

Kentucky Teacher

August 2010

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Mason County Middle School offers learning in the great outdoors

Page 9

What's Inside

- 4** Budget tight for education, may get tighter
- 5** Graduation 2010 part of Daviess County identity
- 6** Experienced teachers give KTIPs to first-year counterparts

- 7** Students, teachers adapting to technology advancements
- 8** Beyond bits and bytes
- 10** GPS, GIS tools guide students through surroundings

- 11** Miles Elementary goes to standards-based grading
- 12** Book serves as guide to effective dance instruction

Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Front cover: Grant Felice gives instructions to his 7th-grade science class after it observed animal tracks along a wooded path in the outdoor classroom area at Mason County Middle School. Photo by Amy Wallot

Beshear appoints members to State Board of Education

Gov. Steve Beshear recently reappointed two members and named five new members to the Kentucky Board of Education.

The appointees are:

- Jonathan Parrent, of Caldwell County, will represent the 1st Supreme Court District. He is the dean of student affairs at Madisonville Community College and works with regional high school students to improve college and career readiness.
- William L. Twyman, of Barren County, will represent the 2nd Supreme Court District. He is a former educator and national Milken Educator award winner. He works with the consulting firm Educational Directions.
- Roger L. Marcum, of Nelson County, will represent the 3rd Supreme Court District. He is a former principal, superintendent and national Milken Educator award winner. In 2006, he was named superintendent of the year by the Kentucky School Boards Association. He is the executive vice president of St. Catharine College in Springfield.
- Mary Gwen Wheeler, of Jefferson County, will represent the 4th Supreme Court District. She is senior policy adviser on education and youth with the Louisville Metro Government. She is a member of the Jefferson County Public Education Foundation and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence.

- Martha M. Jones, of Boyd will represent the 7th Supreme Court District. She is a former social worker and continuing education counselor. She also previously worked with Friends of the Children, a non-profit organization in Ashland, to assist disadvantaged schoolchildren.

Beshear also reappointed C.B. Akins Sr. of Fayette County and Judith H. Gibbons of Kenton County.

The seven appointees' terms expire April 14, 2014.

MORE INFO...

<http://bit.ly/KyBdEd>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Quick mathematics

Teacher Ladonna Rascoe congratulates Cassius Britt after he finished 100 mathematics problems in less than five minutes during Rascoe's 2nd-grade class at South Green Elementary School (Glasgow Independent).

KDE, Microsoft deploy Live@edu

The Kentucky Department of Education has switched its online communications to Microsoft's Live@edu system, which impacts more than 700,000 students, faculty and staff statewide. Live@edu is a suite of services that provides e-mail, calendaring as well as collaboration tools and services, information retrieval and more through cloud-based technology. The system is expected to save the state \$6.3 million over four years in operational costs and was deployed in May.

Live@edu is based on the familiar Microsoft technologies many people use. With Live@edu, students, teachers, administrators and district staff can access information in the cloud virtually anytime, anywhere, through popular Web browsers and from any Internet-connected personal computer or mobile device such as a cell phone.

"With Live@edu, all school districts in Kentucky have access to the same powerful Microsoft applications and Web 2.0 technologies. That means we can close the technology gap between rich and poor districts and level the playing field for students regardless of where they live," said Terry Holliday, commissioner of education. "Because they are 'in the cloud,' Kentucky schools will always stay up-to-date with the latest innovations. And the features are far greater than anything we could have afforded to offer to every school in Kentucky."

"Kentucky is getting a world-class communications and collaboration infrastructure that is dependable and highly secure," said Sig Behrens, general manager for U.S. Education at Microsoft. "With single sign-on, Live@edu integrates with existing school systems, including school portals, allowing people to access all content with one identity that makes it easier to accomplish their work. More important, Live@edu will help transform the learning environment by extending education opportunities beyond the traditional classroom walls and help students master the technology they will use in their future careers."

MORE INFO...

www.microsoft.com/liveatedu

New school year brings transition for teachers, KDE

A new school year is beginning for Kentucky teachers and students. There's a lot going on, and I'd like to take this opportunity to give you the highlights of where we are and where we're heading this coming school year.

KDE reorganization

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is embarking on a new model of organization that is designed to make the agency more streamlined and efficient and to help provide services more effectively. This model enables the agency to directly address priorities related to Senate Bill 1 (SB1) and other legislative mandates, Kentucky's Race to the Top application and the Kentucky Board of Education's strategic plan. The highlights of this model include:



Holliday

- a structure that provides more direct reporting to the commissioner of education from KDE offices
- a logical distribution of programs, projects and teams based upon KDE's core, guiding and support processes
- grouping of efforts that address common activities and issues

The proposed new organizational model will enable the agency to target the areas of greatest importance and provide the services schools and districts need to ensure student success, while complying with additional budget reductions required by the biennial budget shortfall.

Biennial budget

In late May, the General Assembly passed a \$17.3 billion biennial budget. Some highlights of the budget are:

- Many KDE programs will see a 3.5 percent cut from current levels in fiscal year 2011 and an additional 1 percent cut in fiscal year 2012 (for a total cut of 4.5 percent from current levels in 2012).
- Schools are required to provide the equivalent of 177 six-hour instructional days in each fiscal year.
- SEEK is funded at a per-pupil amount of \$3,868 in 2011 and \$3,903 in 2012.
- KDE must have a regulation for "innovative alternative school calendars" in place prior to approval of calendars for 2011 and 2012.
- A free basic health plan for state and

local district employees is provided. The state's health policy board will determine other plans in time for open enrollment in October.

KDE is working through what this budget means to school districts and how to target the available dollars to the key areas identified in our strategic plan.

Common Core State Standards

In June, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers released the final set of Common Core State Standards in English/language arts and mathematics. SB 1 required KDE to develop new standards in these areas, and the 2010-11 school year will be used to prepare for full implementation of new standards in schools.

The first step of this transition occurred over the summer during meetings of the Kentucky Content Leadership Networks. Teachers came together to learn about the new standards through professional development focused on capacity building. Participants made connections between what they are learning and the needs in their districts, then will use the knowledge, resources and tools from the network meetings to develop a

plan specific to their district's needs.

This kind of training results in a long-term sustainable model that best lends itself to delivery in professional learning communities throughout the school year, collaborating with institutions of higher education and educational cooperatives to provide sustained professional learning opportunities.

Reflecting back and looking ahead

During my first year as commissioner of education, I've made an effort to be out in districts and schools, often spending time talking with teachers, students, administrators and staff. The educators tell me their work is challenging, but they wouldn't have it any other way. Kentucky educators know they have the unique opportunity and the responsibility to make a difference in the lives of Kentucky's children every school day.

When I arrived last August, I promised to be visible and accessible and to make myself available to hear your comments, questions and concerns. I hope I've kept that promise. I'd like to express my gratitude to all of those who have helped make this first year a time of continuous progress. I'm still as excited about the opportunities we have to

help our students excel as I was on my first day on the job.

We are educators. Our collective goal must be student success. We must work together to expand our thinking and continue to develop effective and efficient strategies for higher learning. Our efforts and our contributions will set the pace for Kentucky's future.

Race to the Top

Kentucky has submitted its application for Phase 2 of the Race to the Top initiative, and the department awaits the announcement of grants in September. The major changes to the state's application occurred in the area of great teachers and leaders, where we created a much stronger proposal. Collaboration with our partners on the Race to the Top Steering Committee and the subcommittee formed on Teacher Effectiveness was critical to helping us make these improvements. We expect between eight and 13 states to receive funding in the final round. If funded, Kentucky will be eligible for \$60 million to \$175 million.

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Holliday at terry.holliday@education.ky.gov)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Ceiling art

Art teacher Casey Bates helps then-senior Travis Toohey with his design for a ceiling tile. Students paint ceiling tiles for their final art project in Bates' class at Caverna High School (Caverna Independent). Bates uses the website DonorsChoose.org, which is an online charity that helps teachers supplement their classroom budgets. She said she's received glazes, glass, a potter's wheel and sewing machine to use in her class.

Clarification

In the May issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, information about extra Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) money for students who receive qualifying scores on AP exams was included in the Commissioner's Comments. That information should be clarified.

According to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, students who have been eligible for free or reduced-price meals during any year of high school and have earned a qualifying score on an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exam taken during or after the 2008-09 academic year can earn supplemental KEES awards. For AP exams, KEES awards for students who've been eligible for free or reduced-price meals can increase by \$200 for a score of 3; \$250 for a score of 4; and \$300 for a score of 5.

For IB exams, KEES awards for students who've been eligible for free or reduced-price meals can increase by \$200 for a score of 5; \$250 for a score of 6; and \$300 for a score of 7.

More details on KEES awards are available at www.kheaa.com.

Budget tight for education, may get tighter

By Matthew Tungate

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Despite increased per-pupil and education-reform funding, Kentucky's new budget likely leaves teachers with fewer healthcare options, no new textbooks and possibly less salary, the Kentucky Board of Education heard at its June meeting.

The state General Assembly passed a \$17.3 billion budget for fiscal year 2011 and fiscal year 2012 that had to address a nearly \$1.5 billion shortfall with no new taxes or significant revenues.

Many education programs will see a 3.5 percent cut in 2011 from their already reduced fiscal year 2010 levels and by 4.5 percent in 2012, according to Hiren Desai, associate commissioner for the Office of Administration and Support. The operating budget for the Kentucky Department of Education, a resource to teachers and school districts, was reduced by 4.2 percent in 2011 and 7.6 percent in 2012, Desai said.

"I'm still positive about that because it would have been worse if we didn't have a budget," he said.

The budget also cuts textbook funding from \$21 million to \$600,000 in 2011 and \$640,000 in 2012.

The funding amounts to "roughly a dollar per pupil," said Ruth Webb, policy advisor for strategic planning.

Board member Dorie Combs replied, "You can't even get a spiral binder for that."

The budget also underfunds bonuses for teachers who achieve National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification. The Department of Education usually reimburses the legally-required \$2,000 districts pay National Board certified teachers, Desai said.

However, the department estimates the cost at \$3.6 million in 2011 and \$4 million in 2012, respectively, but the budget only funds \$2.75 million each year. Districts will likely have to pay the difference, Desai said.

Webb added that the budget does not fund the statewide student information system or longitudinal data system, both of which need to be continued, and does not provide any money for the Highly Skilled Educator program in 2012.

And the financial woes may get worse, she said. The budget requires the executive branch to reduce costs and expenditures by \$300 million for the biennium.

Desai said he expects additional budget reductions in education.

"The problem is \$300 million is a lot to

come up with in efficiencies and reductions, given that we've already faced several such reductions in this fiscal year," he said.

Joe Meyer, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet secretary, said Congress may not fund \$238 million that the state budget allots for Medicaid. If that happens, further cuts would be necessary, Meyer said.

"The budget environment continues to be very shaky, and we will continue to have to grapple with it, and it will be the focus of our attention and efforts for the near future," he said.

Teachers may struggle even without further reductions.

The General Assembly mandated a basic health plan for employees and teachers in the budget, with the state health policy board allowed to develop additional plans, Desai said. However, Gov. Steve Beshear vetoed that minimum plan, so the health policy board will determine any plans offered, Desai said.

"We do anticipate that they will have to tighten up on the benefits under the health insurance plan simply because the legislature counted on \$94 million in efficiencies from reductions in health insurance costs,

and those costs have to come from somewhere," he said.

The budget also requires the equivalent of 177 six-hour instructional days in each fiscal year, but the state will only fund 176. Districts will have to pay salaries and benefits for the other school day.

"The districts can put into their calendars the number of days that they choose as long as they have 1,062 instructional hours," Webb said.

Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said Beshear's intention was to maintain instruction time.

"I have pushed hard to keep 177 days and pushed hard to keep the 1,062 instructional hours," Holliday said.

Any district calendar with less than 170 instructional days must be reviewed and approved by the department, he said.

Because of the cuts, numerous districts have gone from 187 paid days to 185 for teachers, which is a 1 percent decrease in pay, Holliday said.

"I have not made myself a friend of every superintendent in the commonwealth because I pushed to maintain instruction and pushed to maintain teacher contract days," he said. "If you hear from superintendents that

KDE is not supporting them, I am not supporting them in their decisions to cut teacher contracts, but I have no way to overrule their decisions to cut teacher contracts."

Teachers may not be the only ones facing a reduction in paid days.

In July, Gov. Beshear announced that state employees, including those at the Department of Education, would be furloughed six days before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2011. Teachers are not included.

"We do expect to come back to you with more bad news this year," Desai said.

There was some good news in the budget, he said.

Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding increased from \$3,866 per student this year to \$3,868 in 2011 and \$3,903 in 2012, Desai said.

The budget also included \$8 million for new assessments and professional development related to education reforms outlined in Senate Bill 1 and \$2.5 million for a review of primary and secondary building classifications.

"It's good news on paper, but it may just be an opportunity for further cuts," Desai said.

As bad as the budget is, Holliday said it could be worse.

"I think our superintendents and school boards need to take the outlook that Kentucky has fared fairly well," he said. "Our overall budget reductions of 4 and 3 percent are nowhere near what some other states have done."

In other actions, the board:

- revised the intervention system for persistently low-performing schools to allow school councils to serve in an advisory capacity and adjust appeals deadlines, among other changes
- approved Common Core Standards for mathematics because of significant changes to the draft the board approved in February
- upheld Holliday's decision to transfer the authority of the Frost Middle School (Jefferson County) decision-making council to the district's superintendent
- approved district facility plans for Nelson County and Ashland Independent and an amendment for Henderson County
- approved the designation of Rogers Hall at the Kentucky School for the Deaf as surplus property
- approved a KHSAA-implemented alternative training course for coaches



Photo by Amy Wallot

Exploring climate change

Georgetown Middle School (Scott County) teacher Joan Killey, left, and Trigg County Middle School teacher Melissa Calhoun work together on a graph-interpretation activity at the "Teaching About Climate Change" workshop at McConnell Springs Nature Park in Lexington. The workshop helps teachers bring the science of climate change into their classrooms. Teachers also can learn about more climate change curriculum for their classrooms at the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education Conference in Cave City Sept. 18-19. More information about the conference can be found at www.kaee.org.

MORE INFO...

<http://bit.ly/KyBdEd>

Graduation 2010 part of Daviess County identity

By Susan Riddell

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It started out as an idea to introduce students to critical thinking beyond what traditional textbooks and lessons offer.

Now it's a part of who they are.

Graduation 2010, an effort created by the Daviess County school district in the fall of 1997, was intended to expose students to the arts, especially those who might not get those opportunities outside the school setting. But it went beyond that, according to Superintendent Tom Shelton.

"Elements of Graduation 2010 have become embedded into our district identity," Shelton said. "The arts, music, foreign language, literacy, critical thinking, physical and emotional health, family involvement and community involvement are no longer specifically categorized as 'Graduation 2010 programs,' but rather are just a part of who we are and how we educate kids.

"When Graduation 2010 was introduced (by former Daviess County Superintendent Stu Silberman), our goal was to provide enhanced opportunities to students who might not otherwise experience exposure to the arts," Shelton added. "Brain research indicated a direct correlation between learning music and high academic achievement."

Graduation 2010 not only incorporates the arts into classroom learning, it also gets the community involved. A local business in Owensboro sponsors each graduating class. Owensboro Medical Health System sponsored the class of 2010.

"Class sponsors have provided all kinds of things," said Jana Beth Francis, director of assessment, research and curriculum for the district. "Each one is very different. Most provided T-shirts when the students were kindergarteners. Each sponsor has provided unique opportunities based on the resources they have. Owensboro Medical Health System gave all the seniors a pedometer at graduation. Unilever, the makers of Ragu, did lessons with 3rd-graders about label design and nutrition. Each student took home a bottle of spaghetti sauce with a label they had created. Kentucky Wesleyan (College) has offered tickets to various sporting events."

Each fall, this program kicks off throughout the district and includes all grade levels. Younger students are introduced to music and other art elements. The class of 2010 was introduced to keyboarding at the start of the



Photo by Amy Wallot

Jenny McIntosh, left, Jerrika Combs, center, and Emily Wink, then-freshmen, use treadmills that were donated to Daviess County High School by a local hospital as part of the district's Graduation 2010 program. The program, which was originally designed to expose students to the arts, has grown to include components such as music, foreign language, literacy, critical thinking, physical and emotional health, and family and community involvement.

project, but at that time, putting each student in front of a keyboard was a relatively new and expensive concept for schools to pull off successfully. These days, it's more the norm in Kentucky elementary schools, and as Francis pointed out, it's standard practice in Daviess County and considered traditional in art education. Intermediate and exiting primary students soon learn chess and other games that meet the critical thinking component of Graduation 2010.

During the early years of Graduation 2010, teacher Cathy Englehardt was tasked with teaching students chess even though she didn't know much about the game herself.

"At the time (in 1998), I didn't know how to play and couldn't imagine how I was going to teach my 5th-graders to play," said Englehardt, who was at East View Elementary School at the time and soon got a friend to teach her how to play one weekend.

Unable to find teaching material, Englehardt decided to create her own by breaking the game into small steps and gradually helping students master it. The result was *Teaching Chess in the Classroom*, a document about many facets of the game including rules, history and etiquette.

"We learned the movement or pathways of one piece at a time," Englehardt said. "We started with the pawns as these are the less complicated pieces to learn. We practiced pathways of each individual piece over and over again. One piece was placed on the board at a time to battle and attack the opponent's army and king. We gradually increased the number of pieces on the board until all 16 pieces were on the board. This was a slow process, but very productive. Students caught on quickly.

"We learned a little about the history of chess and the symbolism behind each game piece," Englehardt added. "After researching professional chess matches, I set rules and regulations in the classroom when playing chess to create an orderly and chess-like atmosphere. It was extremely important to the learning process to set and teach behavioral expectation while the chess boards were out. Otherwise, the student energy level becomes difficult to handle, learning is less productive, and game boards and pieces can easily become lost or destroyed. This is a key element to teaching chess successfully in the classroom."

She concluded the chess instruction with

a chess championship. Parents also were brought in to play against their children at PTO events, and several students eventually taught their parents how to play the game.

"It seemed like the learning became contagious," Englehardt said. "I believe breaking the game down into baby steps removed the barriers to learning and any fear of failure. It was exciting to see students become enthusiastically engaged in learning to play chess."

Learning through Graduation 2010 continued into middle and high school with a wide variety of learning opportunities. An emphasis in health education was a key component of the high school curriculum, and various class sponsors funded several items students needed to excel in this area.

So with the class of 2010 recently graduated, did Graduation 2010 work?

"Yes," Francis said. "It established a common philosophy across the district and engaged our community in the schools. Our academic achievement rose as measured by (Commonwealth Accountability Testing System) CATS, but it's hard to isolate that increase as a direct result of Graduation 2010. As so many other initiatives were involved, we can't really isolate it to show the direct impact."

Francis said the name of the initiative will likely change since the class of 2010 has graduated, but the philosophy will remain the same. "Many of the strategies are now just part of our regular program," she said.

"We continue to focus our vision on preparing students to succeed for life," Shelton added. "Our innovative experiences with Graduation 2010 have been very successful in giving children the tools to learn in different ways. This initiative has challenged us to look at what students need to know, and be able to do, upon graduation from high school.

"Skills that have been identified as crucial for success include critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and communication. It's not enough to teach kids what to think; we have to teach them how to think. The elements of Graduation 2010 have provided a seamless transition to this focus on 21st-century skills."

MORE INFO...

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Experienced teachers give KTIPs to assist first-year counterparts

By Matthew Tungate

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Many teachers across Kentucky are walking into classrooms as professional teachers for the first time this month. Danny Pagan, who teaches students with special needs at Dry Ridge Elementary School (Grant County), wants them to know that no two days are ever the same.

"For me, every new day is like a canvas," said the former graphic designer now in his fifth year teaching. "I will most definitely bring my paint brush and all my colors, yet the picture I paint may be different than the one I planned."

First-grade teacher Stephanie Arnold was Pagan's mentor at Dry Ridge Elementary. She wants new teachers to know that being a teacher is more than just standing in front of a classroom and teaching.

"It's a profession in which things

are constantly changing, and you must be able to adapt to change and learn and update new things repeatedly," she said. "I think most teachers would admit that it is a profession that we feel rewarded daily as we see our students' progress."

Pagan is one of the five teachers Arnold has mentored in the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP), which is designed to provide assistance to new teachers. Kentucky law requires that teachers with less than two years' experience who are seeking initial certification serve a one-year internship. A three-member committee composed of the principal, resource teacher and university-appointed teacher educator guide and assess the intern's progress throughout the first year of teaching.

Pagan said the KTIP was good to go through.

"I got the chance to polish certain skills and interact with three different observers who gave great insight to the lessons that I taught for them," he said. "My mentor helped me with the whole process and what I would need to do to excel on all the guidelines for the whole program."

Hope Phipps, an 8th-grade U.S. History teacher at Morgan County Middle School entering her second year teaching, said meeting KTIP requirements can be very stressful. She thanked her mentor, Allison Hembree, for keeping her from turning into a "basket case."

"She helped guide me in a lot of the decisions that I had to make on things in class and how to deal with things that I shouldn't have done," Phipps said. "Being a first-year teacher, I was always second-guessing myself, and with Mrs. Hembree there to help me, I always felt confident in the choices I made."

Tom Knight, who is entering his second year teaching special education at Graves County High School, agreed that KTIP was worthwhile and that he benefited from the help of his mentor, Kelly Hlava.

"My KTIP mentor was more than willing to tell me the truth about my abilities," he said. "She explained what I was doing right and what areas I needed improvement, then followed up, frequently answering my questions. I had a lot of questions."

The teachers' mentors, though asked separately, named the same common issues with which new teachers struggle.

"Some of the common things that I have seen new teachers needing more work on include classroom management, learning to transition from one activity to the next and being prepared," said Arnold, who is beginning her 19th year of teaching and 12th at Dry



Photo by Amy Wallot

Teachers Daniel Pagan and Stephanie Arnold work with a student in the sensory room at Dry Ridge Elementary School (Grant County). Pagan is one of the five teachers Arnold has mentored in the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program, which is designed to provide assistance to new teachers.

Ridge Elementary.

Hlava, a special education teacher at Graves County High School entering her 16th year, said new teachers are either non-confrontational or nit-pickey.

"The non-confrontational teacher is typically a pushover with students and is willing to 'bend' his own classroom rules on a regular basis. This inconsistency often breeds chaos," she said. "The nit-picking teacher is one who spends more time on discipline than on instruction. When a teacher sets up too many classroom rules or is insecure with his own authority in the classroom, the result is a classroom filled with rebellious students."

Hlava suggests teachers work with students to develop three or four classroom rules and the consequences for not following them. She suggests handling minor rules violations one-on-one in the last few minutes of class and in private, if possible. She also suggests building rapport with students by learning about them and talking to them outside of the classroom.

Hembree, a 7th-grade social studies teacher at Morgan County Middle School beginning her 17th year, said many new teachers are caught off-guard by the lack of support a student may receive at home.

(See **Experienced** on page 15)

Tips for new teachers

Three new teachers and their mentors give suggestions on how to have a smoother first year in teaching.

1. Be flexible – You've got to know how to move on when something doesn't go as planned.
2. Over plan – Disorganization will produce behavior problems.
3. Be consistent – Whether in classroom procedures, discipline or grading, be consistent.
4. Build relationships with your students and parents – Greet students with a smile at the classroom door. Make contact with parents regularly.
5. Model classroom procedures and behavioral expectations – If you want respect, you must be respectful.
6. Teach bell-to-bell – Make sure that you have more planned than you think you will need.
7. Look for new ways to accomplish learning goals that are effective and engaging for students who have many different personalities, learning styles and abilities.
8. Celebrate anything your students do or have done that deserves your praise.
9. Teaching is not an 8 to 3 job – You have to find time for your own family and personal life, but if you aren't willing to give 100 percent, then you will not be a successful teacher.
10. Don't be afraid to ask for help – Even when you are not working with a supervising teacher, find someone, because you will always have questions.

Students, teachers adapting to technology advancements

By Susan Riddell

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Even 10 years ago, the phrase “less than a computer but more than a calculator” might have generated a collective shoulder shrug from students.

But that was then, and this is now. Educator Mike Sexton envisions such devices as learning tools in the years to come.

Sexton, a teacher and technology coordinator at Montgomery County High School, sees personal digital assistants (PDAs) and iPhones as potential teaching tools. Those, coupled with more room for labs and more teachers to fully staff an information technology (IT) program, will help students get the most out of a learning experience needed to succeed after high school.

“I would like to add programming,” said Sexton, a 27-year veteran in the classroom. “There is room to grow in Informatics (encompassing information science, information technology, algorithms and social science) as well. Without the latest tools and software, students will not be current and may lag behind.”

To keep students more current, many districts are pushing their IT programs to the limit, allowing students an enormous amount of freedom to pursue interests and stay current, as Sexton said.

The Harlan County school district has an abundance of class offerings for students. The courses are electives but necessary in rounding out the educational experience, according to Scott Pace, career and technical education instructor for Harlan County High School.

“These real-world experiences are what truly allow our students to make the connection between school and career and immediately see the value of what they are learning,” Pace said. “Many of our students are kinesthetic learners; learning takes place by the student actually carrying out a physical activity, rather than listening

to a lecture or merely watching a demonstration. IT courses are electives and something that the students sign up for because they have a genuine interest in the subject area. They provide the students with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience, whether it is building a website, configuring a network router or delivering a broadcast message.”

For example, Harlan County High School offers courses in Web Page Design, Multimedia Publishing, Networking, Help Desk Computer Maintenance and Support.

Help desks run by students are becoming more common in high schools.

“We offer a Help Desk class that can be taken for up to four credits,” said Jody Johnson, a technology integration specialist at Walton-Verona High School (Walton-Verona Independent.) “Students work directly with the school technology assistant who oversees both the middle and high school technology resources. This includes managing our eight mobile lab units in terms of delivery, routine maintenance and assisting teachers who reserve them. Students also answer the phone and perform other tasks as necessary to address service requests submitted by staff members.”

Chad Parnell, technology coordinator at Adair County High School, has led a group of students on the help desk that reaches all five schools within the district.

“My help desk students are part of a districtwide student-operated technical support help desk,” Parnell said. “Two students are assigned to each school and visit that school once a week to complete work orders. When emergencies arise, they may go more often. The help desk students have proven to be an invaluable asset to our district support staff during computer lab installations, major software upgrades – basically any time they have needed more



Photo by Amy Wallot

Mike Sexton, a teacher and technology coordinator at Montgomery County High School, supervises then-senior Sara Wood and then-junior Aaron Donathan as they fix a computer and printer for another teacher. Districts are expanding their information technology programs to help students get skills necessary to succeed after high school.

people than they can spare. The students learn the basics in the Computer Support Essentials class and then are ready to begin completing work orders and learning additional troubleshooting techniques in Help Desk.”

Sexton’s class at Montgomery County High is one of the more popular IT classes at the school. His students appreciate the experience they are gaining in the class, he said.

“Many students go on to work on college help desks,” Sexton said. “They have been very successful and several times have worked ahead of the recommended age level.”

The Help Desk class at Harlan County High also services the entire Harlan County district, and the Web design class reaches out to the community.

“Advanced Web Design students not only serve our community businesses, churches and non-profit organizations by providing professional-quality websites,” Pace said, “but they designed and maintain several of the websites for our local elementary schools as well.”

While students are reaping the benefits of burgeoning IT programs, teachers agree the programs must continue to grow and not become stagnant.

“Currently, students in our

school wanting to pursue additional IT offerings enroll at one of the area technical centers for a portion of the school day,” Johnson said of the Walton-Verona students. “While this is a good opportunity for our students, it would be nice if there were more IT opportunities offered on campus. We were able to bring in a guest lecturer one year for a portion of the day who taught specific programming languages. It would be advantageous to do this on a regular basis.”

Parnell agreed. “Technology changes on a daily basis,” he said. “Proper funding to ensure we are teaching students about current practices in business and industry is essential. I would like to see our program expanded to include a second teacher, but I also understand how budget constraints have affected every department. There are many, many more requests for IT classes than we can possibly fill each year.”

While funding is critical to the success of information technology teaching and learning, it must be all-encompassing, according to Johnson.

“The demand for specialized IT employees in the work force is not going to wane,” Johnson said. “It’s important that we as school districts do what we can to promote careers in IT by representing it in an appropriate manner. IT needs to be approachable, not just something that happens in the background. Just funding the hardware and software isn’t sufficient. You have to fund the training and the promotion of it. This is usually done by properly staffing your IT program in terms of both technicians and teachers or trainers.”

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Beyond bits and bytes

Teachers should use technology for betterment of students, Barren County tech leader says

By Matthew Tungate

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In what has become a familiar scene, Benny Lile was greeted with numerous well wishes from his Facebook friends on his birthday in January. But for Lile, director of Instruction and Technology for the Barren County school district, a message from a former student who works in Centre College's IT department stood out.

"He said, 'I still give you credit for telling me how to cut and paste that day in the 6th grade for starting my technology career.'"

Lile was in the then-student's classroom in the mid-1990s, and his teacher didn't know how to cut and paste on the computer, so Lile showed the boy how to do it.

"He remembers that," Lile said. "Stuff like that makes you feel pretty good."

Now in his 13th year in his position, his interaction with students is less frequent – but his effect on them and teachers may be greater. Earlier this year, Google selected Lile as one of only 50 participants nationwide to attend its Google Teacher Academy for Administrators in San Antonio, Texas.

The Google Teacher Academy for Administrators is designed to help K-12 educational leaders get the most from innovative technologies. Each academy is an intensive, one-day event where participants get hands-on experience with Google's products, learn about innovative instructional strategies and receive resources to share with their districts. Upon completion, academy participants become Google Certified Teachers who share what they learn with other K-12 educators.

It's a prestigious spot for Lile, who started as a 7th- and 8th-grade teacher 25 years ago in Metcalfe County.

"That was about the time the Apple IIC and Apple IIE were hitting, and I just got drawn into that," he said. "It was just such a powerful learning tool I saw, so I got very active in getting a lot of computers in my

classroom at that time.

"I never was enamored with how many bits of this and bytes of that," he said. "I was drawn to the power that it had in the classroom."

That was the same reason he was interested in the Google Teacher Academy for Administrators.

Google employees and trainers showed participants "everything from promising products to new releases to old standbys like Gmail," he said.

For instance, many people are familiar with Google Forms, a form-and-survey development interface with built-in reporting in Google Docs, Lile said, but the Google Academy takes what educators can do with Google Forms to a new level. Barren County plans to give principals smartphones to put some of their walkthrough information into Google Forms.

"We're hoping they'll be able to take this and even come back and teach us things," he said.

If Barren County can successfully integrate the Google applications, it will just continue a long-line of technological accomplishments for Lile and the district.

He said there are several of which he is particularly proud. The Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning (BAVEL) would be up at top, Lile said. Students from Barren County and other districts enroll in BAVEL, whose curriculum is provided by the Kentucky Virtual High School, to take core courses and Advanced Placement courses, study foreign languages, accelerate their learning or to make up credits.

The district also has a student-run technology help desk. Students

take advanced technology classes in middle school, and then apply for a job on the phone help desk. When they can drive, the students go to other schools to solve technology problems.

"We treat it just like a co-op," Lile said.

"I never was enamored with how many bits of this and bytes of that. I was drawn to the power that it had in the classroom."

Benny Lile,
director of Instruction and
Technology, Barren County



Photo by Amy Wallot

Benny Lile reviews tips in Google Docs with technology resource teachers Melissa Moss, left, and Valerie Stokes at Barren County High School. "By being a forward-looking technology director, he allows us, teachers, students and others around him to explore the different avenues of technology that will enhance the educational experiences of the students in our district," Moss said.

Lile doesn't directly supervise BAVEL or the student-run help desk, but he helped start them. He does supervise what is known as the V-Team, the district's technology integration specialists. The two original members' names started with V, he said, and even though the team has grown, the name has stayed the same.

Michelle Shirley, a 2nd-grade teacher at North Jackson Elementary, has known Lile for 14 years and worked for him as a curriculum specialist. She said the V-Team is a valuable component of the district staff.

"When we, the teachers, ask for help, we aren't met with why something cannot be done, but 'How can we make this happen?'" she said.

Valerie Stokes, one of the original V-Team members, said Lile is the kind of person who is there when you need him, but he doesn't get in the way when you're working.

"He knows that we keep him informed of what is happening in our schools, and he supports our ideas for new and innovative ideas for the future and encourages us to pursue any and all opportunities to help the students of Barren County succeed with instruction and technology," she said.

V-Team member Melissa Moss said Lile's background allows him to relate well to classroom teachers.

"By being a forward-looking technology director, he allows us, teachers, students and others around him to explore the different avenues of technology that will enhance the educational experiences of the students in our district," she said.

Lile said some teachers are reluctant to use technology, and there are others of whom he says, "I could hand them a paper clip and a matchstick and tell them 'Apple just put this on the market,' and they'd order it tonight."

"I am pleasantly pleased with the initiative that our teachers are taking, be it young, old, 30 years' experience or three years' experience," he said.

Lile has seen educators fight technology. Years ago he had a fellow administrator who did not want to let a parent fax missing homework because it was so new and not everyone had access to a fax machine, he said.

"The fax at that time was so new and so different, and now faxes are about obsolete," Lile said.

V-Team member Jeanelle McGuire said Lile has earned his peers' respect.

"Benny truly wants what is best for the students and is willing to go to great lengths to achieve that goal," she said.

Though he is not in the classroom, Lile still knows that what he does matters for students.

"Even though things like student-run help desk and BAVEL are the big deals, every day somebody is leaning over a desk and helping the next IT director at Centre or UofL or wherever."

MORE INFO...

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Let's take it outside

Mason County Middle School offers learning in the great outdoors

By Susan Riddell

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Science students at Mason County Middle School spent part of the 2009-10 school year learning outdoors.

No field trip was required, however. Students stayed on campus and merely headed outside to woods nearby.

Through grants from Toyota, the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and Carmeuse Lime and Stone, teachers Brian McDowell and Grant Felice spearheaded an effort to create a unique outdoor classroom filled with several stations aimed at providing students with hands-on learning opportunities.

"The outdoor classroom started out as a dream for our science teachers, but through their dedication and persistence, it has now become a reality," interim Principal Amy Gilkison said. "The science teachers have worked as a team to design, build and maintain the wonderful outdoor facility at the school."

"It brings students into an environment that stimulates their senses and brings them closer to nature," added Felice. "It enables them not only to learn important facts and gather their own data, but make them really feel what being outdoors is like."

McDowell said initial money the school received was for a trail, amphitheater and outdoor classroom. "We also have created a rock-cycle garden, flagpole shadow study, butterfly garden and a composting site," McDowell said. "The rock-cycle garden is a collection of large landscaping stones that have been grouped as sedimentary, met-

amorphic or igneous. Within the area, we can play games that show how rocks change from one type to another. The flagpole shadow study is used to show the 'reason for the seasons.' Our classes have equinox parties and mark the shadows as they change.

"The butterfly garden has flowers of different colors and heights to inspire good scientific questions," McDowell added. "The composting site allows students to experiment with decomposition."

Four other stations in the scenic outdoor classroom lead students through lessons dealing with geology and paleontology. The first three stations are located along the nature trail.

Station one is a 6-foot tower with three sides covered in rock. "Each side represents a different geologic principle of superposition, folding or faulting," McDowell said. "The fourth side connects these concepts to Kentucky's geologic history by containing layers that represent different Ordovician fossil populations."

At station two, a concrete slab contains simulated dinosaur tracks, where students investigate and make observations based on the varying track marks and distances between them.

In station three, students examine a bone assemblage. "The structure is a concrete pad embedded with (simulated) ice age mammal bones and fossils," McDowell said. "A replica saber-toothed tiger skull and mastodon teeth are usually the center of much speculation."

The final station relates to the scale of Earth's history and incorporates ideas from the first three stations.

"The theme to all areas we have created is inquiry and problem solving," McDowell said. "The areas allow for students to ask questions, create procedures, gather data and answer their questions in a scientific manner."

The possibilities for learning in

the outdoor setting are endless, according to Felice.

"Students can pick up walnuts that are later eaten by squirrels and feel and smell them, realizing they are an important biotic factor in this section of woods," Felice said. "They can listen to bird calls and attempt to identify them. They can smell Japanese honeysuckle and observe the flowers and describe their function. Students can dig under rocks and see the home of grubs, look under rocks and catch crayfish, and see mayfly larvae and other macro-invertebrates. Some of our students have never walked on creek rocks and felt a cold stream tickle their toes.

"The experiences they get as we work on lessons have been invaluable and have influenced our students to be young conservationists," Felice added.

Students sometimes even get to choose their own activities.

"The activities that have worked best have actually been selected by students themselves from an activity menu that allows students to use the woods, creek and meadow to search for habitats and identify species of birds, insects, trees and macro-invertebrates," Felice said. "When identifying species, our students take that next step and examine features of organisms that make them successful in their habitats."

While student learning is at the heart of the outdoor classroom, the teachers also are reaping the benefits. Felice said heading outdoors makes him excited about developing different lesson plans to keep the students engaged.

"Having the outdoor classroom has really put us on alert for new productive activities for our students, constantly refreshing our units each year to include new exercises that are stimulating for students and teachers alike," Felice said. "At the same time, taking our students outside has been exhilarating, providing us with

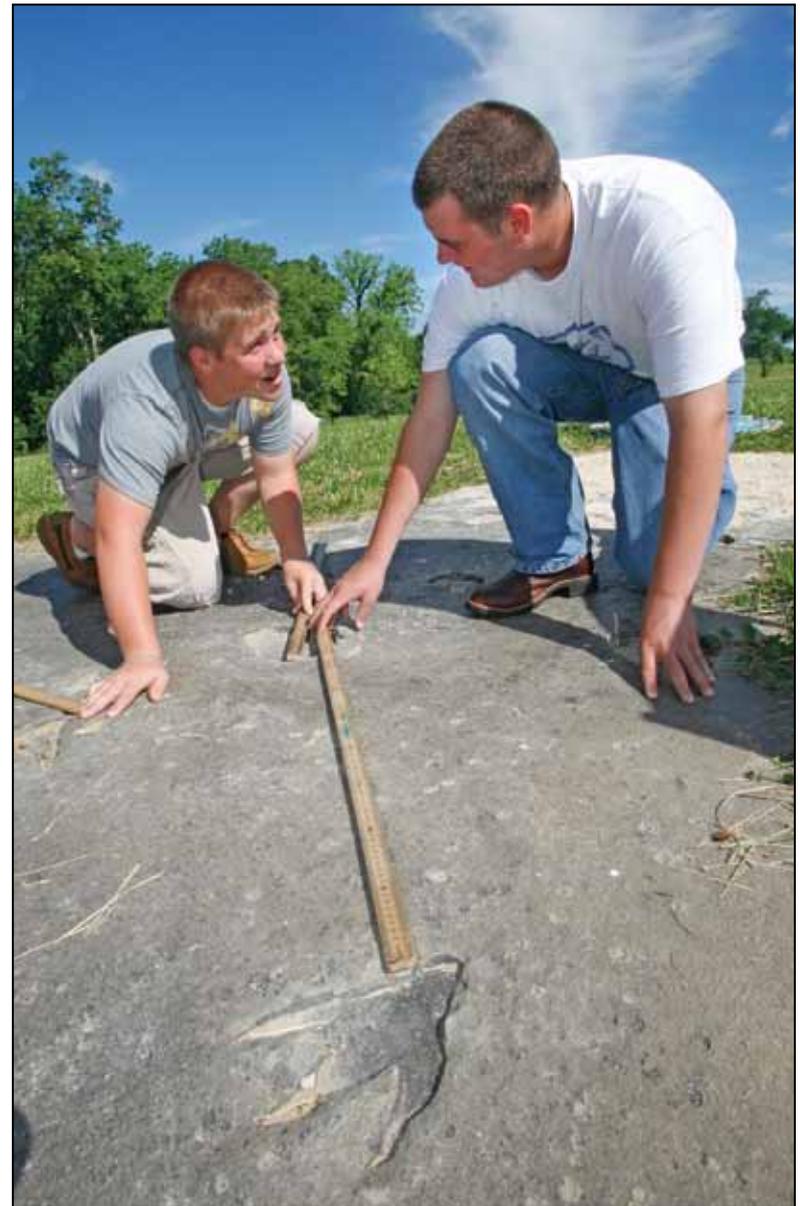


Photo by Amy Wallot

Aaron Howard, left, and Clay Saunders, both then-8th-graders, demonstrate how the trackway is used for observation as part of Mason County Middle School's outdoor classroom. "Taking our students outside has been exhilarating, providing us with an opportunity to have fresh new approaches to teaching and more opportunities for students to set up inquiry experiments," teacher Grant Felice said.

an opportunity to have fresh new approaches to teaching and more opportunities for students to set up inquiry experiments."

It's not just the science teachers who are using the outdoor classroom, according to Gilkison.

"Many of our teachers have been able to design and modify their lessons to include the outdoor classroom experience," Gilkison said. "It has been used in our art, English, mathematics and social studies classes to enhance their lessons and make them more meaningful to our students."

Outdoor classrooms such as

the one at Mason County Middle are vital to students receiving a well-rounded, thorough education, according to Gilkison. A key element in accomplishing that is finding a strong balance between the outdoor classroom and the constant presence of technology inside.

"In today's society, technology plays a key role in classroom instruction and in student engagement," Gilkison said. "Our teachers have embraced this belief, even with outdoor activities. They have used technology to enhance

(See **Outside** on page 16)

Technology meets outdoors

GIS, GPS tools guide students through surroundings

By Susan Riddell

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Ever wondered why a certain plant is prominent in one part of your county but not another?

Maybe you're curious as to how urbanization and growth affect creeks and other bodies of water.

Students are answering those types of questions thanks to Geographical Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices.

According to Haridas Chandran, a science teacher at Belfry High School (Pike County), GPS devices, originally designed as military location tools, have found their way into the classroom as educational tools.

The University of Kentucky's Tracy Farmer Institute for the Environment is working with nearly 20 schools throughout the state developing GIS and remote sensing/GPS curricular content with non-geography teachers.

Belfry High was a recipient of the National Science Foundation (NSF)-Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) grant from the institute that brought the GPS and GIS resources to the schools.

Chandran said his students' goal in using the tools was to study the chemical constituents of herbs grown in the nearby Appalachian Mountains and compare them with the medicines used for treating cancer and other related diseases prevalent in the region.

"Since the NSF-ITEST grant is more focused on the information technology component, we used the GPS system provided by the grant to locate the herbs in the mountains near our school," Chandran said. "We focused on two mountains surrounding Pigeon Roost Road and Thornsberry Hollow in Canada, Ky., to collect the soil with the herbs ginseng, yellow root, golden seed, sassafras and others that are of medicinal value.

"(The) GPS system was used to locate the places where these herbs were grown so that one can use this location and revisit later on for further investigation. The students used ArcGIS program (one of the GIS software programs) to insert these points on the Pike County map. This program has features where one can exactly find the distance from the school to the points where the herbs are grown. It can also find the elevation of the mountains."

Chandran said students collected soils and herbs to study chemical compositions and

performed an analysis.

"They observed that some soils were rich in potassium and nitrogen and were more acidic than others," Chandran said.

Teachers also use GIS technology to look at settlement patterns, the human relationship to surroundings in an area and how technology has influenced these environments.

"This has helped students to see that the big world is not so big after all through the technology of map building and visual representation," said Shelly Chesnut, a 6th-grade science teacher at Grant County Middle School, which also received a NSF-ITEST grant. "In the general 6th-grade science classroom, the use of this technology has improved the students' use of data and critical thinking skills by allowing students to see cause-and-effect relationships between past environmental decisions and current results."

Rebecca Saager, a science teacher at Scott County Middle School, has used GIS resources to have her students study the changes in an ever-growing Scott County population. Her "big picture project" has involved researching how the urbanization of the county has affected the Elkhorn Creek watershed drainage basin.

"As part of this program, I have been using an Environmental Systems Research Institute program called Our World GIS Education," Saager said. "This program introduced the students to the ArcGIS computer program and the basis of how the features are used. I then have a small group of students that gathers GPS points to download into the computer and design maps specific to the Elkhorn Creek basin.

"I am always reminded how much the students become engaged in the program," Saager added. "Middle school students are more attentive to any learning when there are hands-on activities like these."

Chesnut's students at Grant County Middle chose to investigate the problem of invasive species. To complete this project, Chesnut's students were given various materials including water testing and fishing equipment, GPS units and ArcGIS software.

"Students identified various species of plants and animals including native and invasive species," Chesnut said. "They used the GPS units to mark the location of each species and recorded information such as size and area covered.

"Back in the classroom, the information gathered in the field was analyzed and trans-

ferred to the ArcGIS program to make a visual representation of the data found. This representation was then used to inform the general community of the threat that invasive species pose to our local community."

Chesnut said the students just assumed every plant or animal in Grant County was supposed to be there and served a purpose that kept the environment in balance before tackling this project.

"After doing this project and exploring the data from other locations around the state, they have developed a protectionist attitude toward our environment," Chesnut said. "They petitioned the Grant County Board of Education to eliminate the winter creeper used for erosion control and replace it with burning strawberry, which serves the same purpose but is native to Kentucky."

While teachers agree the GPS and GIS tools have been a great way to enhance hands-on learning, they warn teachers to consider cost and available time, too, should they be interested in obtaining the resources.

"There is some time needed for self-learning and being connected with other help for resources," Saager said. "It can be very difficult at times without a strong technological base in the school and the ability to connect with other teachers using similar technology."

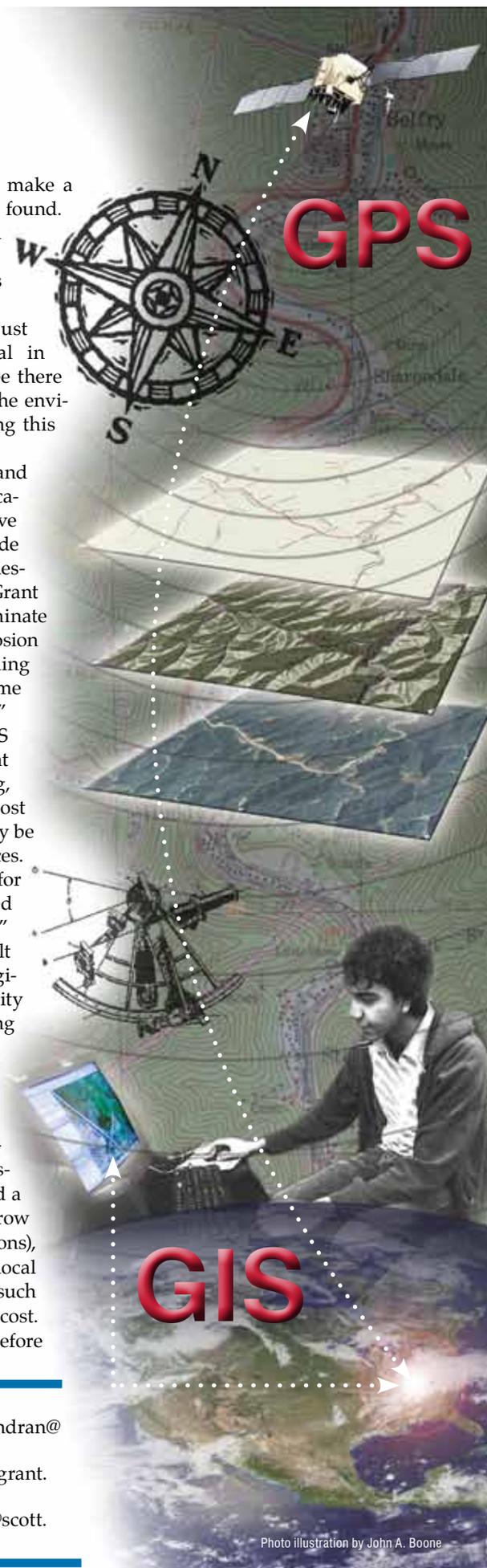
"I would encourage other teachers to use GPS units in their classrooms for data gathering and research to increase student understanding and enthusiasm," Chesnut added. "Most teachers can find a local resource to purchase or borrow basic GPS units from (organizations), like the conservation district or local 4-H council, but other programs, such as the ArcGIS, come with a higher cost. It's something to keep in mind before you begin."

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Failing grades

Miles Elementary goes to standards-based grading

By Matthew Tungate

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For the second year in a row, students at Miles Elementary School (Erlanger-Elsmere Independent) won't receive grades.

Yet teachers and the principal say students and their parents are better informed about what the children know – and what skills and information they still need to master.

Bryant Gillis, in his seventh year as principal, said he never figured out in his 36 years in education what an A really means.

"As a parent, you could get an A student coming home without knowing any of the skills necessary to support that A," he said.

So Miles Elementary has replaced traditional grades A-D and F with standards set by teachers and students. Each grade level has standards that students are required to meet, which then lead into the standards required for the next grade. To measure progress toward meeting the standards, students fall into four categories: Exceeds Mastery, Mastery, Partial Mastery and Non-Mastery. The teachers use rubrics they designed to measure students' progress, and they continue working with students until they reach mastery.

Kim Asbrock, a 4th-grade teacher in her ninth year, said she remembers parents would get upset that student got a bad grade.

"And I was like, they don't need to be upset because they have a bad grade. They need to be upset because their child can't add or multiply or read," she said. "So I really felt like they were missing the point."

Even though she sees the value, Asbrock said giving up traditional grades has been uncomfortable.

"When you're a teacher, you have a grade book and grades, and you write them down and average them up," she said. "Letting go of that was probably the most challenging part for me."

Della Kemper, a 4th-grade teacher in her 16th year, said she always felt like grades were a reward or a punishment – not a measure of what a student knows.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Della Kemper helps 4th-grade student Chase Gilbert with fire safety questions during Kemper's health class at Miles Elementary School (Erlanger-Elsmere Independent). Miles Elementary is going into its second year using a standards-based grading system that replaces traditional grades A-D and F with standards set by teachers and students.

"We just couldn't keep making our students feel like they were being punished for not knowing something," she said. "I felt like it never really told them where they were and what they could improve on."

"I never liked grades."

As part of the new standards-based grading system, teachers keep and analyze a lot of data on students. Asbrock said those profiles help the teachers look beyond the percentage of answers a student got right to which ones and why.

"You think that a child is failing, and then when you look at it you're like, 'Gosh, he knows six out of the seven standards. He just missed all of the questions on this one,'" she said. "So sometimes it's kind of comforting because you think he's really struggling and then you're like, 'We just need to work on this one thing.'"

So teachers still assess students, Kemper said, but "what we do with that assessment is different."

"The difficult part for me was that in a standards-based assessment, you're never done until that child has mastered that goal," she said. "If they didn't master it, there's a lot of follow up."

Teachers are able to provide remediation (and enrichment to students who want to exceed mastery) because the school had already changed its schedule to include blocks of time for the extra help.

Gillis said the 2009-10 school year was the first in which the school did not give grades on report cards. That was the culmination of four years of using some of the most cut-

ting-edge techniques in education, including professional learning communities, learning targets, standards-based instruction and following the gospel of education gurus Richard and Rebecca DuFours, Robert Marzano, and Rick Stiggins.

Gillis said the movement at Miles Elementary began in 2006 when he heard the DuFours, Marzano and Stiggins speak. He had teachers look at curriculum alignment, SMART goals and objectives, and what were the precursors to learning communities.

The following summer (2007), he took three teachers – including Kemper – to hear the DuFours and Stiggins.

"On the way back, there was never a moment of silence on the school bus," Gillis said. "They said, 'We've got to change it. Things have got to happen, and Mr. Gillis, we're going to do this.'"

The three teachers contacted the other faculty members, made a master schedule and wrote in time for the interventions.

In 2008-09, teachers developed learning targets and common assessments, and the district realigned curriculum for all four elementary schools, Gillis said.

So leading into the 2009-10 school year, teachers met vertically to develop and align standards that Gillis says have "more rigor than an A or a B ever had. Our standards are higher."

At the same time, Gillis said he was meeting with parent groups and giving them homework. Parents read and learned about standards-based curriculum and assessment. He held two parent academies to tell

Miles Elementary scoring rubric definitions:

Exceeds Mastery

- You demonstrate a strong understanding of concepts.
- You can offer explanations and interpretations.
- You perform skills and solve problems independently.
- You may work at levels higher than expected for the grade level.

Mastery

- You demonstrate an understanding of concepts.
- You perform skills and solve problems independently.
- You usually work at the expected grade level.

Partial Mastery

- You demonstrate a limited understanding of concepts.
- You perform skills and solve problems with help.
- You sometimes work at the expected grade level.

Non-Mastery

- You cannot demonstrate an understanding of concepts.
- You cannot perform skills and solve problems.
- You are unable to work at the expected grade level.

parents how the grading system would work.

Parents thought it was good, he said, but they had "a bunch of questions." So he showed an example of what the report card would look like and explained why standards-based curriculum and assessment is better.

"We felt so committed that we had to make changes, that they felt that with us," he said.

Gillis said he didn't receive any negative feedback from parents when the first report cards went out, either.

He acknowledges that the new report cards, which take about 30 minutes each, take more work than traditional grading systems. Any schools that move to standards-based curriculum and instruction must give teachers the time to meet with each other and evaluate data to personalize instruction.

But, he said, it's worth it.

"You can't sit back just because people are uncomfortable with change," Gillis said. You have to endorse change, and you have to let people know that a change is okay."

MORE INFO...

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Book serves as guide to effective dance instruction

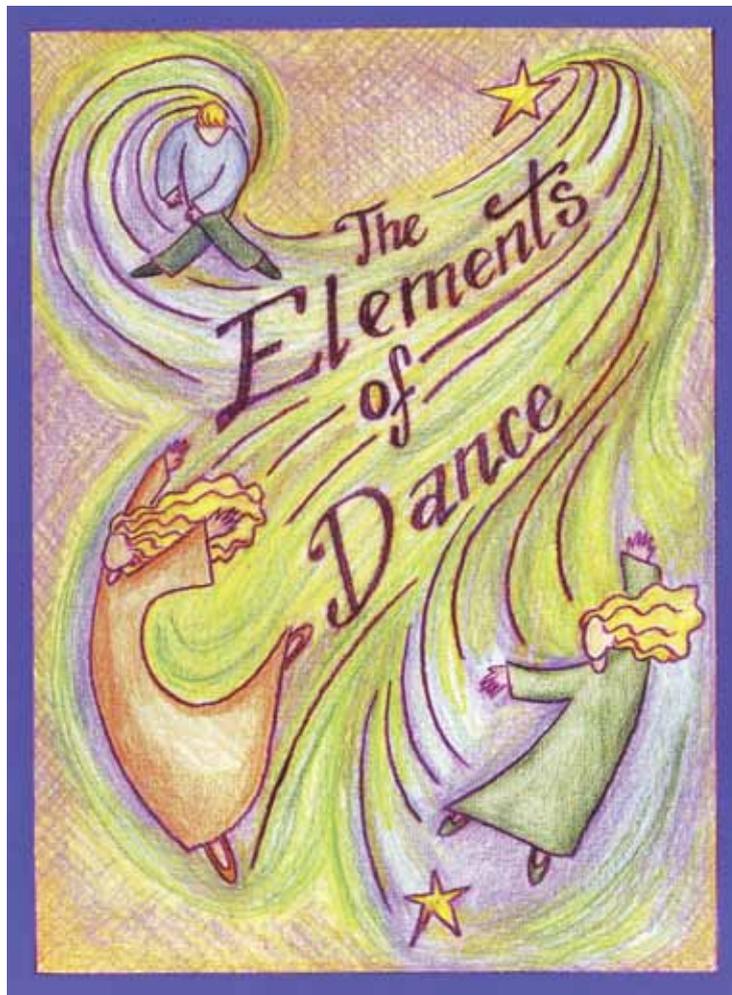
Tamara Buchanan

Caldwell County Elementary School

As a physical education (PE) teacher who uses dance instruction in my classes at Caldwell County Elementary School, Terrie White's *The Elements of Dance* is a book other PE instructors should be reading and applying to their instruction. The book introduces dance elements in a simple, concise way that is suitable for 3rd- through 5th-grade students. The book also covers all aspects of current Kentucky core content standards and instruction in dance through illustrations in an age-appropriate, student-friendly manner. Author White works for the Lyon County school district

As I worked my way through the elements in *The Elements of Dance*, I discovered each fundamental standard was introduced in a clear way that is accessible to students of all learning levels. In addition, there was demonstrated mastery of dance elements from the students after instruction from the book. As elementary school students and teachers use the techniques taught in the book, they discover it is an essential tool for teaching dance at the elementary level.

The book was especially useful for student teachers in my classroom who were unsure how to teach dance. *The Elements of*



Dance takes away some of the intimidations of teaching dance with its simple instruction and thorough coverage of content. Arts and

humanities teachers in upper grade levels also will find value for students in their classes.

This book is unique in that it's actually two separate books in one. Flip the book over, and it becomes a new book titled *From Cha Cha to Rumba* with content more appropriate for middle school students. Both books contain a variety of information for educators at both the elementary and middle school levels.

From Cha Cha to Rumba teaches students elements of social dance, such as ballroom dancing, swing dancing, waltz and fox trot. Illustrations capture the holds and positions of each dance. White also helps the students' understanding of each dance with simple explanations of timing, steps and the history of dances.

Each year in Caldwell County, there is a dance night where students showcase what they've been learning in class for their parents. My students look forward

to this activity each year. They can act out the illustrations with and for their parents and fellow students, and be led by the direct

instruction from the content they learned from the book. The instruction from *The Elements of Dance* encourages educators to hold events such as this to get creative with their students' movement. I have found that these suggestions helped make our showcases a success.

The Elements of Dance/From Cha Cha to Rumba also has been a great tool to assist my regular education kids to interact with their special education classmates. My special education students enjoy seeing the illustrations and love for their regular education partner to read it to them. It is helpful for the special needs student to get a picture of what they should look like doing the dance. In addition, the book's content adds an element of unique arts and PE instruction to any classroom and school.

The Elements of Dance/From Cha Cha to Rumba is written for teachers who are looking for a straightforward tool for dance instruction. Being a physical education teacher, I encourage other physical educators and school librarians to add this book to their teaching resources. As I continue to use *The Elements of Dance* with my students each year, my enthusiasm for dance is rediscovered each time I open the book, which is something I can pass on to my students.

Those interested in ordering the book can contact the author, Terrie White, at cashw@vci.net, (270) 625-0235 or (270) 388-2420. Single copies are available for \$11.95 plus shipping. Quantity discounts for multiple copies also are available.

Sites set for Aug. 17 regional forums on improving education in Kentucky

Gov. Steve Beshear's office has released final location information for the regional TEK Talk community forums on Aug. 17. The meetings, part of the governor's Transforming Education in Kentucky (TEK) initiative, will include discussion of ideas for changes in the state's existing education programs "to better prepare Kentucky students for the challenges of the 21st century."

The forums will begin at 8 p.m. Eastern Time / 7 p.m. Central Time with a live, web-streamed panel discussion with the governor, First Lady Jane Beshear, Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and Council on Postsecondary Education President Bob King. The panel will address questions posed at the community forums and discuss issues that emerge from local events. Bill Goodman of KET will moderate the panel

for his program, *Education Matters*.

The regional forum locations are:

- West Kentucky Community and Technical College, Paducah
- Owensboro Community and Technical College, Owensboro
- Bowling Green Community and Technical College, Bowling Green
- Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, Elizabethtown
- Jefferson Community & Technical College, Louisville
- Northern Kentucky University (location to be announced)
- Bluegrass Community and Technical College, Lexington
- Somerset Community College, Somerset
- Big Sandy Community College, Prestonsburg

- Ashland Community and Technical College, Ashland

Members of the governor's TEK task force include education advocates, parents, teachers, superintendents, lawmakers and business and community leaders. McLean County school board member Bill Lovell and Woodford County board member Margaret Cleveland represent local school board members on the panel, while superintendents are represented by Sheldon Berman of Jefferson County, Tim Hanner of Kenton County, Nannette Johnston of Hardin County, Stu Silberman of Fayette County and Steve Trimble of Johnson County.

Meetings have focused on improving college readiness; providing every student with the opportunity to earn college credit

during high school; assessments that measure what employers value make and high school more relevant; expanding the use of technology for learning; improving teacher recruitment and retention; boosting academics in career and technical education; and improving transitions between preschool to K-12.

The task force is preparing to recommend ways to channel all of these efforts into an integrated and comprehensive system of education in Kentucky. The goal is to formulate recommendations by the end of 2010 for consideration during the 2011 legislative session.

MORE INFO

<http://educationcabinet.ky.gov/tektaskforce/tektalk.htm>

Database for improving teaching techniques for diverse student bodies

The Teaching Diverse Students Initiative (TDSi) by Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, is a database of tools for educators that provide research-based resources for improving the teaching of ethnically and racially diverse students.

This initiative places primary emphasis on practices within the teachers' control, such as classroom strategies and educational techniques, and strategies to reduce teacher and student prejudices.

These resources also can help school leaders, school improvement teams, college faculty and anyone or any group interested in maximizing students' learning opportunities to identify needed policies and practices that support effective teaching and high levels of student learning.

The resources available through TDSi are embedded in tools and cases:

- The Understanding the Influence of Race tool helps educators learn more about the origins of "race" as we understand it, examine the continuing influence of race on their own beliefs and behavior, and better comprehend how and why their students succeed or struggle.
- The Common Beliefs Survey identifies beliefs about instruction and learning that may have consequences for students of diverse races and ethnicities.
- Primer on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is an introduction to teaching that facilitates student learning by taking into account race and ethnicity-related values, dispositions and experiences.
- Case-Based Course Modules engage the learner in interactive problem-solving related to teaching literacy; many of the lessons to be learned apply to all subjects.
- The School Survey identifies conditions in schools that support effective teaching and learning of racially and ethnically diverse students.

TDSi places primary emphasis on practices within teachers' immediate control-classroom strategies and pedagogical techniques. The research-based strategies promoted by TDSi, first and foremost, support students' academic learning. Within that focus, it also emphasizes strategies that have the potential to reduce teacher and student prejudice.

While TDSi focuses on improving instruction, it recognizes that teaching and the learning opportunities experienced by students are influenced by school structures,

processes and cultures that vary in the extent to which they are responsive to student diversity. The TDSi helps teachers, administrators and families identify the characteristics of schools that are particularly important in maximizing the social and cognitive development of racially and ethnically diverse students.

www.tolerance.org/tdsi

Kentucky receives funding through NASBE obesity-prevention project

Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina have received funding to help their state boards of education develop school policies to fight childhood obesity. The funding is one aspect of a National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Obesity Prevention Project.

The \$15,000 awarded to each state is intended to help them adopt, strengthen or implement policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity in schools. NASBE also will provide ongoing support in developing policies to prevent obesity to all state boards and policymakers, and work to raise awareness among federal policymakers of successful state-level obesity policies and initiatives.

NASBE's goal for the project is to help state boards develop the most effective policies to support high-quality health education and healthy school environments for all children, with a special emphasis on children in lower-income communities. During the grant period, the state boards will address policies to:

- improve the quality of school food
- increase students' physical activity
- restrict food and beverage marketing to students
- strengthen health education standards and requirements

As part of the funding requirements, the

Kentucky Teacher available online

Every issue of *Kentucky Teacher* from Sept. 1997 to the present is available online. Visit www.education.ky.gov and click on the *Kentucky Teacher* logo on the left side of the page to select the school year and issue. To view issues online, you need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. To download Adobe Acrobat Reader, visit www.adobe.com/products/reader.

Kentucky Board of Education will establish a school health subcommittee. This subcommittee, along with various state-level stakeholders, will address the link of health to student learning.

Barbara Donica, project director for the Kentucky Department of Education's Coordinated School Health Initiative, will serve as the project liaison.

A pilot project in conjunction with the Coordinated School Health activities will be implemented in selected counties in Appalachia and designated schools in Jefferson County. The project will begin this school year and be completed the following year.

www.nasbe.org

Pew Center backs Kentucky preschool expansion

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence has earned the support of the Pew Center on the States for a fourth year in its work to improve the educational and economic success of Kentucky by expanding access to quality preschool programs for more children in the state.

The statewide organization has received a \$200,000 grant from Pew, \$25,000 of which is contingent on raising matching funds, for work in 2010 to bring advocates, policy

and business leaders, and service providers together to develop strategies for expanding quality early education programs through Prichard's Strong Start Kentucky initiative.

Strong Start Kentucky advocates for quality, voluntary Pre-K for all 3- and 4-year-old Kentucky children through collaborative efforts that involve public, community-based and Head Start programs.

Kentucky's preschool program currently serves 3- and 4-year olds with disabilities and 4-year-old children whose families earn an income 150 percent or less of the federal poverty level or about \$33,000 a year for a family of four.

Expanding access to quality Pre-K is essential to Kentucky's economic future. For that reason, the Prichard Committee is using \$50,000 of its grant from the Partnership for America's Economic Success, which is managed by Pew, to build its statewide Business Leadership Council for Pre-K. The committee is working with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to develop this group to support key state business leaders as they promote the economic development and return on investment benefits of providing quality Pre-K to 3- and 4-year-olds.

www.pewcenteronthestates.org



Photo by Amy Wallot

Technology innovation 101

Bullitt County Technology Integration Specialist Keith Barnes, left, and Russellville Middle School (Russellville Independent) teacher Steven Branim work with a LEGO Education Mindstorms NXT robotics kit during the Innovations for Learning conference at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School (Fayette County). The two-day conference featured technology-focused sessions on innovative instructional strategies that engage students.

Conferences & Workshops

Kentucky Middle School Association

The Kentucky Middle School Association's annual conference will be Sept. 19-20 in Lexington. Jack Berckemeyer, formerly with the National Middle School Association and now with Incentive Publications, will be the featured speaker. Contact Fran Salyers at fran.salyers@eku.edu for more information.

www.kmsaonline.com/pd/fallconf.htm

Arts education

The 2010 Kentucky Arts Education Association conference is set for Oct. 8-9 in Bowling Green. Although a majority of the sessions and workshops are free, there will be some that use numerous supplies that will require a small fee. Workshop fees will be collected on-site at the workshop by the presenter. Paid workshops will be on a first-come basis until the cap determined by the presenter is met, and then admittance to that workshop will be closed. Contact Kimberly Newton at kimberly.newton@bullitt.kyschools.us or (502) 543-7614 for more information.

www.kyaea.org

Kentucky Counselors Association conference

The annual Kentucky Counselors Association (KCA) Conference, set for Oct. 20-22 in Louisville, will focus on counselors of all fields and the challenges of thriving in current times. Workshops will provide new tools for assisting clients/students and a renewed prospective as counselors. Keynote speakers will be Marcheta Evans and author Kim P. Johnson. For more information, contact Beverly Martin, beverly.martin@paints-ville.kyschools.us, at (606) 789-2656.

www.kyca.org

Art Museum PD opportunities

The Art Museum at the University of Kentucky will host several professional development opportunities during the 2010-11 school year. The Art Museum is accepting registrations for any of the following events:

- Sept. 22, Teatime Introduction to the Horse in American Art exhibition
- Oct. 30, Lessons Learned: 3D lessons that work (for mathematics, art, science, history, social studies, writing and more)

- Nov. 20, TechArtistry workshops (two different themes)
- March 12, Teaching and Learning from Art: Visual art as primary source to teach Kentucky core content in the arts, social studies and language arts
- April 27, Teatime Introduction to Japanese Embroidery exhibition

For more information, contact Sonja Brooks, sonja.brooks@uky.edu, at (859) 257-1926.

www.uky.edu/ArtMuseum

Contest & Other Events

ThinkQuest International Competition

ThinkQuest International Competition 2011, scheduled to run from August to April, challenges students to solve a real-world problem by applying their critical thinking, communication and technology skills. Participants may enroll in the following competitive events: ThinkQuest Projects, Digital Media and Application Development. Teachers can find more information about the competition, new age divisions, evaluation guidelines and prizes on the website.

www.thinkquest.org/competition

Maze Daze

Life Adventure Center of the Bluegrass in Versailles will offer Maze Daze during September and October. Using a giant corn maze and other resources, Life Adventure Center of the Bluegrass presents a unique hands-on learning opportunity for students and will customize a program that can include a variety of topics and draw an important connection between agriculture and the classroom. Each program includes cross-curriculum education in mathematics, science and physical education. For more information, call (859) 873-3271.

www.kycornmaze.com

History writing award

The Anita Sanford Tolson High School Writing Award is given by the Kentucky Association of Teachers of History (KATH) to a high school student who has written an outstanding paper on a history-related topic. Teachers will submit the papers. The deadline is Sept. 1. The paper's topic will be determined by the writer, with length between 1,500-2,500 words. Papers will be evaluated on the following criteria (in the order of their importance): overall quality; depth of

research, analysis and interpretation of information; effectiveness of topic development; and length. Submissions can be e-mailed to Beth Van Allen at beth.vanallen@ky.gov, and students or teachers can call Van Allen (502) 564-1792, ext. 4440, for more information.

Rockin' Readin' Revolution

The Kentucky Press Association/Newspaper in Education's annual literacy project, Rockin' Readin' Revolution, is set for the week of Sept. 12. Newspapers around the state will publish the first chapter of the new free book, *CSI: Canine Secret Investigator* by Kentucky author Leigh Anne Florence and illustrator Paul Brett Johnson. Students can make their own books by collecting each of the 10 newspaper chapters and putting them in a free scrapbook offered by newspapers. To enhance the media literacy integration, teachers can use online learning activities and a podcast found at www.kypress.com. This project is sponsored by Kentucky Utilities/LG&E, KPA, the Lexington Herald-Leader and the Kentucky Secretary of State. Teachers should contact their local newspapers to request newspapers and scrapbooks for student use.

PTA 'Reflections' contest

"Reflections" is a cultural arts program that was established by National PTA in 1968. Each year National PTA asks students to submit ideas for a "Reflections" theme that will be used in future years. Theme ideas are submitted to Kentucky PTA and then forwarded to National PTA. The deadline each year is Oct. 15. The 2010-11 "Reflections" theme is: "Together We Can." Entries can be in the form of photography, literature, visual arts, film, musical composition or dance choreography. Divisions include primary, intermediate, middle or high school or special needs (P-12).

www.kypta.org/site/programs

Pennies for Polar Bears

The Louisville Zoo is offering a program for schools to help raise funds for its Glacier Run Exhibit, called Pennies for Polar Bears. Schools are asked to collect pennies – and any other form of currency – and turn those funds over to the zoo by Oct. 15. In return, schools will receive educational resources and incentives based on the success of the program. For more information, contact Debbie Shannon at helpyourzoo@iglou.com or (502) 238-5486.



Photo by Amy Wallot

BULLETIN BOARD (continued)**Be a part of
Kentucky history**

The state Capitol building is celebrating its 100th birthday. For those who have a favorite memory of the Capitol, you can send a digital photo or write down a memory to be included in a virtual time capsule being created by the Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet. Teachers are asked to send in photos and memories to Paige Sexton at paige.sexton@ky.gov. The deadline to send in something for the capsule is Dec. 31.

**Student spaceflight
experiments**

The National Center for Earth and Space Science Education, in partnership with American Aerospace Advisors, has launched the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program. Middle and high school classes or groups of students can propose and design experiments to be run by astronauts aboard the final flight of the Space Shuttle. The timetable to submit a proposal is tight. The program's website contains comprehensive information on program objectives, customizing to community need and how to participate. For more information, contact Jeff Goldstein, jeffgoldstein@ncesse.org, at (301) 395-0770.

<http://ssep.ncesse.org>

Resources**National Teacher Registry**

The National Teacher Registry is a new and free service for teachers and schools, public and private, preschool through college. The National Teacher Registry helps teachers get items they need and want for their classroom when there is no budget to purchase them. There are more than 40,000 items from multiple suppliers on the site and many more products are being added. Once a wish list is created, a direct link to the registry can be sent by the teacher or school to parents and friends. Parents and friends can access the list on the Internet, purchase items from the list and have the items delivered directly to the teacher or school. In many cases this is a charitable donation that can be deducted on the purchaser's tax return.

www.nationalteacherregistry.com

Crosswalk resource

During the 2010-11 academic year, schools and districts will begin to implement the *Kentucky Core Academic Standards* for mathematics and English/language arts. To assist with the transition to these standards, the

Kentucky Department of Education website offers a crosswalk resource that presents the alignment of *Common Core State Standards*, those standards used to develop the *Kentucky Core Academic Standards*, and the current Kentucky standards found in the Program of Studies. This crosswalk publication will benefit educators by presenting the standards alignment which can be used to inform instruction, plan professional learning, and determine necessary curriculum materials.

<http://bit.ly/9j13v1>

**Field Trip Factory,
Free Rice**

Teachers interested in looking for unique, nearby field trips can benefit from the Field Trip Factory, a website that lists free field trips within a zip code. The site shows trips for all different age groups. Free Rice is a trivia site, but for each correct answer grains of rice are donated. Questions related to mathematics, chemistry, geography, arts, English and other subjects are generated, making this a good tool to keep kids sharp on certain subjects while helping the needy.

<http://fieldtripfactory.com>
www.freerice.com

**Guidance in developing
writing policy and plan**

The Kentucky Department of Education's website now includes an overview of the requirements of Senate Bill 1 related to writing and provides recommendations to teams as they develop a writing plan and policy to support their writing program. Resources include a PowerPoint with facilitator notes, a tool that leads teams through a process of building on their current program to develop a plan and policy for implementation, and a sample survey that guides discussion of recommendations to the fictional ABC Middle School as its school-based decision making council updates a past policy to meet the new requirements.

<http://bit.ly/9lp89W>

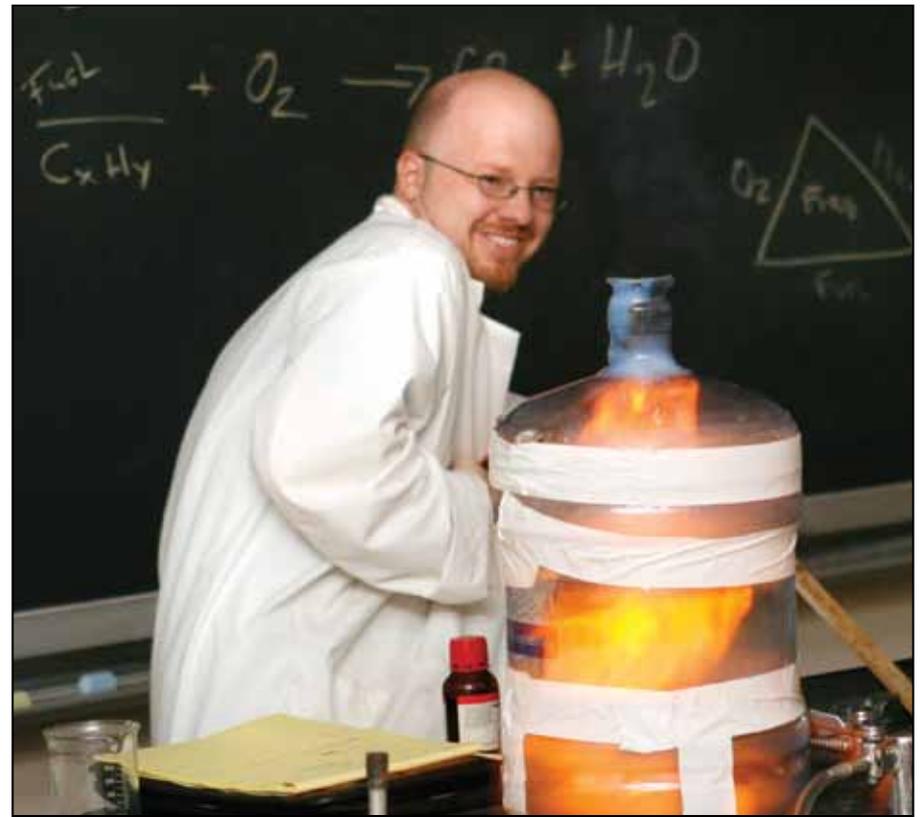


Photo by Amy Wallot

Explosive science

Caverna High School (Caverna Independent) chemistry teacher Eric Self performs a combustion demonstration to a group of high school students during the Pre-College Academic Experience in Math and Science (PAEMS) program at Georgetown College. PAEMS is a two-week summer residential learning experience for students that mixes instruction and laboratory experiments with field trips to promote enthusiasm for the sciences. The program also invited five high school mathematics and science teachers to implement learning modules in astronomy, biology, chemistry, environmental science and mathematics.

Experienced from page 6

"So many times first-year teachers think parents will always be supportive of the child and the teacher, but it doesn't always work out that way," she said.

Arnold said many discipline problems are caused by new teachers' common problem: a lack of instructional planning with supporting activities.

"It is very difficult for interns to realize how many activities must be prepared or planned for each day, depending, of course, on the grade level," she said.

Arnold said new teachers also are consistently surprised by the wide range of ability levels in their classrooms.

"It's your job to teach all these different levels at the same time," she said. "They are

also faced with that student who 'just isn't getting it,' yet don't qualify for extra services, so what do you do? It is a challenge that requires lots of creativity, planning and patience."

Phipps said she was surprised how much students have changed since she was in school and offered a suggestions to new teachers as well.

"Don't be afraid to ask advice from those in your school," she said. "I can't list the amount of time I spend talking with my vice principal and others in the building over discipline issues and just classroom issues in general. Their advice was invaluable to me."

MORE INFO...

www.kyepsb.net/internships/ktip.asp
<http://louisville.edu/education/admin-support/ktip>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Field day fun

Fourth-grade students Ricky VanHook, left, and Nathaniel Bray collapse in the inflatable playground during field day at Pine Knot Intermediate School (McCreary County). The district was in class until the end of June making up 29 days missed due to school renovations, flu and snow days.

Educators recognized at conference

Teachers Cheri Chaney, Amy Creek, Jennifer Johnson and Laura Kopshever have been honored at the Project CHILD National Conference held in April. This two-day event is hosted annually by the Institute for School Innovation (ISI) and is attended by educators from around the country.

Chaney, Creek and Johnson received the 2010 Innovation First Year Star Cluster Award. All are Project CHILD teachers at Dishman McGinnis Elementary School (Bowling Green Independent).

Project CHILD, which stands for Changing How Instruction for Learning is Delivered, is a unique three-dimensional learning system that incorporates technology and hands-on learning into daily instruction. Classrooms are organized into cross-grade clusters using a team-teaching approach. Teachers receive special training to become subject-focused specialists in one of the core academic areas: reading, writing or

mathematics. Classrooms use six different learning stations to incorporate computers, textbooks and hands-on activities. Teachers work with students for three years to build basic competencies throughout the primary grades (K-2) and intermediate grades (3-5).

"After Dishman McGinnis (Elementary) completed its first year of CHILD in the primary grades (K-2), Cheri, Amy and Jennifer didn't wait for Principal Michael Wix to ask them to implement it in the intermediate grades," said Sally Butzin, president and executive director of ISI. "They asked him if they could become a cluster and start CHILD with the 3rd-, 4th- and 5th-graders.

"Their students are loving school, becoming independent learners and making academic achievement by leaps and bounds," Butzin said. "CHILD has given them the tools to transform their traditional classrooms into 21st-century classrooms. You often hear them say, 'We love teaching!'"

Kopshever received the 2010 Classroom Champion for Change Award. She is a primary CHILD mathematics teacher at South Heights Elementary School (Henderson County).

The Classroom Champion for Change Award recognizes exemplary CHILD educators who stay in the classroom to have a direct impact on student achievement. The recipient must have at least five years of

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teaching experience as a certified CHILD specialist, as well as becoming a certified consultant to train and mentor new CHILD teachers.

"She is truly an extraordinary, committed person," said South Heights Elementary Principal Rob Carroll. "She views every child as an opportunity to improve the world."

The CHILD project was originally developed at Florida State University. Numerous research studies have shown that CHILD students have higher test scores and better behavior and are more involved in learning than are comparable students in traditional classrooms. Project CHILD is being implemented in schools in Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Connecticut and New York. Nearly 16,000 students are involved.

The Institute for School Innovation (ISI) is a private, non-profit educational organization established as a vehicle to continue the CHILD research and development and to promote its growth to reach more students and teachers. ISI engages in research and development, along with professional development, to transform teaching and learning to better meet the educational needs for the 21st century.

MORE INFO...

www.ifsii.org

Outside from page 9

their outdoor experiences by incorporating GPS units, wireless laptops, portable video cameras, iPod touch devices, digital photography, class wiki pages, lab probes and graphing calculators into their lessons."

Felice said outdoor classrooms aren't easy to come by, but the effort is well worth it.

"For teachers interested in constructing their own outdoor areas for students, I suggest that they look to existing community connections and make new ones," Felice said. "Many businesses have funds that they can donate to nonprofit organizations.

"Check out grant opportunities on the Internet and at the state levels," Felice added. "Go for grants that are specific to your cause. If you want a bird blind constructed, go to bird support organizations first to ask for assistance. If you have a patch of woods near your school, see how it can be used. A trail can be constructed with five students, clipper, a weed eater and a chainsaw."

MORE INFO...

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