mind to the possibility that there could be a better way to teach than how you have taught all these years. Compile the primary sources, learn with your students, be as active a learner as you expect them to be.

Remember that the primary sources may be more difficult to read because of language and sentence structure. But, if you decipher as a group, you learn as a group. Chart the ideas as your students discover them, and then relate the ideas to the primary sources.

Once you use primary sources in your classroom, I know you’ll experience teaching in a more meaningful way than you ever thought possible.

(Kristy Molony is a social studies teacher at Dixie Heights High School in Kenton County. Contact her for more information at (859) 341-7650 or by e-mail at kmolony@kenton.k12.ky.us.)

“Students were engaged ... Even I experienced history in an entirely different way!”



Dixie Heights High School teacher Kristy Molony and Jarred Lucas talk about something he was reading from a primary source in world civilization class. James Moore, left, listens to their discussion as other class members work on their assignment at the Kenton County school.

way I was teaching core content. Then, I developed essential questions toward the core content so the connections would be there.

Once I began using primary sources in my classroom, something wonderful started to happen. Students were engaged. Heads did not hit the desks. Eyes were open. Even I experienced history in an entirely different way!

History went from sequential infor-

I first tried to get my students to understand the realness of these historical figures. Much of this work was done in small groups. I had students review a PowerPoint document on each family member that I prepared from my research. They learned about the family’s likes and characteristics — personal information.

Together, we sifted through first-hand documents written by family members and those close to the events. I included

ONLINE from Page 1

register online. Fees for courses and programs vary.

Participants in KyEducators.org online programs and courses can access information from the Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL). Some courses are supplemented with information on CD-ROMs, which are mailed to educators. Technical assistance is available online and toll free by phone 24-hours a day, seven days a week from the Tech Help Desk.

While the KyEducators.org site offers a variety of online programs and courses, several are targeted to specific groups of Kentucky teachers who are seeking rank changes, national board certification or principal certification. Courses are available for members of the KTIP committees that help and mentor first-year teachers.

Educators with emergency certification in special education can receive professional development credit for three modules: Introduction to Special Education, Learning and Behavior Disorders, and Behavior Management of Children with Disabilities. Fourteen "mini" modules cover a variety of special education topics.

Another online course is tailored to pro-

vide teachers who are new to Kentucky with information about education reform, legal responsibilities and education documents that drive instruction. Likewise, there is a course designed to help substitute teachers learn basic classroom management skills.

One of the attractions to KyEducators.org's professional development courses, said Kaplan, is that educators can begin at anytime during the year. They also can register and pay fees online for all courses.

KyEducators.org also offers 50 modules, developed through Indiana University's School of Education, that focus on strategies for integrating technology in all content areas. In addition, the University of Kentucky Department of Physics and Astronomy and the Kentucky Virtual University offer a 12-hour course for intermediate and middle school science teachers. A materials kit must be purchased so teachers can conduct experiments at their own sites.

www.kvhs.org

For 13 semesters, the Kentucky Department of Education has been offering interesting and challenging courses for

secondary school students online through KVHS. For nearly that long, educators have had access to online "anywhere, any time" professional development at www.kvhs.org. KVHS offers the Kentucky-specific professional development tools free or for a fee, depending on the course selected.

The KVHS online professional development courses are scheduled for seven weeks each semester. Teachers can earn up to 12 professional development hours for each class. Administrators can earn Effective Instructional Leadership Act (EILA) credits. Registration for the first spring 2006 sessions opens Nov. 1. Courses begin Jan. 16, 2006.

Professional educators facilitate each KVHS course and are available to answer student questions. Course members can interact with one another via course e-mail and message boards.

Educators participating in the online professional development find the courses worthwhile and engaging, said Bob Fortney, KVHS professional development consultant. "Nearly 79 percent of the educators taking online summer PD courses spent more time in their courses than

is required to complete them," he said. "They liked the ability to direct their own learning and spent three to four times the required time really studying what they wanted to learn more about in the course."

KVHS offers courses to help educators integrate technology in their content instruction. "Teaching All Students" is a series of nine modules to help emergency/probationary special education teachers in content, managing student behaviors, collaboration with regular classroom teachers and assistive technology.

In addition, KVHS has training courses for school based decision making council members. New and existing member training is available, as is online training for principal selection.

For more information about the online course offerings at both Web sites, go to KyEducators.org and www.kvhs.org. Contact: Chela Kaplan about KyEducators.org at (502) 564-4604, or toll free at (888) 598-7667, epsbkyed@ky.gov; contact Bob Fortney about KVHS courses toll free at (866) 432-0008, bob.fortney@education.ky.gov

NEW from Page 1

the student's academic success.

Drug abuse violations are on the rise in Kentucky's schools. According to the 2004 Safe Schools Data report, drug abuse violations account for the largest number of disciplinary actions for Part I and II law violations in schools.

At the September "Safe Schools — Successful Students" Conference, student drug use and school-based drug programs were key topics of conversation.

"In order to start solving a problem," said Jon Akers, director of the Kentucky Center for School Safety, "you must acknowledge it first."

Kentucky's drug situation is a problem that continues to get worse, especially in middle schools, Akers said. According to the 2004 Youth Behavior Risk Survey, Kentucky students use marijuana at about the same levels as their peers across the country. The same report shows Kentucky students using inhalants at rates much higher than students in other parts of the nation. Methamphetamine use is at about twice the level of students in other areas.

Most schools use a variety of methods to inform students of the dangers of substance abuse. Drug prevention is discussed during health classes. Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) is an organization that encourages students to help other students make positive decisions. School resource officers work with local law enforcement to conduct random

locker searches.

Forty-six Kentucky school districts currently conduct random drug tests for students involved in athletics and extracurricular activities, according to Akers. While student drug testing could be a valuable tool in identifying students to provide drug counseling and mental health services, it should not be used to identify students for disciplinary actions, Akers said.

"When a child is using drugs, it's just a mask for another problem," he said. "As educators, it is our responsibility to provide a safe school environment and help students work through these problems in order to be successful in school and life."

Akers offers these suggestions to educators:

- Teachers need training about the latest drug trends among teens.
- Schools should have administrative support and a well-defined procedure in place when drug use is suspected.
- Schools should keep the parents and guardians involved.

For more information about the drug prevention pilot program in Eastern Kentucky schools, contact Heather Wainscott at (502) 564-7554, Heather.Wainscott@ky.gov. For more information about school-based drug programs, contact Jon Akers toll free at (877) 805-4277, Jon.Akers@eku.edu.



Photo by Rick McComb

Following the story

Sitting cross-legged in a comfortable chair, first-year primary student Dylan Wilson moves his finger across the page of a book as he reads in his classroom at Olmstead Elementary School (Logan County).

KTLC from Page 1

hour workshop on Kentucky's Successful Practices Alliance. He will discuss the goals of the Alliance and lay out a series of initiatives that can move Kentucky schools from promising to proven models of success.

The Alliance is part of the state's Refocusing Secondary Education Initiative. It is providing 75 Kentucky high schools and their feeder middle schools with instructional resources, strategies and support to prepare students for the next level of learning in college and the work force.

Conference participants will have several opportunities to hear Hall, who has helped create 21st century learning centers throughout Georgia. He will share

programs on the integration of technology across the curriculum, 1:1 initiatives and high school transition programs.

There will be something for everyone at KTLC '06 — both individuals and school/district teams comprised of administrators, teachers, council members and parents. The wide range of conference topics — from literacy to technology to special education to content-specific programs — will provide schools and districts with strategies that can be taken home and put into practice.

For conference and registration information, go to www.kentuckytlc.org. Registration for KTLC '06 opens in November.

Safe Schools Week

Kentucky's Safe Schools Week is Oct. 16-22. For more information, visit www.kysafeschools.org/clear/ssweek/index.html or contact Doris Settles, Kentucky Center for School Safety clearinghouse director, at (859) 257-9105, ddsettl@uky.edu.

Students find relevance in science classes

By Joy Barr

joy.barr@education.ky.gov

Most students are naturally curious and interested in learning about the world around them. "But, somewhere along the way, some lose that zeal for learning and asking questions. I try to reinvigorate them and show them that science is relevant, from their future jobs to the candidates they elect to office," said Greg French, an introductory chemistry and physics teacher at Woodford County High School (WCHS).

French's ability to make his classes relevant and interesting led to his being named one of only 19 teachers in the country to receive a 2005 Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. Peggy Welch, a science teacher at West Jessamine High

ence because science is most definitely not boring," said French.

"Mr. French is an outstanding instructor. Learning in his classroom is meaningful and students are engaged in challenging work. He focuses on student achievement and brings excitement to learning science," said Sam Watkins, district instructional supervisor and former WCHS principal. "Learning is focused on real-world issues that students can identify with and easily understand."

French believes his role as a science educator is to improve scientific literacy by encouraging his students to explore and understand the world in which they live.

He wants his students to make connections with the concepts he teaches. "I want

a sheet of newspaper to having students learn penny tricks.

"Mr. French was one of those special teachers who could keep order in a classroom without raising his voice. I think students learn a lot more in a classroom where they feel safe and believe their opinions will be respected. The atmosphere there encouraged students to open up and be themselves," Jacobs stated.

French uses activities that appeal to the different learning styles of his students. He allows students to develop and articulate their understanding of concepts through reading comprehension passages, calculations, experimental design, arts and writing.

"I can't say this about any other teacher I've ever had, but I actually looked for-

on learning. Many students send him notes of thanks. Another former student wrote, "I really enjoyed your class this year, and you inspired me to explore and to understand the complex subject of physical science. You helped me gain the ability to exercise my knowledge and apply it in the future. It was a humbling and fun-filled experience with lots of laughs."

Beyond educating students in the classroom, French also has headed up several initiatives to put technology in the hands of students and teachers. In his classroom, he often uses Web pages and multimedia presentations to communicate with students and their parents.

French is driven by the thought that the future of scientific discovery and progress lies in the hands of the very students he teaches on a daily basis. "I want students to have the same appreciation for the interconnectedness of our world as I do, and I want Americans to be scientifically literate voters so they can make wise and informed choices in the future, regardless of their career path," he said.

Contact: Greg French at Woodford County High School, (859) 873-5434, g french@woodford.k12.ky.us



Photo by Rick McComb

Woodford County High School science teacher Greg French watches as freshman Katherine James demonstrates her understanding of a concept in advanced integrated science class.

School (Jessamine County) is the other Kentucky teacher to receive the award.

Sarah Jacobs, a WCHS sophomore, recommended French for the Amgen award. "I have always been pretty good at science, but until I got into Mr. French's class, I didn't like it very much. Mr. French made science interesting and fun," said Jacobs.

"After reading the letter that Sarah wrote on my behalf, I was reminded of why I chose to become a science teacher. I knew that it would be fun and that I could make learning about our world fun. And, hopefully, I could turn students onto a subject that is often viewed as boring, if not feared by many students. I strive to rid my classes of boring approaches to sci-

ence to recognize that science is not just memorizing facts; it is understanding the interconnectedness of our world," he said.

"In his class, we did lots of hands-on experiments and demonstrations. He instilled in me a greater appreciation of science. His class always put me in a good mood. But the things I appreciated most about Mr. French were his creativity and his enthusiasm for the concepts he was teaching us," said Jacobs, his former student.

French involves students in the teaching and learning process. For instance, when teaching about the concept of inertia, he uses a series of demonstrations ranging from breaking a stick using only

ward to Mr. French's tests. He would make up zany questions for us to answer. These questions still made sure that we knew the concepts, but they were interesting as well," said Jacobs.

"I don't mean to say that Mr. French's class was easy — exactly the opposite. It was an advanced class, and we did a lot of challenging things," she continued. "Mr. French didn't want us to just learn the concepts — he wanted us to apply what we'd learned. He showed me that school could be entertaining and educational, a lesson I'm glad I learned because I can apply it to my other classes."

Sarah isn't the only student to let French know his teaching had an impact

About the award

Amgen Inc., the world's largest biotechnology company, recognizes extraordinary science teachers in K-12 public and private schools in communities where Amgen operates. Recipients of the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence are teachers whose exemplary science teaching has had demonstrated results in student learning. Two teachers in Kentucky received the 2005 Amgen award: Greg French of Woodford County High School, and Peggy Welch of West Jessamine High School (Jessamine County).

Since the award program's inception in 1992, Amgen has given more than \$1 million to educators who have made exceptional science-teaching contributions and who have had a measurable impact on the lives of their students.

Award recipients receive an unrestricted cash award of \$5,000 and a restricted \$5,000 cash grant to the school for the expansion or enhancement of a school science program, science resources or the professional development of the school's science teachers. Recipients also have an opportunity to share best practices with other award winners and colleagues via an online forum.

For more information about the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence program, visit www.amgen.com/citizenship/aaste.html on the Internet.

Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr
joy.barr@education.ky.gov

FEA state conference

The Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Educator Quality and Diversity will host its third annual Future Educators of America (FEA) conference Nov. 17-18 at the Louisville Marriott Downtown. The theme for this year's conference is "Fulfill the Dream — Teach!"

The Division of Educator Quality and Diversity strives to recruit highly qualified individuals into teaching, improve the quality of teacher education and encourage minority candidates to enter teaching. Its staff also provide assistance to current teachers through collaboration with colleges and academic departments and local school districts.

Between 1,200-1,500 students aspiring to become teachers and educators are expected at the conference. Kentucky has the most chartered FEA chapters in the nation. The state goal is to have chartered chapters in every high school by 2007 and every middle school by 2011.

For more information about the conference or about starting an FEA chapter, contact Jennifer Miller at (502) 564-1479, jennifer.miller@education.ky.gov.

Parental involvement initiative announced

The Prichard Committee's Center for Parent Leadership and the Appalachian Mathematics and Science Partnership (AMSP) have announced an initiative to emphasize parental involvement in science and mathematics education. The program will develop and provide training for educators at 51 schools in Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia that have been identified as 'baseline improvement' schools. These schools will receive special programs and services from the initiative.

The first training, "A Powerful Alliance: Educators and Parents," will teach up to 30 parents and educators how to link parental involvement to improved academic achievement and determine how well educators respond to that involvement.

www.prichardcommittee.org

Kentucky ACT scores improve slightly in 2005

Kentucky high school students slightly improved their scores on the ACT college admission test this year, but continue to trail the national averages. The average Kentucky composite score from the four sections of the test was 20.4 for the 29,943 students who took the exam. That's up from 20.3 the year before. The increase reflects a continuing trend of slight growth since 2002, when the state score was 20.0.

The average scores for Kentucky students who took college preparatory classes was significantly higher — 21.1 out of a

possible 36. Students who took a less-demanding course load scored 19.1.

Overall, Kentucky scores were lower than national averages across the board in English, mathematics, reading and science.

www.act.org/news/data/05/index.html

KCSVO offers schools help with volunteer programs

Do you see needs in your school that are not being met? Do your teachers need extra help? Do the students need extra tutoring? Does a child need a mentor?

Did you know that a structured volunteer program can help your school meet these and other needs?

The Kentucky Coalition of School Volunteers Organization (KCSVO) invites schools to join its organization to learn more about establishing and maintaining school volunteer programs. The organization also offers an annual conference and recognition program for volunteers, as well as district workshops geared to the needs of local schools.

For information about membership or KCSVO products and services, contact Nellie Gooden, (270) 678-4004, ngooden@barren.k12.ky.us.

HSE application deadline is Oct. 31

Have you considered taking your leadership and instructional skills to a new

level? Are you looking for an opportunity to share your valuable professional experiences with children and colleagues across Kentucky? Would you have an interest in continuing your lifelong learning in a new venue?

The Kentucky Highly Skilled Educator Program may be for you. This cadre of education professionals works with Kentucky schools to improve teaching and learning in new and innovative ways. Applications are being accepted for the 2006-2007 cadre through Oct. 31, 2005.

For more information and access to the application, go to www.education.ky.gov and click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the upper right-hand corner. Select "Highly Skilled Educators" from the list and click.

PD for principals

The Kentucky Association of Elementary School Principals (KAESP) will hold its fall conference Nov. 13-15 at the Galt House in Louisville.

www.kaesp.org/pdev.htm

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) will hold its 85th annual convention March 31-April 4, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas. "Take the Reins of Leadership" is designed to offer programs and resources to inspire, motivate and educate elementary principals.

<http://web.naesp.org/conv2006/>

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) had plans to hold its 90th annual convention March 17-19, 2006, in New Orleans, La. A decision

will be made by Oct. 1, 2005, as to the status and location of the conference.

www.nasspconvention.org/home.htm

Poll gauges attitudes toward public schools

Phi Delta Kappa, the international professional educators' organization, released its 37th annual poll of the public's attitude toward public schools. The survey included 1,000 respondents and was conducted in June 2005.

This year, two of the poll's conclusions stand out:

- Overwhelming support for closing the achievement gap — respondents believe that the gap can be closed and that it can be done within the current system. Most believe that the gap is not the fault of schools, noting that parents and students are responsible for what children learn.

- Dislike of the strategies of the No Child Left Behind Act — a majority of respondents say that test results in mathematics and reading do not give a complete picture of a school's performance. Eighty-two percent of those responding say they are concerned that the emphasis on those two subjects will lead to less emphasis on other subjects. Most say that, rather than transferring their children from a school needing improvement, they would prefer to have additional help in their children's current schools.

www.pdkintl.org/



Photo by Tim S. Thornberry, Education Cabinet

Recognizing school success

Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Stephen Daeschner, far left, Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit, Gov. Ernie Fletcher, Education Cabinet Secretary Virginia Fox and Atherton High School Principal John Hudson participate in a panel discussion with teachers and parents at Atherton High School (Jefferson County) to talk about the school's strategies for increasing student achievement. Atherton was the first stop in a series of public school visits the governor and state education leaders are making this school year to recognize outstanding school improvement. Atherton's results on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System increased 13.8 points between 2001 and 2004.

Work experiences build independence for students



By Joy Barr

joy.barr@education.ky.gov

Giving students the building blocks to independence and self-sufficiency is an important mission at the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB). The school's goal is to empower students with the knowledge, attitude and skills to assume responsible roles in society and to lead fulfilling lives.

Located in Louisville, KSB provides services to Kentuckians from birth to age 21 who are blind and visually impaired. KSB was the third state-supported school for the blind established in the United States.

The school's comprehensive educational program follows the Kentucky Department of Education's Program of Studies. However, along with studying the basic academic subjects, students take courses that help them develop skills that promote independence in and out of the classroom.

KSB students on alternative assessment can enroll in the high school community-based instruction program. The program gives students an opportunity to participate in real-world applications of learning — both in and out of school.

"The students here study the same subjects that all high school students in Kentucky study. Plus they learn basic job skills to encourage them to become more independent," said Connie Hill, who teaches the course.

KSB seeks to provide its students with real-world applications for their classroom studies. Repetition and patterning are very important to the students, Hill explained. They follow a detailed schedule and have nightly homework.

"What the students do on a weekly basis above and beyond the classroom is so positive and motivating," said Sara Villavicencio, the Highly Skilled Educator assigned to KSB last year. "Connie always puts her students

first, not only in their present experience, but for their future."

Each year, KSB high school students update their Individual Education Plans (IEP) in collaboration with parents, teachers and school administrators. Together, they coordinate the student's progress and set goals for the future. Each student completes an alternate portfolio, which is a collection of work over a three-year period and is a "true reflection of the student's work," says Hill.

Active teaching and learning experiences are the norm in KSB's specialized environment ... every child is valued, she added. Some students may attend Jefferson County Public Schools for part of the school day. This cooperative agreement between KSB and the local school district offers students

a broader range of academic and vocational courses. It also allows them to interact with students who are not visually impaired.

KSB students who have special needs in the areas of functional development and practical living can enroll in community-based instruction classes. Students gain experience and confidence from direct instruction in a variety of community environments. They learn to integrate skills as they perform real work activities. Instructional areas include community and domestic functions, and vocational and recreational/leisure skills.

"Connie is able to analyze a student's strengths and match those strengths to a job in the community. She has a great rapport with the students and the local businesses. She is continually looking for new positions for the students within the community. If a new business is opening in the area, she is there within the week investigating the opportunities for our students," said Jeanette Wicker, KSB principal.

On campus, students put together boxes for a bakery across the street from the school. They also stuff bags with crayons and coloring books for a Bob Evans restaurant.

Off campus, one group of students works at the Hard Rock Café. They wrap silverware in napkins, clean the dessert and beverage menus, and wipe down

furniture at the restaurant.

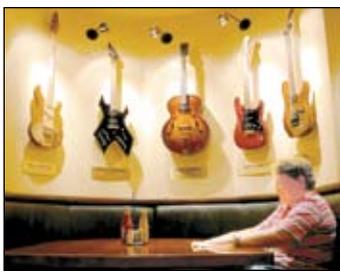
Another group folds linens for a Ramada Inn. Some students work at a recycling center (weather permitting) unloading newspaper bundles from cars and placing them in bins. Before Christmas, students make weekly trips to the post office to

buy stamps and mail packages for the faculty and staff. Two students also work at the local transportation center counting and shredding tickets.

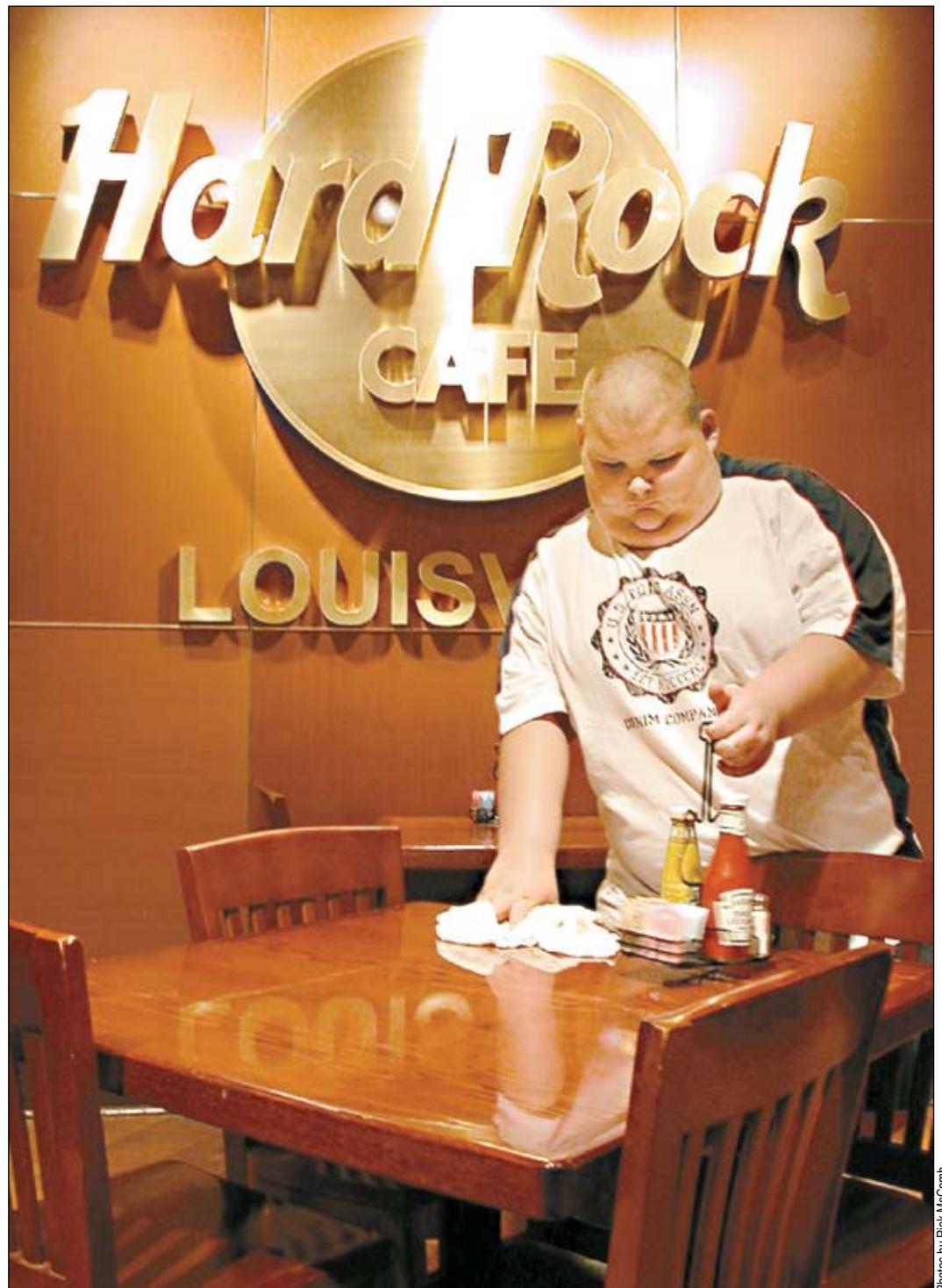
At KSB, all of the jobs are voluntary, but give the students valuable work experience, said Hill. And the support from the

community is tremendous. These partnerships have helped students learn practical job skills that can help them now and in the future.

Contact: Connie Hill at the Kentucky School for the Blind, (502) 897-1583, chill@ksb.k12.ky.us



Danielle Dodson, a KSB student, is surrounded by guitars as she works at the Hard Rock Café.



KSB student Patrick Knox makes certain the tables at Louisville's Hard Rock Café are clean and ready for the day's customers.



Kentucky
Teacher

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lexington, Kentucky
Permit No. 1