Schools gather data to improve learning

By Faun S. Fishback
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Matt Thompson, principal at Deep Springs Elementary, is a recent convert to using handheld technology in his work. After a little training and a little practice, he is using a compact, hand-size computer to gather data about classroom instruction at the Fayette County school.

The device is a tool Kentucky administrators can use for whole school improvement. It is not designed to be used as part of an individual evaluation. “The device enables me to quickly and accurately take objective data (from a number of classrooms) which our school uses to ask questions leading to school improvement,” Thompson said.

The handheld device Thompson uses is small. However, it packs a wallop, storing an enormous amount of information about what teachers are doing in their classrooms.

Thompson uses a specially designed computer program, “The Walkthrough,” to quickly record what is going on in classrooms, the types of learning activities he sees, how students are working and learning, and how the lessons are prepared. This information — gathered multiple times for every teacher — will guide the faculty’s work to improve teaching and learning at Deep Springs Elementary.

After Thompson gathers information on his handheld device, he transfers the data to his desktop computer. He then can analyze data for groups of teachers or the whole faculty. He also can chart strengths and weaknesses in instruction — vital information for school improvement work.

Thompson is one of more than 700 school and district administrators who have been trained to use handheld electronic devices and “The Walkthrough” to improve student learning. He also trains other principals and superintendents to use the device. Before he began recording data from the walkthroughs, Thompson said he met with the faculty and showed them what the handheld device is capable of.

Board approves assistance for low-performing schools

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

At its December meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education approved the criteria for dissemination of Commonwealth School Improvement Funds (CSIF), revised information updating content and student performance standards, continued discussions about Kentucky’s writing assessment and heard presentations on a number of other items.

The CSIF was established in fall 2000 to support schools labeled in assistance as a result of low performance on state assessments. The funds help schools pursue new and innovative strategies to meet the educational needs of their students and to raise the school’s performance level. Those funds may be used for professional development, hiring consultants, implementing supplemental reading programs, purchasing technology and more.

In 2002, the Kentucky General Assembly mandated that CSIF grants during the 2002-2004 testing cycle be used solely for reducing achievement gaps in schools that did not meet their goals under the state accountability system. Therefore, funds were diseminated using a formula based on the severity of achievement gaps in reading and mathematics and the Average Daily Attendance.

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Mark your calendars to attend KTLC 2005!

The hype about the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference 2005 (KTLC) is true! This annual three-day conference is the only event in Kentucky that showcases a comprehensive collection of best practices and gives educators first-hand access to the work of outstanding educators that can help improve teaching and learning in their schools.

Numerous workshops and hundreds of sessions will fill the Kentucky International Convention Center March 3-5, 2005, in Louisville. Everyone — veteran and first-year teachers, administrators, the techno-savvy educator and the techno-savvy content area teachers and library media specialists — will find something of professional interest.

The event begins on Thursday, March 3, with ticketed workshops. Separate registration fees are required for the three-hour workshops that cover a wide-range of current education topics. Michele Sloan, an education specialist with ESCORT, a national resource center for improving educational opportunities for migrant children, will give a presentation on a number of other items.

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Bulletin Board

Cleanup Week
Commonwealth Cleanup Week is set for March 20-26, 2005. Kentuckians are urged to help “spring clean” the state during the weeklong event. Students in grades 1-8 may enter an environmental education contest. Grades 1-2 participate in a poster contest, and grades 3-5 and 6-8 create a multimedia public awareness campaign as part of a classroom project. Winning entries from the schools must be submitted to the local county extension agent by Feb. 4, 2005. Lesson plans for teachers may be downloaded from the Internet.

www.waste.ky.gov/ccw

Louisville Orchestra programs
The Louisville Orchestra announces these upcoming concerts available for school groups:

“America’s Land and People,” at the Kentucky Center, Whitney Hall on Jan. 19, 21, and 27, 2005, at noon. This Making Music series concert, conducted by Maestro Robert Franz, integrates themes of geography and music, and is appropriate for grades 3-6.

“Humanities 102: Art as a Reflection of Society,” at the Kentucky Center, Whitney Hall on Jan. 28, 2005, at 10:30 a.m. The concert, suitable for grades 6-12, highlights the characteristics of music, art and architecture in their social and historical contexts.

Contact: Box office for group rates and teacher materials at (502) 585-9403

www.louisvilleorchestra.org

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day
Feb. 24, 2005, is a day set aside to encourage girls to consider careers in engineering. This is the centerpiece of National Engineers Week, Feb. 20-26. Looking for a great project-based learning opportunity? The University of Kentucky's College of Engineering sponsors its Engineers Day Open House on Feb. 26. Several contests for students include: egg drop, basketball catapult, Pringle mailing, Rube Goldberg and many more.

www.engr.uky.edu/eday/2005/index.html
www.eweek.org

American West exhibition
The Speed Art Museum in Louisville will host the “Capturing Western Legends: Russell and Remington’s Canadian Frontier” exhibit Feb. 12 through March 8, 2005. The exhibition includes 98 paintings, drawings and sculptures by two famous artists of the American West, Charles Russell and Frederic Remington. Teaching guides, lesson plans, etc., are available for teachers to download.

www.speedmuseum.org

Events
Stage One
Stage One, located in Louisville, has these upcoming productions appropriate for field trips.


“Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” is a participation play by Gail Fairbank-Roth. It will be performed Feb. 7 through March 25, 2005. Suitable for grades PreK-3.

All productions are at 10 a.m. and noon at the Kentucky Center, Bombard Theater.

Contact: Box office for group rates for field trips and workshops at (502) 562-0161

www.stageone.org

Ag Day poster and essay contest
Students in grades 1-8 may participate in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s annual Ag Day poster and essay contest. Winners for each grade will receive a $300 savings bond. The theme for this year’s contest is “Kentucky Farmland, Preserving Our Past and Protecting Our Future.” Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 25, 2005.

Contact: Teresa Prather, (502) 564-6676, teresa.prather@ky.gov

www.enviroout.education/agday/postercontest/Winners.htm

Summer study in England
Teachers can apply for scholarships to study this summer in England from The English-Speaking Union Kentucky Branch. Deadline to apply for the scholarship is Jan. 18, 2005.

www.esuky.org

Thoroughbred Center production
The next production at The Thoroughbred Center in Lexington will be “Amelia Bedelia Goes Camping” on Feb. 17 and 18, 2005, at 10 a.m. and noon. Amelia Bedelia goes camping for the first time and catches a fish…with her bare hands. This production also includes audience participation, a sing-along and much more. Teachers can download study guides from the center’s Web site.

Contact: Box office at (502) 291-1853

www.thethoroughbredcenter.com/theatre/schedule.asp

Resources
Teacher tax deduction extended for classroom expenses
Recent federal tax legislation signed into law includes an extension of the “above-the-line” tax deduction for teachers for the first $250 “out-of-pocket” spent on instructional materials and classroom supplies. The legislation, first passed in 2002, had expired at year’s end. Remember to keep receipts for classroom materials purchased during the 2004 calendar year.

Common Cents
Common Cents is a financial literacy program designed for P-12 students to learn the basic principles of financial responsibility and long-term money management. For this and other free educational programs from State Farm Insurance, visit www.statefarm.com/educate/kits.htm.
Commissioner's Comments

Teachers have strong feelings about improving writing assessments

By Gene Wilhoit
gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us

I am never disappointed when I ask Kentucky teachers for help in improving our public education system! I know you can be depended on to give an informed opinion on what you know to be true for your school and your situation.

And, my recent request for your advice about Kentucky's writing portfolio and on-demand assessments is an example of that well-placed trust. From Nov. 15-29, more than 8,700 teachers, administrators, and district-level and postsecondary educators responded to my invitation to participate in an informal online survey about writing assessment issues.

The input is proving extremely valuable to the Kentucky Board of Education in its discussions on enhancing and updating the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). As I reported to you earlier this school year, the board is reviewing CATS before preparing specifications for a new five-year testing contract that will take effect in 2006.

The board is thoroughly examining many areas of concern that teachers, principals, lawmakers and other education stakeholders have voiced about Kentucky's testing system.

One of the most consistently discussed issues with CATS is the writing component, both the portfolio and on-demand questions.

This summer, the board directed the department to convene a focus group to study Kentucky's writing assessment and to use that input in making recommendations to the board. Some of those recommendations, made public at the board's November meeting, were included in the 16-question online survey about writing. Other questions came from concerns about the writing assessment expressed by other educators and stakeholders.

While there is no overwhelming consensus among the nearly 9,000 people answering the survey, the answers have given the board volumes of information to help inform their decisions. This information, provided by those who regularly work with writing in our schools, provides the board with an opportunity to hear clearly what educators on all sides of education issues before making final decisions on assessment policies.

Although writing is currently assessed in 4th, 7th and 12th grades, we most often hear concerns about the 4th-grade writing portfolio. More primary and elementary educators responded to the survey than teachers at other levels.

Slightly more than 70 percent of the educators responding to the survey said they favor adding a multiple-choice component to the current assessment. This component would be an additional method for assessing writing conventions, such as sentence structure and word choice. Support for this change was consistent at all levels, elementary, middle and high school.

Slightly more than 55 percent of respondents said they do not favor expanding the on-demand writing assessment to include personal expressive and literary entries. There was support from 43.3 percent of the respondents to include the entries.

A proposal to move the writing assessments to different grade levels received 34.4 percent support for assessing portfolio writing in 4th grade/5th grade on-demand, 7th grade on-demand/9th grade portfolio; and 11th grade on-demand/12th grade portfolio.

The next option to receive support — at 27.5 percent — would assess the portfolio at 4th grade/5th grade on-demand, 7th grade portfolio/8th grade on-demand, 11th grade portfolio/12th grade on-demand.

Respondents were closely divided on whether Kentucky should add an on-demand writing prompt at the 12th-grade level that would count toward the reading index and the writing index at the high school level. Slightly more than 55 percent said it should not be added, and 41.2 percent said it should.

When asked about scoring methods, 50.2 percent of the respondents preferred the current system where scoring occurs at the school level but scores are audited at the state level. Slightly more than 25 percent indicated they would prefer state-level scoring by the testing contractor and no school-level scoring. Nearly 20 percent would prefer regional-level scoring only.

Respondents overwhelmingly showed support — at 59.6 percent — for a combination of holistic scoring for content and analytical scoring for writing conventions. Nearly 23 percent prefer reporting holistic scores only, and 16.4 percent prefer reporting analytical scores only.

When asked if the accountability system's weighting structure for writing should shift across grade levels, 65.8 percent said the weighting should be consistent. Only 30 percent said the weighting should shift across grade levels.

Given several models that add more performance levels for writing assessments, 38.8 percent of the respondents showed support for the model that provides for 10 levels: novice-performance, novice and high novice; low apprentice, apprentice and high apprentice; low proficient, proficient and high proficient; and distinguished.

The survey also allowed respondents the opportunity to comment on proposed portfolio configurations at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Open-ended questions addressed strengthening the state's Code of Ethics for writing assessments and making changes to professional development opportunities in writing.

The wide variety of opinions expressed in answers to these questions fills more than 2,000 legal-sized pages. Each member of the state board received an electronic copy of every single response along with the raw survey data in advance of their Dec. 8 and 9 meeting.

It is invaluable for the board to hear from every public school educator in Kentucky who is willing to comment on education issues before making final decisions on those important assessment issues. It has been important in the past — and remains so — that education stakeholders know they have been heard before the board makes assessment and accountability policy decisions.

Look for more opportunities to provide suggestions and ideas to the board as we move forward.

To comment on this topic, send an e-mail to the commissioner at gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us.

Hallway update

Aaron Reed, a 7th grader at the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB), talks about classwork with Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit during the commissioner’s November visit to the school. The commissioner visited the KSB campus in Louisville and the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville to commend students, teachers and administrators on their accomplishments on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System.

Photo by Rick McComb
New opportunities, services for students with sensory loss

Students with sensory loss in Kentucky are beginning to notice changes in their services and programs because of a five-year Implementation Plan adopted in August by the Kentucky Board of Education. The plan, based on nearly three years of research and information gathering, is starting to improve and expand services in Kentucky public schools for students with visual and hearing losses or dual sensory loss.

The multi-faceted plan maintains quality, center-based services at the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) while providing more support to local school districts through expanded outreach services. As a result of the plan, coordination between the Kentucky Department of Education and other public and private agencies serving these students will increase.

The KSB campus in Louisville and the KSD campus in Danville will continue to offer instructional and related services to students identified through the Admissions and Release Committees as needing services at these schools.

Both schools will implement research-based literacy programs that have proven highly effective for students who are blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing and deaf/blind. Assessment coordinators for each school will help staff address any testing issues that are unique to these student populations.

Students at the two schools will benefit from expanded inclusion opportunities and access to all course offerings, including after-school practical living and independent living skills development. Both schools will expand short-course offerings that provide sensory-specific services to students who come to their campuses for short periods of time. In addition, more on-campus summer experiences will be available.

A more uniform referral system as part of the First Steps program will ensure early identification of blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing and deaf/blind students. First Steps serves children from birth to three years of age who have developmental delays.

A minimum of 11 early childhood centers will be piloted to provide all services needed by preschool students — regardless of disability — in the regular classroom. These centers will be based on the Jessamine County Early Learning Village service delivery model.

One outreach staff person from each school will work with each of the 11 special education cooperatives to develop a comprehensive on-going method of program assessment, needs determination and evaluation of services, as well as to provide technical assistance and support.

The Department of Education, KSB and KSD will increase professional development opportunities for teachers and other service providers who work with students with sensory loss. Family support services at both schools will be expanded and upgrades will be made to instructional resource and assistive technology lending libraries at each school.

In addition, more comprehensive interpreter training at Eastern Kentucky University will be expanded to help meet the demands for interpreters for all modes of communication.

Teacher exchange programs will be established to enable mentoring, coaching and shadowing opportunities for service providers in local school districts. KSB will provide Braille transcription training to local and regional service providers.

For information about KSB services and programs, contact Kathy Jones, manager, Principal Jeanette Wicker or Cathy Johnson, outreach director, by calling (502) 897-1583 or by e-mail through the KETS global list.

To learn more about KSB services and programs, contact Bill Molen, campus manager/interim principal, or Fran Hardin, outreach director, at (859) 239-7017 or by e-mail through the KETS global list.

Both schools are divisions within the Office of Special Instructional Services at the Kentucky Department of Education. Associate Commissioner Johnnie Grissom supervises a collaborative team, comprised of Barb Kibler, Larry Conner, Wilton McMillan, Bill Sturm and Barbara Buman, that is responsible for oversight of statewide services for students who are blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing and deaf/blind. Their office number is (502) 564-4970. Each team member’s e-mail address is listed on the KETS global list.

Billie Travis is named 2005 Kentucky Teacher of the Year

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

Billie Travis, a mathematics teacher at Scott County’s Georgetown Middle School, was named the 2005 Kentucky Teacher of the Year during ceremonies in Frankfurt in November. The annual awards program recognizes outstanding elementary, middle and high school teachers throughout the state. It is sponsored by Ashland Inc. and the Kentucky Department of Education.

Penny Roberts, a curriculum specialist and resource teacher at Muhlenberg County’s Greenville Elementary, was named the 2005 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Debbie Fowler, an English teacher at Hart County High, was named the 2005 High School Teacher of the Year.

The three join 17 other teachers from across the state honored with 2005 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards. Travis received $12,500 and a customized art-glass vase from Ashland Inc. The remaining 17 winners each received $5,000.

Travis has been teaching for 24 years, 19 in her current position. She earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Morehead State University and a master’s degree in elementary education from Georgetown College. She has completed 30 additional credit hours at Georgetown.

Travis is a national- and state-level member of the Council of Teachers of Mathematics and belongs to the national and state Middle School associations. She also is a regional board director for the Kentucky Middle School Association. She has been named to Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers and is a past recipient of the Ashland Inc. Golden Apple Achievement Award.

Travis has served two of her 18 years of teaching in her current position. She earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education and an endorsement in elementary music education from Western Kentucky University. She also has a master’s degree in elementary school counseling, as well as 15 additional hours of music education.

She is a member of the Kentucky and Muhlenberg County Education associations and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She is a member of the Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics, served as primary vice national and state Board of Education member, and belongs to the Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics, served as primary vice president for two years and received the council’s Mathematics Education Service and Achievement Award. She is a member of the Western Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics, where she has held several elected positions.

Fowler has been teaching for 10 years, serving four in her current position. She graduated from Campbellsville College with a bachelor’s degree in business administration and holds an associate’s degree in bank management from the University of Kentucky. She also has both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in middle-grades education, with an emphasis in English and social studies, from Western Kentucky University.

She is a national- and state-level member of the Council of Teachers of English. In addition, she is a member of Hart County High School’s school-based decision-making council. She was named Hart County High School Teacher of the Year in 2004 and received the 2004 Campbellsville University Distinguished High School Educator award.

Photos by Rick McComb

Billie Travis
Fowler
Roberts

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Travis Fowler Roberts

David Carnes, a 6th grader at the Kentucky School for the Blind, reads a Braille format test on the Industrial Revolution in Britain during Karen Corbett’s social studies class.
Henderson County Schools make literacy a priority this school year

Henderson County educators and parents are working together to increase literacy among students in the district. As part of the literacy initiative, parents and guardians learned how to integrate reading into their regular family activities during a Parent Academy at the beginning of the school year.

Throughout the school year, Henderson County administrators, faculty and staff are encouraging adults to read with children on a daily basis. The slogan for the program is “The most important 20 minutes of your day ... Read with a child.”

More than 600 parents attended the academy to learn reading tips to use at home that support classroom literacy activities. The evening event was designed for parents of all students — preschool to high school.

Thirteen different sessions demonstrated a variety of ways to integrate reading into family activities, said Superintendent Richey. Family Resource Centers and extended enforcement agencies, Family Resource Centers and extended learning services — distributed information to the families. All 12 students are involved in classroom literacy activities. Primary students are focused on this year's kindergarten students — the district's first full-day group — to make certain they are reading at or above grade level by the time they reach 3rd grade in 2007-2008.

The Henderson County literacy program is based on work in the Washington state Kenne- wick School District to identify and describe the attributes of an effective reading program. The research-based strategies used to teach these skills are documented in the book “The 90% Reading Goal” by Lynn Fielding, Nancy Kerr and Paul Russo.

The Henderson County literacy program is part of a district-wide reading and mathematics plan to help students of all academic levels and grade levels reach their highest potential, said Superintendent Richey.

For more information about this Henderson County program, contact Superintendent Thomas Richey at (270) 831-5000, trichey@ henderson.k12.ky.us or Ellen Red- ding, director of communications, at eredding@ henderson.k12.ky.us.

Learn to connect students to content through Kentucky traditions and crafts

An exciting way to teach creative writing, language arts, social studies, arts and humanities, vocational agriculture and practical living is to connect these areas of the curriculum to the real world of Kentucky’s traditions and economy. The Kentucky Arts Council is sponsoring The MARKET Professional Development Seminar from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville on March 4, 2005, to show teachers the many resources available in Kentucky to make those connections.

The seminar will be held in conjunction with Kentucky Crafted: The MARKET, a state-sponsored wholesale/retail event that attracts hundreds of artists and craftspeople from throughout the state. The seminar will give teachers the opportunity to:

• Interact with people who are earning their livings as writers, craftspersons, artists, musicians and farmers
• Learn hands-on arts and writing activities to take back to their classrooms
• Find out about grant resources that will enable them to bring artists and guest speakers to their schools

Guest artists Chad Schott and CoC’s Thomas will open the workshop with hands-on activities using gourds they have raised to make musical instruments and decorative items. The artists will discuss economic concepts like value-added agriculture and provide information on gourd art from diverse cultures and the prob- hetic past.

Judy Sizemore, outreach coordinator for the council, will demonstrate how to connect portfolio-appropriate writing in genres from poetry to feature articles to the hands-on activity. Guest speakers will help par- ticipants learn the economic importance of specialty items such as beef sausages, country cheese and salsa in Kentucky’s agricultural market.

Teachers also will learn how to make families of community resources. More than 30 local agencies — youth clubs, the public library, law enforcement agencies, Family Resource Centers and extended learning services — distributed information to the families.

All K-12 students are involved in classroom literacy activities. Primary students are focused on this year’s kindergarten students — the district’s first full-day group — to make certain they are reading at or above grade level by the time they reach 3rd grade in 2007-2008.

The Henderson County literacy program is part of a district-wide reading and mathematics plan to help students of all academic levels and grade levels reach their highest potential, said Superintendent Richey.

For more information about this Henderson County program, contact Superintendent Thomas Richey at (270) 831-5000, trichey@ henderson.k12.ky.us or Ellen Redding, director of communications, at eredding@ henderson.k12.ky.us.

Grant programs help teachers give students the ‘gift of art’

Kentucky teachers in early childhood/ preschool facilities and in alternative schools can bring artists, dancers, musicians, drama specialists and craftspersons into their classrooms for short-term residencies this school year. The Kentucky Arts Council will pay almost two-thirds of the cost through its grant program. The residencies provide opportunities for staff and teachers to offer students different pathways of learning by introducing them to hands-on experiences with various art forms.

Students and teachers work with professional artists right in the classroom. Each artist is trained to help teachers integrate the arts into daily content lessons. The teacher and artist work together to design the residency to meet the needs of each school's students and staff.

With a specialized training program through Kentucky Artscouncil.ky.gov and click on “Arts Education.”

John S. Benjamin, program director, can be reached toll free at (888) 833-2787, Ext. 4813, or by e-mail at john.benjamin@kky.gov.

Photo by Rick McCord

Sixth grader Jana Johnson gets an up-close look at a monarch butterfly at Bowen Middle School in Owen County. Students in Tim Marcum and Donette Gaines’ science classes learned a life lesson when the season’s first frost killed the butterflies’ primary food source, milkweed planted by the students on school property.
Read & Discuss

Extreme Learning

By Keen Babbage

Paperback, 193 pages; Scarecrow Education; 2004;
ISBN: 1588441403

A teacher and assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School in Fayette County, author Keen Babbage will be a featured presenter at the 2005 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC) March 2-5 in Louisville. He will discuss this book and show participants during a ticketed three-hour workshop how they can develop an extreme learning classroom. See story on Page 1 for more information about KTLC or visit www.kentuckytclc.org for online registration.

Reviewed by Richard Hughes
Hardin County Schools

Many times since I entered the field of education in 1968, I have been at excellent conferences and said to myself, “I wish all the teachers in my school or school district could be here.” Upon completing Keen Babbage’s most recent book, “Extreme Learning”—his sequel to “Extreme Teaching”—a similar thought came to me. All professional educators—but particularly practicing classroom teachers—could benefit from reading this interesting, relevant and practical book. Truly it is one of those books that will inform our practices!

Babbage is a credible author of a book on teaching. He is an assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School (Fayette County) where for several years he has requested to teach one class each day. This has provided him an avenue to demonstrate and practice his “approach to use the whole—knowledge, interests and talents of the students to create learning activities that connect what they know with what they need to know.”

When he taught economics, for example, he took the position that, “A textbook was not needed when the knowledge, talents and interests of the students provided a sufficient basis for further learning.” Yet, he acknowledges that textbooks are a must for some classes.

He contends that extreme teaching does not cover material; rather it uncovers knowledge, wisdom, mystery, understanding, analysis, insight, perception, thinking, curiosity, imagination, commitment and material. And, when completely and correctly implemented, extreme teaching can cause extreme learning, he says.

Babbage makes numerous contrasts between teaching to cover material and teaching to cause extreme learning. One example of extreme learning is seen in the time, effort and energy — two- or three-a-day practices — that we have come to expect from marching bands and athletic teams because directors and coaches expect perfection. They expect from marching bands and athletic teams because directors and coaches expect perfection.

Babbage says extreme learning dictates that if all a school does with students in the classrooms is cover material, then only a tiny portion of the totality of knowledge, discovery, wonder, exploration, creativity, analysis, imagination, application and brainpower of the teacher and the students will be used. Extreme learning on the other hand is infinite because the depth, width, breadth, length, quality and quantity of what teacher and students can do also are infinite.

According to Babbage, material is not covered in the extreme learning classroom. Material is uncovered as it is explored, analyzed and questioned; improved, applied and debated; connected with real life; connected with prior knowledge, interests or talents; and truly understood with depth, meaning, purpose and fascination. The extreme learning classroom continually renews itself, he says.

Babbage says extreme learning takes students from what they know to what they need to know. He offers specific examples of extreme teaching that cause extreme learning in mathematics, language arts, social studies, world history, economics and interdisciplinary units.

Babbage gives teachers pointers on establishing the extreme teaching and extreme learning mentality. He encourages readers to think of the characteristics of the best teachers they had when they were in school and emulate them:

• they challenge students and they challenge themselves
• they use a variety of teaching methods with emphasis on active involvement of students
• they are enthusiastic and encouraging
• they connect learning with students’ lives now, in their real worlds

Babbage says extreme learning takes students from what they know to what they need to know. He offers specific examples of extreme teaching that cause extreme learning in mathematics, language arts, social studies, world history, economics and interdisciplinary units.

Though he says he never plans for his classes to be fun, it is a by-product of fascination. As extreme learning is caused, students become fascinated and their learning—though demanding and still a lot of work—seems like fun.

The extreme learning classroom, according to Babbage, is organized, managed, productive, demanding, creative, interactive, interpersonal, disciplined, energetic, continuously evaluated, open to change, ready to use an unexpected opportunity, insistant on cooperation and results. It also is very fulfilling, rewarding and meaningful to students and teachers.

Extreme teaching that causes extreme learning can resolve the complaints of students that school is boring and the concerns of teachers that many students do not work hard at school. Extreme learning fascinates students, and teaching becomes productive for teachers.

In Hardin County, we are proud to have had Keen Babbage in our district on at least three occasions to present his innovative and practical ideas. He has informed our practice!

(Richard Hughes is superintendent of Hardin County Schools.)

Have something to read and discuss?

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

Share your discoveries with teachers throughout the state by submitting a review about what you like — or don’t like — about the publication or resource. For submission guidelines, contact kyschooler@kde.state.ky.us.
Kah shares Japanese education experiences with Oldham County students and other teachers

By Joy Barr

Creating an international perspective for students at Oldham County High is one of mathematic teacher Michael Kah's goals — especially after his recent trip to Japan. The experience is giving Kah the opportunity to use his content area specialty to help his students understand the differences and similarities of other countries and their people.

Kah is preparing a unit of study for his Algebra classes that deals with the population density, limited land and associated issues in Japan as compared to the United States. Kah says he has a lot to share with his students and fellow teachers since spending two weeks in Japan with 49 teachers from 10 different states.

The study tour allowed the teachers to observe education and culture in the Far East as part of the Toyota International Teacher Program.

This fully funded professional development program is sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, and led by the International Institute of Education (IIE). Shannon Murphy and Jamie Vogt of Jefferson County, Sarah Raikes of Washington County and Jason Smith, Daviess County, were the other Kentucky high school teachers on the study tour.

"This experience has given Michael a greater appreciation for the American system of education. There is evidence of much greater pressure felt by the students in Japan and the social system within the school system," said Principal David Wooldman.

Education differences

Indeed, the education system in Japan is typically quite different from that of the United States. In Japan, education is compulsory through the 9th grade. After that, senior high school becomes very competitive.

Japanese society places a heavy emphasis on the schools students attend, Kah said. There is much competition to attend prestigious schools. As a result, many young students attend juku ( cram school) after regular school in the afternoons, evenings, Saturdays and holidays to prepare for entrance exams to these highly academic schools.

During the trip, Kah spent several hours at two different schools in Tokyo, a high school and an elementary school. He said he observed many teachers "tutoring," using blackboards and having little to no student interaction.

In the mathematics classes, he understood the lessons due to the universal nature of the mathematics language. "I am a high school teacher, but I recognized the geometry that the 5th graders were being taught," said Kah.

"I believe Japanese students are taught more advanced concepts at an earlier age than our students are. There also seems to be less interaction between the teachers and students," said Kah.

Learning English as a second language is important to the Japanese, and the students learn to speak and write English very well. They spend much time practicing their writing skills, he said.

"Japanese schools are very neat and uncumbered. One interesting feature of the classrooms was that students cleaned the school at the end of the day," he added.

The Japanese believe schools should teach not only academic skills but good character traits as well. Students are taught respect for others as well as oneself.

The students walk or ride their bikes to school. There are no school buses, and students do not drive. Before entering the school, the students change out of their shoes into slippers, Kah said.

A learning experience

"I learned a great deal about Japanese history, culture, environment, education, technology and industry," said Kah. "More importantly, I learned how each of these areas is intertwined and how each subject affects the others. For example, Japanese history had some long periods of isolation. When Japan was opened to the west in the late 1800s, they began a long period of catching up to the rest of the world. This is evident in their approach to the environment, for one thing. You can't compare a subject like education without understanding the other aspects of a country."

Kah said the experience of the study tour "was amazing." The teachers spent two days in Tokyo. They toured the Eilo Museum, had a briefing at the U.S. Embassy and heard lectures about the country and its culture. Kah then went to Kyoto where he stayed in Machiyas, which are traditional Japanese towns. While touring, the teachers participated in traditional dance, Noh drama, martial arts, tea ceremonies, calligraphy and even flower arranging.

When asked about his most memorable experience, Kah shared this story: "At breakfast in Tokyo, an older Japanese gentleman and his wife approached us and began a conversation. We described our reason for being in Japan, and they told about their profession and hometown. Suddenly the man broke into tears as he told about being trained to be a kamikaze pilot near the end of World War II, but the war ended before he could join his comrades. Later, as they left, the gentleman said, 'I just wanted you to know how important your job is. With our teachers I had as a youth, I would not be successful today. Thank you.'"

"This was a remarkable experience and a great opportunity to get to know an outstanding group of educators. I am very appreciative of Toyota's efforts to support this program and encourage teachers to apply," said Kah.

Contact: Michael Kah at Oldham County High, (502) 222-9461, MKah@oldham.k12.ky.us
Donna Carrier earns a ‘star’ for teaching excellence

By Joy Barr
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Oakland Elementary's mission — visible throughout the small Warren County School — is to provide a safe, caring environment that will enable all students to reach their highest level of potential. That vision is exemplified in 5th-grade teacher Donna Carrier, who has been instrumental in helping the school increase its test scores, according to Principal Michael Taylor.

“Donna Carrier has high expectations for all of her students, and every day for her is not just a day of work, it is an opportunity,” said Taylor. “She should be commended for her hard work and achievement in a profession that is so vital in shaping the minds of tomorrow.”

Oakland Elementary is a progressive school with steadily increasing test scores. Despite many obstacles, the school has made great strides and has an accountability index of 88.4 on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

Among the obstacles Oakland Elementary has overcome are a high migrant population and an influx of non-native English speaking students. More than 60 percent of the school’s 250 students qualify for the free-and-reduced-price lunch program. Despite this, the school has met Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2003-2004 school year.

Part of the school’s academic success is attributed to Carrier’s use of the “History Alive!” program, which focuses on literacy and social studies through group work. The program’s effects can be seen in the school’s increase in social studies scores — from an index of 58.5 in 1999 to 103.7 in 2004.

The program’s effects have also been seen in the way Carrier’s students have responded to her social studies instruction. “Social studies is great because you learn about what happened in the past. And you learn about things that might happen in the future. Mrs. Carrier is a great teacher and makes learning fun,” said 5th grader, C.J. Alvey, who especially loves current events.

The History Alive! curriculum encourages Carrier’s social studies students to work in small groups with hands-on exploratory activities. “Students retain history information so much better using this curriculum. For example, students can read about ships in a textbook and listen to the teacher’s instruction, but History Alive! offers hands-on activities — and students might even build a ship,” said Carrier.

Molly Greer, a 5th-grade student, said social studies is her favorite subject. “We get to do lots of activities and 3-D projects,” said Molly. “I think Mrs. Carrier is very creative and very nice.”

And, Chris Duncan, another student, says it is fun learning new things by doing activities. “I like being able to move around in the classroom and working with others,” said Chris.

The History Alive! curriculum, available through the Teacher’s Curriculum Institute, is based on three main concepts:

- Students have different learning styles
- Cooperative interaction increases learning and improves social skills
- All students can learn

History Alive! is a good tool to use in teaching core content. All subject areas — mathematics, art, music, science — can be covered with the social studies program.

Carrier said she started teaching with a focused and heartfelt goal: to educate children and watch them grow. “Teaching is not an easy job when done right,” said Carrier. “The quality of your life and your students’ must increase.” She prides herself on enthusiasm and maintaining an excellent rapport with her students.

Brooke Knight, a team teacher at Oakland, did her student teaching with Carrier. “She is an inspiration to other teachers. Her enthusiasm for students and other teachers is limitless.”

High expectations are part of the culture at Oakland Elementary. A few years ago, the school implemented a program to change the overall climate at the school called Champs. The program — which is also used by other Kentucky schools — is a focused effort by the faculty to decrease discipline problems and increase the amount of time for teachers to teach.

The Champs program focuses on curriculum rather than discipline. The school has established routines and has the same expectations for all students. There is consistency among a very dedicated staff. “The program gave a very proactive and positive approach to classroom management,” said Principal Taylor. “Our goal is to provide students assistance in developing to their fullest potential while satisfying physical and emotional needs.”

To learn more about the History Alive! curriculum, visit www.teachtci.com on the Internet.

Contact Donna Carrier at dearrin@warren.k12.ky.us to learn more about her award-winning teaching practices, or Michael Taylor at mtaylor@warren.k12.ky.us to learn more about Oakland Elementary’s academic programs. The school phone number is (270) 563-4719.
SCHOOLS from Page 1

the handheld device and walkthrough tool would do. They talked about each part of the walkthrough and came to “a common definition on what the classifications meant,” he said.

Right now, the faculty is developing a process to use the data “to ask ourselves the ‘tough’ questions,” Thompson said. “My goal is to use this data during faculty, committee, and team meetings to lead into constructive dialogue with staff on improving instructional practices.”

After four months, the pocket PC is not only a technology device Thompson is using to improve student learning, it’s become an invaluable professional tool for him, linking this busy administrator to his work while he’s away from his office and his computer.

“It has made things much easier and time efficient,” he added. “Principals have so many more options simply by using the handheld for e-mail, calendar and other tasks. This walkthrough instrument is not one size fits all. However, it does allow for the collection of data for schools to begin dialogue and the improvement process.”

The more than 700 participating Kentucky public school administrators were trained to use the handheld devices through a program funded by a Gates Foundation grant to help educators improve their work while he’s away from his office and his computer.

A couple of them are getting up to speed on the device working properly again. Keisha Hall has volunteered with a private school in his district for five years. He manages that school’s computer network, including e-mail and several servers. He also is responsible for maintaining the school’s records for Scholastic Reader and server programs.

Three young men have become thoroughly familiar with the technology and software for the handhelds. They also use a handheld computer for organizing their own class assignments, personal computing needs like e-mail, and the occasional game.

“H-E-L-P from STLP”

By Faun S. Fishback
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With more than 700 school administrators using handheld computers in their daily work, there are bound to be glitches, problems with the gizmos and just plain frustration when a device won’t power on. In anticipation of those problems, the Kentucky Department of Education took a page from that popular axiom, “Ask someone under 20 years old for help with computers.”

The department created a technical team of more than 30 Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) members in districts throughout the state, led by four high school students. As “Gates Grant leads,” Ross Kelsch, a junior at Augusta (Independent) School, Warren Lee Moore, a junior at Lee County High, Dustin Robinson, a freshman at Nicholas County High, and Steven Wilmot, a junior at North Laurel High, are at the center of this exciting venture.

Selected through an application process, all four lead students come from backgrounds of technology service in their schools and districts. Robinson, who serves as chief lead, may be familiar to many as the “go-to guy” for the statewide Read & Write Gold project, as well as helping with video editing and desktop publishing at his school.

Wilmot has worked in his school and district doing computer repair and troubleshooting problems. Moore also fields computer-related questions at his school, as well as helping develop Web pages and protect the school’s computers from virus threats.

Kelsch has volunteered with a private school in his district for five years. He manages that school’s computer network, including e-mail and several servers. He also is responsible for maintaining the school’s records for Scholastic Reader and server programs.

The STLP leads share information through a listserv with each other and with members of the student team about problems they’ve solved. They plan to create a Web site that will allow more information storage and sharing.

The STLP leads say they are excited about working with the Help Desk during their free time. They like using their technology skills and knowledge to help others. They also feel the experience of working with others to solve computer problems is an opportunity that will increase their expertise. All four have a lifelong interest in technology and feel it will be the focus — or at least part — of their postsecondary education.

Their advice to school administrators: Learn the basics of your computers, use them in all aspects of your work and call on the STLP team and the STLP leads if you need help!

The STLP leads will discuss their work with the Help Desk during the STLP Showcase at the 2005 Teaching and Learning Conference on March 4.
**MARK from Page 1**

dren, will show high school teachers how to make content accessible and comprehensible to students with language barriers.

James Kloter, professor of history at Georgetown College and state historian of Kentucky, will provide new approaches to teaching Kentucky history.

Kean Babbage, assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School in Fayette County, will discuss strategies from his latest book, “Ex-treme Learning” for teaching any content area. (See Page 6 for a re-view of the book.)

Lauretta Buchanan returns to KTLC as a presenter for a workshop on the Self-Motivational and Recreational Teaching Strat-egies (S.M.A.R.T.S.) Learning System, a program she created.

One-hour and two-hour sessions are held March 4 and 5. Featured session present-ers include Troy Medina, Gary How-ard and Mary-Dean Barringer Medina, associate director for the Southeastern Equity Center in Florida, returns to KTLC for a session on equitable educational op-portunities for language minority students and their families.

Howard, founder and president of REACH Centers for Multicultural Edu-cation, will conduct a session on diversi-ty leadership. Barringer, national direc-tor of the Schools Attuned program, will lead two sessions on using a neurodevelop-mental perspective to understand stu-dent-learning problems.

Who should attend?

KTLC is designed to provide quality professional development for Kentucky educators and administrators, as well as be informative for school council members, parents and other Kentuckians interested in education. Because many schools get the most out of the confer-ence by send-ing a team, a special regis-tration pack-age is offered to teams of five or more people from one school.

When such a team registers, the confer-ence fee for a principal or assistant prin-cipal will be waived. This is a $100 sav-ings.

Online professional development cours-es also are available to school teams — administrators, educators and council members — and individuals. Six courses offered by the Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) will begin with a three-hour orientation and supervised work ses-sion at the conference and continue online until April 24. The fee is $100 for each online course, in addition to conference registration. Participants in the online courses and conference attendees can receive profes-sional development credit and Effective Instructional Leadership Act hours.

**BOARD from Page 1**

Attendance (ADA) rate of $25 per stu-dent.

While the board is not obligated to continue disseminating these funds for 2004-2005 based on the former crite-ria, the board decided to do so because the approach has been effective. Since 2000, the number of public schools in as-sistance has decreased from 141 to 48. Of the 130 schools in assistance during the past two testing cycles, 104 have re-mained out of assistance.

The board agreed that disseminating funds according to achievement gaps and ADA will help schools get to profi-ciency by helping them focus on their most important academic needs.

“Seven Steps Forward”

The Kentucky Department of Edu-cation staff and Commissioner Gene Wilhoit have discussed with the board what steps need to occur as the new as-sessment and accountability contract Re-quest for Proposals is designed. The cor-ners of these “Seven Steps Forward” concerns work with the current content and student performance standards.

The board has asked department staff to prepare a schedule for upgrading all content standards. This process is not one of developing new standards. Rather, it is one of updating to ensure Kentucky’s standards are aligned with emerging na-tional standards and are organized in a way that the essential knowledge and skills to be learned are clear.

While all areas of the core content are being addressed during this process, de-partment staff highlighted reading and mathematic during its review at the December meeting. These content ar-eas received particular attention due to the federal No Child Left Behind legis-lative emphasis and the on-going discus-sion of the need for better alignment at the secondary level with postsecondary and workplace expectations.

Department staff provided the board with a timeline for reviewing, updating and organizing the standards. This will allow schools to implement the clarified core content by August 2006 to prepare for spring 2007 testing.

During the past year, the board has focused on writing assessments and on specific issues related to the instruction-al time spent on portfolios, portfolio con-nexions to P-16 transition and resolving differences in teacher-produced scores and audited scores.

This process involved results of an on-line survey of teachers, administrators and postsecondary educators concern-ing possible changes to Kentucky’s writ-ing assessment. These results, which mirrored the findings of a writing fo-cus group convened by the department, showed no overwhelming consensus ex-ists among educators about necessary changes.

The board did agree that Kentucky must have a writing assessment that sets high standards for students. The board said the state’s focus must remain on what good writing instruction should be.

Members of the National Technical Advisory Panel for Assessment and Ac-countability (NTAAPA) discussed with the board issues such as the number of pieces that would be valid at each lev-el of the portfolio, student choice within in portfolio pieces, the best way to assess writing conventions, the ramifications of changing the weights of portfolio and en-demand writing, and analytical versus holistic scoring.

The board will continue its discus-sions and review of possible changes to the writing assessment at its January meeting.

**CATS Online**

The board also heard an update on the CATS Online High School Prototype. Di-rectly tied to the “Seven Steps Forward,” the online testing will provide immediate feedback that will allow teachers to deal more effectively with individual student accountability.

A CATS Online High School Prototype will be conducted for the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) in grade 10 reading and grade 11 social studies for the 2005 test administration. The prototype will include a sample of approximately 3,800 students per grade. It will serve as a pi-lot for the administration of the KCCT in online format for all students in the fu-ture.

All Kentucky high schools will be invit-ed to participate. Participating schools will be selected based on certain crite-ria such as technical capacity and geo-graphic location. Student scores from the online prototype will count toward school accountability calculations.

The next meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education will be Jan. 5, 2005, in Frankfort. More informa-tion about the board is available at www.education.ky.gov. Click on “KDE Quicklinks” in the upper right-hand cor-ner. Scroll down to “State Board of Edu-ca-tion” and click.
Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr
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NAESP convention

Improving nutrition and physical fitness
A report by Action for Healthy Kids calls on schools to take action to address students’ poor nutrition and physical inactivity. “Schools have the unique opportunity — even the responsibility — to teach and model healthful eating and physical activity, both in theory and in practice,” Improving children’s health likely improves school performance, and it may even help a school’s bottom line. Therefore, schools have a vested interest in improving the nutrition and increasing the physical activity of their students,” said David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General. Satcher, author of the report, “The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools,” cites how schools may be losing critical state dollars when students are absent due to health problems caused by poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

Action for Healthy Kids recommends that schools consider implementing best practices for nutrition and physical activity throughout the school campus. To help improve students’ health and readiness to learn, schools need to include daily physical activity; provide health and physical education; increase the availability of health-promoting foods and beverages, and offer more after-school programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks, physical activity and nutrition education.

www.actionforhealthykids.org/AFHK/specialreports/index.htm

Proposals sought for Teacher Academies
The Kentucky Department of Education is accepting proposals for its 2005 Teacher Academies through Jan. 18, 2005. Proposals will be accepted from public and private postsecondary institutions, educational cooperatives, school districts, professional associations and organizations, and other state or local public or private educational centers or groups.

Teacher Academies provide intensive, long-term, content-focused professional development in the core content areas. The purpose of an academy is to improve teacher knowledge in a core content area and to enhance the ability to teach the content more effectively so that student learning and performance will improve. Academies are also designed to foster learning communities and develop leadership capacity of participating teachers.

For more information about submitting a proposal, go to the department’s Web site at www.education.ky.gov and click on the link to “Teacher Academy Proposals Sought” or contact Sheila Vicie at (502) 564-9850 or by e-mail at svicie@kde.state.ky.us.

Leaders in Learning awards nominations
Cable in the Classroom’s Leaders in Learning Awards honor policymakers, educators, community leaders and administra- tors who demonstrate vision, innovation, action and transformation in K-12 education, in schools and in other informal learn- ing settings such as after-school programs. In addition to a three-day, all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., winners receive a $3,000 prize and the chance to be part of a national community of innovators. The online application/nomination pro- cess continues through January 2005.

www.leadersinlearningawards.org

Prichard Committee reports on teaching
“Quality Teaching Initiatives in Kentucky: A Status Report,” released by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, looks at a five-year history of teaching quality in Kentucky. The report focuses on four areas and makes recommendations in each area: compensation, teacher education and preparation, teacher recruitment and retention, and professional development. The report can be downloaded from the Internet. www.prichardcommittee.org/news/TeachingQualityRelease.htm

Schools must publish district report cards
The Kentucky General Assembly approved budget language during the 2004 legislative session that provided a one-year exemption from the statutory requirement to publish school district report cards in local newspapers. However, the General Assembly did not pass a state budget this year, and so the publishing requirement is still in place.

Accordingly, school districts must once again publish their District Report Cards in the newspaper with the largest paid circulation in the county no later than the second Sunday in February. This year, that date is Feb. 13, 2005.

Inside Kentucky Schools
A Kentucky Department of Education production 30 minutes of news and features about education in Kentucky
• Second and fourth Saturday of every month at 5 p.m. Eastern/4 p.m. Central on KET2
• Second and fourth Sunday at 3 p.m. Eastern/2 p.m. Central on KET2

Please check TV listings for air times on local cable stations. For program information, visit www.education.ky.gov and click on “KDE QuickLinks” to find Inside Kentucky Schools.
By Dennis Angle  
Western Kentucky University

The way Lori Wallin tells it, marriage rescued her from a career of changing college majors 20 years ago.

“I had already changed my major three times by the time I was a sophomore,” Wallin said. She quit college to marry Jim Wallin. In three short years, they had three children.

Lori was a stay-at-home mom for more than 11 years. She stayed involved in her children’s education through PTA and school-based decision making (SBDM) projects.

In 1998, Jim suggested that perhaps Lori should get a job at the school and actually make money for all the time she spent there.

With their youngest child entering 3rd grade, Lori applied for a position at their school.

About that time, Beth Schaefer, who had returned to the classroom as preschool teacher at Cumberland Trace Elementary (Warren County), needed an instructional assistant. She began working with her principal to find a suitable candidate.

“We interviewed several, but I quickly chose Lori,” Beth said. “Although she had no classroom experience, formal training or education in child development, I felt that having three children in elementary school would give her at least an idea of what young children might need.”

As they prepared for the first day of school, Lori was full of questions. “She was concerned with things like schedules, the location of materials and learning the names of the new students,” Beth said.

Once school started, Lori had even more questions. And, they were becoming more and more complicated: Why do we eat family style? Why do we have learning centers? What are the children supposed to learn from this activity?

“She was quick to question my practices, but she was also quick to learn and to assist with problem solving and planning,” Beth said.

Toward the end of that first year, Beth questioned Lori about her career goals. “Lori was working so hard and had learned so much, but she was being paid very little,” Beth said. “I began to encourage Lori to pursue a degree in early childhood education.”

For Lori, however, returning to college wasn’t that easy. She and her husband were saving for their children’s higher education. There was no pot of money for Lori to attend college.

Then in the summer of 2001, Beth called to say, “I found you a scholarship.”

Kentucky’s KIDS NOW Scholarships were created to provide non-repayable tuition scholarships to child care workers wishing to pursue an associate’s or a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education. In July 2001, the program expanded to include instructional assistants working in state-funded preschools.

After consulting with school district officials, Lori applied through the regional Child Care Resource & Referral (CC&R) Agency to become a part of the KIDS NOW Scholarship program. She worked with the professional development coordinator at the CC&R to obtain a scholarship. Academic advisors at Western Kentucky University helped her plan for a degree in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education.

“Of my first classes was Child Development. Our teacher, Janet Fugate, helped me understand why Beth did so much of what she did in our classroom,” said Lori. “I began to understand that working with children was what I wanted to do the rest of my life.”

While pursuing her degree, Lori still worked full time in the classroom. What she learned, she could not wait to put into practice.

“I could see tremendous growth in her each semester,” said Beth. “She began to recommend changes in our classroom. She often expressed her increasing understanding of the reasons for our actions. It was like watching a flower bud, then bloom.”

In May 2004, Lori received her associate’s degree in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education. Because of the coursework she completed before getting married, she also received a bachelor’s degree in general studies.

Lori expects to complete the master’s program in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education at Western in 2005, about the time her oldest child enters college.

(Reprinted from The Child Care Professional, October 2004, with permission from the Child Care Resource & Referral at WKU.)

Curious about KIDS NOW Scholarships?
If you want to learn more about the KIDS NOW Scholarship program and how it can help early childhood educators continue professional development, go to www.kheaa.com/programs.html. Contact the Child Care Resource & Referral office listed for your region.