Reports on minority programs show some positive changes

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

The Kentucky Educator Placement Service (KEPS) helps educators locate teaching and administrative jobs throughout the state. It also will provide much-needed information on minority hiring in local districts, Lucian Yates III, director of the Division of Educator Recruitment and Retention, told the Kentucky Board of Education at its December meeting.

The need for better data was underscored by the release of a department study on minority hiring during the 2001-02 school year. The study uses the information reported to the Office of Education Accountability from 170 of the state’s 176 districts and the department’s Minority Educator Recruitment and Retention Report.

Statewide averages for minority hires in teaching and administrative positions remain in single digits, according to the study. However, Yates cautioned board members about using this study to make judgments on the progress local districts are making to provide faculties and staffs that reflect the diversity of their student populations.

Beginning this school year, data on minority hiring will be taken directly from KEPS as each person is hired rather than being collected in a year-end report. This should provide more reliable data, Yates said.

The department also has several programs to help districts recruit and retain minorities, including programs that prepare minority educators for principal certification, identify public school students who are interested in teaching, and provide scholarships and internships to minorities who want to teach.

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators and the Kentucky School Boards Association, in conjunction with the Kentucky Department of Education, will begin an apprenticeship program for minority superintendent candidates in 2003.

Pilot Project

Teachers and administrators from the Paducah Independent, Jefferson County and Fayette County school districts told the board about new programs that are beginning to make differences in minority student achievement. The three districts are among seven participating in a pilot project to increase support for programs that close the achievement gap between African-American students and their peers. Successful strategies from the pilot schools will be applied to schools throughout the state.

With little or no additional funding, the districts are making changes in instruction and learning. They are increasing local partnerships in academics, especially among their faith-based communities; offering job-embedded professional development on cultural responsiveness; changing school cultures to reflect high expectations for all students; and targeting literacy at all levels.

“We have to close the gap or we won’t succeed. We won’t reach proficiency by 2014,” Vance Ramage, superintendent of Paducah schools, told the board.

The board also discussed Kentucky’s compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The board will meet in special session Jan. 13, 2003, to finalize the state plan that must be submitted at the end of January to the U.S. Department of Education.

In other business, the board took these actions:

• Approved the release of nearly $23 million to 736 schools to reward performance on the 2000-02 cycle of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. Each share of reward money is $300.

• Gave final approval to regulations concerning the instructional resource adoption process, the Advanced Placement program and employment of retired teachers and administrators in full-time positions.

• Approved its intent to promulgate a regulation to clarify and update the pupil attendance regulation.

• Approved a request by the Jefferson County Board of Education to use an alternative formula to allocate funds to school councils in 2003-04.

• Granted a waiver to the Jefferson County Board of Education to allow the district to sell nutritional foods from vending machines and a la carte lines in its high schools during the school day.

The board approved the request in a 5-4 vote and required close monitoring of the pilot program, which will continue through next school year.

For more information, go to www.kentuckyschools.org and enter “Board Notes” in the keyword/search box at the top of the page, then click on “Dec. 11-12, 2002, KRE Board Notes.” For information about public hearings on the proposed regulations, go to www.kentuckyschools.org and enter “Legal and Legislative Services” in the search box.
Commissioner’s Comments

Teachers ‘tell it like it is’ at second annual forum

By Gene Wilhoit
Kentucky Department of Education

On a colorful autumn weekend, more than 40 teachers came to Greenbo Lake State Resort Park to represent teachers in a two-day, no-holds-barred discussion about teaching in public schools. I was there to answer questions but mostly to listen, as were six members of the Department of Education staff.

As expected, the teachers were articulate, forthright and insightful. Their discussions included a few common themes: focus on instruction; assessment and accountability; expectations; and the status of teaching as a career.

They told me that teachers would have more time to focus on instruction, including designing lessons and differentiating instruction, if the department aligned the Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools with Kentucky’s Core Content for Assessment before sending these documents to the schools. As I listened to the conversation, I recalled that, in 1999, the department aligned those two documents with each other, with Kentucky’s academic expectations and with applicable national standards. We distributed the package to all schools on a CD-ROM titled “Teaching to Proficiency and Beyond,” and we made the information available on the department’s Web site. The teachers had sent me a powerful message that we had not communicated well about this important resource. We will try to do a better job of informing teachers about this and other department materials and services.

These teachers reminded us that we have not done all we should to support their capacity to develop and use best assessment strategies in the classroom. They emphasized that content and continuous assessment must be considered equal components of instruction, with each as important as the other in getting to proficiency. They recommended more professional development in creating and using continuous-assessment scoring guides effectively. Again, we will respond.

In discussions about the state assessment and accountability system, teachers called on the state to help them hold students, especially high-schoolers, more accountable for their performance on the Kentucky Core Content Tests. They recommended that scores become part of high school transcripts, and they suggested adding another test question: “To which colleges do you want your scores sent?” They suggested that factoring state assessments into the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship program would help.

Professional development and the status of the teaching profession were central topics in several sessions. The teachers urged the department, school districts and schools to do these things:

• Consider teachers’ calendars and workload when scheduling professional development.
• Differentiate instruction for teachers, just as teachers are expected to do with students.
• Base professional development on long-term improvement, not always the most recent test scores.
• Include more peer coaching and resource teachers who model effective instructional strategies.
• Encourage and support more teachers in seeking national teacher certification.
• Decrease work overload by reducing class sizes and paperwork requirements.
• Improve school physical environment and safety.
• Reduce gaps in teacher salaries from district to district and differentiate salaries to compensate teachers who accept higher levels of responsibility and leadership.
• Create a career path that permits teachers to receive higher pay without moving into administrative positions.
• Improve access and choice in health insurance and lower the costs.
• Market and sell the teaching profession to the public and to potential future teachers.

The teachers also focused on one of my own priorities: closing the achievement gaps that exist between various subgroups of the student population. Recommendations included reducing teacher workloads, reducing class sizes (especially in elementary grades), supporting strong instructional leadership at the school and district levels, and shifting the focus from what teachers are teaching to what teachers are teaching.

The staff and I are taking these and other comments to heart, and you’ll be hearing more about our responses. I came away from the weekend meeting prouder than ever of Kentucky’s public school educators and how teachers are making profound differences in the lives and learning of students. A prevailing theme throughout the weekend was that students matter. Our most effective teachers are getting that message across in caring ways. They are helping students make connections between who they are, what they are learning, and how their knowledge and skills fit into the world beyond the classroom.

Thanks to those 40 teachers who were willing to commit a weekend to advise me and the Department of Education. And thanks to all teachers for everything you do for students.

To respond to the commissioner on this or any topic, phone (502) 564-3141 or send e-mail to gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us.

For Web access to “Teaching to Proficiency and Beyond,” go to www.kentuckyschools.org and enter “Teaching to Proficiency” in the search box. The latest CD-ROM edition is available for $5 (plus sales tax, if applicable) from the Department of Education Bookstore at www.kentuckyschools.org (click on “Publications and Videos”) or (502) 564-3421.

On the Cover . . .
Primary student Austin Fitzpatrick uses a computer to sharpen his reading skills at Central Elementary in Johnson County. (Photo by Rick McComb)
Congratulations, Kentucky Teachers of the Year 2003!

Department of Education and Ashland Inc. recognize 19 outstanding teachers

Kentucky's Teacher of the Year for 2003 is Patrice P. McCrary, a 16-year teaching veteran at Warren County's Cumberland Trace Elementary School. The honor includes a cash award of $10,000 from Ashland Inc. plus a professional development opportunity of her choice from the Kentucky Department of Education.

McCrary will represent Kentucky in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

Patrick R. Black, a mathematics teacher at T.K. Stone Middle School in the Elizabethtown Independent district, is Kentucky's middle school teacher of the year, and Glenn E. Zwanzig Jr., a biology teacher at duPont Manual High School in Jefferson County, is the high school teacher of the year. Each received a cash award of $3,000 from Ashland Inc.

Each of the three winning teachers also received a unique piece of art glass designed specifically for the Teacher of the Year Program.

Gov. Paul E. Patton, Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit, Education, Arts and Humanities Secretary Marlene Helm, and Ashland Inc. President and CEO James J. O'Brien announced the winners on Oct. 30 in a ceremony in Frankfort.

"These teachers represent the best of Kentucky's teaching profession," Wilhoit said to those attending the teacher recognition event. "Our three winners have an exciting and challenging year ahead as they take on their roles as Kentucky's education ambassadors. Kentucky's representation in the national Teacher of the Year competition will be outstanding."

The event recognized 19 recipients of the Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Award for 2003. Each received a framed certificate, and those not receiving teacher of the year honors received $500 cash awards.

This is the second year that the Department of Education and Ashland Inc. have joined together to honor Kentucky educators. All certified teachers presented teaching in primary through grade 12 are eligible for the program. Any Kentuckian may nominate a teacher for recognition. Applications include information on the nominee's teaching philosophy, teaching experiences, community involvement, and letters of recommendation from peers, students, parents, administrators and others.

For more about the program, go to the Department of Education's web site (www.kentuckyschools.org) and enter the keyword "toy" in the key word/search box at the top of the page or contact Donna Melton at the department at (502) 564-1479 or dmelton@kde.state.ky.us; or contact Stan Lampe of Ashland Inc. at (859) 815-4061 or slampe@ashland.com.

Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Award Winners for 2003

- Janet K. Akers, Betsy Layne High School, Floyd County
- Karen W. Biliter, Phelps Elementary, Pike County
- Patrick R. Black, T.K. Stone Middle, Elizabethtown Independent *
- Jean Clement, Russell County Middle School
- Bonnie A. Cornelius, Rockcastle County High School
- Melissa E. Gardner, Woodland Middle School, Kenton County
- Dana G. Hager, Washington County Elementary
- Sharon S. Lancaster, Indian Hills Elementary, Christian County
- Patrice P. McCrary, Cumberland Trace Elementary, Warren County **
- J. Maureen Motsinger, Scott High School, Kenton County
- Charles B. Phipps, Muhlenberg North High School
- Amy D. Riley, Kenneth D. King Middle School, Merer County
- Elke R. Speevack, St. Matthews Elementary, Jefferson County
- Deborah K. Sullivan, Buckner Elementary, Oldham County
- Betty Thompson, John's Creek Middle School and Pike County Central High
- Katie C. Tiller, Boyle County High School
- Lisa Willian, Hart County High School
- Cynthia W. Woods, Walker Elementary School, Wayne County
- Glenn E. Zwanzig Jr., duPont Manual High School, Jefferson County ***

* Kentucky Middle School Teacher of the Year
** Kentucky Elementary Teacher of the Year and Kentucky Teacher of the Year
*** Kentucky High School Teacher of the Year
Educators review books and journals about the profession

How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms
(Second Edition)
By Carol Ann Tomlinson
Paperback; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; ISBN 0871205122; April 2001

Packed in only 97 pages of highly readable text are extensive field-tested strategies and practical information to guide teachers in structuring differentiated lessons at every grade level and content area. This second edition of Tomlinson’s book extends and refines the theory and examples found in the earlier version of the book through the addition of three new chapters. The book provides an insightful examination of the challenges teachers face in creating learning environments that address the diverse needs of all students and shows teachers how to use students’ readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles to confront these challenges. The book explores the particular challenges of differentiating lessons for advanced learners but also provides suggestions for structuring “scaffolds” as well as “high-speed elevators” when designing the content, the process, and the product of learning.

Submitted by Rhonda Bailey
Kentucky Department of Education

Assessing Student Learning: From Grading to Understanding
David K. Allen, Editor
Hardcover or paperback; Teachers College Press; ISBN 0807737534; July 1998

Is there life beyond the grade? David Allen addresses this issue by discussing several protocol processes such as tuning, roundtables and digital portfolios. As our group reviewed Allen’s book, we came to a consensus that some current grading procedures lack teacher or student reflection and focus on the negative aspects of the students’ learning. Grades are an end product, while assessment protocols are an evolution of student learning. Assessing differs from grading by highlighting for students and other stakeholders the positive aspects of protocols:

• Assessing builds teacher respect for students’ strengths and accomplishments.
• It helps teachers differentiate instruction to meet diverse student needs.
• It provides an opportunity for student/teacher reflection.
• It encourages deep discussion on student learning.
• It illustrates a holistic look at the student.
• It provides an alternative to traditional evaluation of student learning.

Allen says that while assessment protocols allow educators an opportunity to improve instruction, they also have several limitations. For example, the protocols can be time-consuming and subjective and can expose the teacher’s instructional practices to peer criticism.

This book provokes thought on the difference between grading student work and assessing student learning. The book’s major weakness, in the group’s opinion, is that it does not provide a strong enough argument for using assessment protocols instead of traditional grades.

Submitted by Annette Bridges,
Kentucky Department of Education,
on behalf of a book study group

Read any good books lately?

Has a recent professional development book, journal or online resource impressed you? Let other teachers know about it! Send us your review for possible publication in a future issue of Kentucky Teacher.

Please include this information:
• your name, district, school and title plus your e-mail address and phone number in case we need clarification
• the name and publisher (and Web address, if appropriate) of the resource you are reviewing
• a brief description of what the resource offers and why you recommend it — or don’t recommend it
• if you recommend it, for whom? (Teachers at certain grade levels? Administrators? Parents? Others?)

E-mail your review to kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us. By submitting it, you are granting permission for possible editing and publication in Kentucky Teacher. You will have an opportunity to review any edits before publication.
Two Kentucky elementary school educators are $25,000 richer – or will be next April, when they travel to Los Angeles to receive checks in that amount from the Milken Family Foundation.

Ruth Ann Sweazy, a reading/English/language arts teacher at Spencer County Elementary, and Howard Kenneth Osborne, principal of Campton Elementary in Wolfe County, learned in October that they were Kentucky’s newest recipients of the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. The program annually recognizes some of the nation’s most outstanding educators. Each winner receives $25,000 to use as he or she chooses.

Gov. Paul Patton, Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit and Milken Family Foundation Vice President Jane Foley made surprise visits in mid-October to surprise Sweazy and Osborne with news of their awards.

Sweazy is a nationally certified teacher with 10 years of experience in education. She earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Louisville. Her colleagues describe her as a thoughtful, caring educator who understands the need for high standards, and they repeatedly select her for leadership roles in the school. She is known for recognizing students as individuals and ensuring that students and their families have positive experiences with school.

Osborne, a member of the Commissioner’s Principal Advisory Council, has more than 25 years of experience in education. He earned an associate’s degree from Alice Lloyd College, a bachelor’s degree from the University of Kentucky and a master’s degree from Morehead State University. In his school, where 95.5 percent of the student population is considered at risk, he has a reputation as a tireless motivator who excels in curriculum development, grant writing, parent involvement, communication and creating a culture of high expectations.

The Milken Family Foundation, established in 1985, established the award to provide public recognition and a cash award to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other education professionals. The foundation presented the first awards given in 1987. Forty Kentucky educators have been recipients since the state began participating in the program in 1993.

This year, the program gave awards to 100 educators representing 46 states.
Curiosity about a new term leads primary teacher to higher levels of instruction, professional growth

By Jill Brock
Taylor Mill Elementary School

A year ago I heard the term “phonemic awareness.” Since I’ve been teaching kindergarten for more than 20 years, I thought I was hearing just a jazzy new term for phonics.

At about the time I heard that new term, I had enrolled in Kentucky’s Continuing Education Option program (see box), which in Northern Kentucky we call JET (job-embedded training). To meet my first JET goal, I had to do these things:

• analyze my school’s state core content test scores and Kentucky’s program of studies;
• identify new content knowledge I needed to have to improve my teaching and my students’ learning;
• do research;
• apply my new knowledge to my instruction;
• take what I had learned to the refinement level by presenting this knowledge to other professionals.

The second goal was to find and apply a new method of instruction to weave this new knowledge into my instruction. All of this built toward my third goal: to show professional growth. For this goal I had to learn a new method of technology, so I took training on PowerPoint presentations, presentation skills and questioning techniques.

The more I researched phonemic awareness, the more I read statements like this one from developmental psychologist Marilyn Jager Adams: “Phonemic awareness ... With four other teachers in my school, I applied to participate in Kentucky’s Reading Project as a way to learn more about phonemic awareness.

At the Reading Project sessions, I received the Developmental Reading Assessment, a teacher-administered, individualized test of reading fluency and comprehension. At the beginning of the year, only six of the 19 students in my morning class and three of the 15 in my afternoon class could pass the first level, Level A. I could tell I had to work cut out for me! To get to the proficiency level, a student had to pass not only Level A but Levels 1 and 2!

After emphasizing phonemic awareness and using the Building Blocks framework, I can proudly say that, by the end of the year, every student in both classes passed Level 2, and many went on to pass Levels 4 to 16. A few went even higher!

I feel good about what I accomplished on behalf of my students during the 2001-02 school year. I sent these students on to their second year of primary as proficient early readers.

What is ‘CEO’?

Kentucky’s Continuing Education Option gives experienced teachers the opportunity to pursue certificate renewal or rank change using the professional development portfolio process rather than completing another degree program. For more information, visit www.kyepsb.net (click on “Testing, Research and Internship”) or contact the Division of Testing and Research, Education Professional Standards Board, 1024 Capital Center Dr., Suite 225, Frankfort, KY 40601; phone (502) 573-4606; e-mail epsb_contined@kde.state.ky.us.

Teacher Jill Brock uses phonemic awareness to help Rachel Hall and her classmates improve their reading skills. Brock did extensive research on phonemic awareness during her quest to earn Rank 1 certification through Kentucky’s Continuing Education Option.
Department revamps Web site

New format will feature easier navigation, improved access

Why change a Web site that has bragging rights to more than a million "hits" (page requests) per month? The Department of Education is doing it to make it easier for visitors to find what they're looking for on the agency's Web site and to make the site more accessible to people with vision disabilities.

After months in the development stage, the improved site will go live in January 2003. The home page address will remain the same: (www.kentuckyschools.org), but users will need to update their bookmarks and links from other pages after the new site is active.

The new site will take on a new look and an entirely new navigation structure. User-friendly tools will include an enhanced search function and a site map that will more accurately reflect what is available on the site. The site will be fully accessible to people who use text-to-speech reader software, which reads text aloud.

"We're doing this for Kentucky parents and educators, but students will reap the ultimate benefits," said Armando Arrastia, director of the department's Division of Publications and Web Services. "We believe the new site will make it easier for Kentucky parents and educators to find information that will support their school improvement efforts."

The site's content will be organized into three main sections:

- **Administrative Resources** – information about school finance, nutrition services, pupil transportation, grant opportunities and other functions that usually happen outside the classroom
- **Instructional Resources** – information that pertains to what happens in the classroom (curriculum materials and information about grade-level instructional practices and the state's student and family support initiatives, for example)
- **About Schools and Districts** – information about Kentucky's schools and districts, with links to the Kentucky Schools Directory, school and district Web sites, school and district report cards and test results.

The drop-down menu that serves as the main navigation tool on the current Web site will disappear. Visitors will navigate the new site using an expanding menu that will stay at the left-hand side of every page. On the home page, this menu will show users key areas of the site. On subsequent pages, it will show visitors exactly where they are within the site and offer other content options within that category and within that section of the site.

An enhanced search function will present results in various descriptive categories and even suggest alternative search terms. It will search Web pages and the contents of downloadable files available on the site. It then will allow visitors to preview contents of these files before downloading them. This is an especially convenient feature for those who access the Web by dial-up connections, which are slower than the typical school or central office connections. By previewing these documents in their Web browsers, users will have more information before deciding whether or not to launch potentially time-consuming downloads.

The new site map allows users to view outlines of different sections or the entire site and to select any page on the site for viewing. The new site map replaces what amounts to a department organizational chart on the present Web site, which has been online since 1999.

For more information about the new Department of Education Web site, visit www.kentuckyschools.org in January or contact Armando Arrastia at (502) 564-3421 or aarrasti@kde.state.ky.us (or through the KETS global list).
February 2000, and the Paducah center, the third, celebrated its 1,000th mission in Hazard, England. Dedicated to the educational spirit of Kentucky’s Challenger Learning Centers, this nonprofit organization founded in 1986 by the families of the astronauts tragically lost in the Challenger 51-L mission on Jan. 28, 1986. There are now 45 centers in the U.S., Canada and England. Indicated to the educational spirit of that mission, Challenger Learning Centers continue the crew’s mission of equipping students in science, mathematics and technology and fostering in them an interest to pursue careers in those fields.

Challenger Learning Centers use the theme of space exploration to create positive learning experiences and motivate young people. More than 10,000 Kentucky students each year experience the excitement of simulation, merging the power of imagination with the excitement of discovery. They’re on their way to a “first-hand” post-visit activity experience “Voyage to Mars” in a realistic mock-up of an orbiting space station and a mission control room patterned after NASA’s Johnson Space Center.

The learning center curriculum is aligned with Kentucky’s science, mathematics and library standards and designed for students in fifth grade through adult. Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wibbitts calls the Challenger Learning Centers’ symbols of education for the future. “The computerized mock missions emphasize each area of the state’s content standards, going beyond mathematics and science to include reading, writing, arts and technical career skills.

Teacher preparation is critical to the mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission. Teachers must attend a full-day training session where they fly a mission.

Mission Control, this is Space Station. We are ready to begin our mission!”

Students probe the universe of learning at Kentucky’s three Challenger Learning Centers

Challenger Learning Programs for Teachers, Students and Life-Long Learners

The three Challenger Learning Centers in Kentucky feature a number of programs that tap the universe and offer something for virtually every age and group. Aries and Spires is an award-winning curriculum developed by the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Built around the latest programs offered to communities throughout Kentucky, Spires also includes Grace Coning, a teacher who died in the Challenger 51-L tragedy; June Scobee Rodgers, the widow of Challenger Commander Dick Scobee; Thomas Higg, a discoverer of comet Hale-Bopp; and numerous local, state and federal officials.

Challenger Learning Centers are part of a nationwide network of Challenger Learning Centers and science museums. The centers frequently host astronauts, educators and other special guests as part of programs offered to communities throughout Kentucky. Spires also includes Grace Coning, a teacher who died in the Challenger 51-L tragedy; June Scobee Rodgers, the widow of Challenger Commander Dick Scobee; Thomas Higg, a discoverer of comet Hale-Bopp; and numerous local, state and federal officials.

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**Distance Learning**

Teachers can attend the weekly webinars from Clements and participate in distance learning programs offered at the learning centers. E-Mission, Operation Quantum丰富多彩的课程; and Earth systems science experts local science leaders; Scienceめねぶor—or various science teams during this two-hour electronic session.

The mission challenges students to apply their mathematics and science knowledge to a real-life event.

**Summer Camps**

All three centers will host summer camps during the months of June and July. Grades two through grade seven, both full and half-day sessions. Public and Corporate Programs

Each Challenger Learning Center in Kentucky offers a variety of community programs designed to meet diverse needs. Public programs include Family Science Nights, Space Day and Meet the Astronaut. Corporate programs reflect the ever-changing needs of industry.
The Jurys are in!
Husband-and-wife teaching team builds interest in agriculture in Gallatin County

Hands-on approach helps boost high school’s science scores by 14.1 points in three years.

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Tony and Kristy Jury have always been involved in agriculture. Both grew up on farms, though different types of farms in different Kentucky counties. Both majored in agricultural education at the University of Kentucky. They’ve pursued careers in agriculture, but along different paths: he as a teacher, she as a 4-H agent.

This year, they began traveling the same road. Kristy joined her husband Tony as an agriculture teacher at Gallatin County High School. This husband-and-wife teaching team has embarked on a journey to build a strong agriculture program in a county where farming is not a major livelihood.

They teach about plants, animals, career opportunities, equipment maintenance, marketing and business finance—the traditional agricultural content. However, the Jurys also are reaching out through classes such as floral design to provide career experiences to nontraditional agriculture students. Kristy teaches in the school’s new computer-aided modular agri-science lab to give first- and second-year students an overview of 12 agriculture-related careers.

Since Tony arrived at Gallatin County four years ago, the agriculture program has grown to about 200 students a semester. “I really can’t explain it,” he said. “Interest has just exploded. It’s a lot of science and mathematics, but everything we teach has a hands-on application. I think that makes a difference.”

A few other components combine to make agriculture a strong academic and technical education program at Gallatin County:

• Connections to Core Content—Science and agriculture have a natural connection because students study plants and animals in both classes. “There is a strong connection between our science and agriculture programs,” said Sharon Parker, a biology/chemistry teacher and Kristy’s Kentucky Teacher Internship Program mentor. Parker also mentored Tony during his internship and continues as his mentor while he works toward achieving national teacher certification.

“I have noticed there are a lot of materials covered in agriculture classes that relate to Kentucky’s core content across the board, especially in science,” Kristy added. Science scores at the high school have increased from 56.8 in 1999 to 70.9 in 2002.

• Collaboration with Other Teachers—The Jurys plan instruction with Parker the mentor, and other teachers. This fall they worked on a unit with Mary Beth Wilson, a social studies teacher who spearheaded a schoolwide study of the Vietnam War era. As part of the unit, agriculture classes looked at Vietnam’s climate and terrain and how it affects what farmers grow. Kristy’s father, a conservation officer for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, showed slides and artifacts he collected while stationed in Vietnam. He also talked to students about agriculture in the southeast Asian country.

Collaboration and mentoring opportunities at Gallatin County High School “allow for optimal (staff) interactions on issues of content as well as dealing with student diversity and nontraditional teaching methods,” Parker said.

• Using Technology in Instruction—Kristy’s modular lab classes address a variety of student learning styles and agricultural material. Students work in teams and spend three weeks on each computer-based lesson. Topics range from hydroponics to meteorology, from global positioning to agricultural mechanics.

Students get hands-on experience pollinating plants, caring for fish and wiring electrical circuits as part of their studies. They use computers to complete assignments and to take regular assessments that are part of their individualized curricula. Kristy monitors students’ progress daily using a networked computer at her desk.

This nontraditional teaching method lets Kristy be a “guide on the side,” helping students when they’re stumped but otherwise allowing them to learn at their own pace.

• Career Exploration—Tony and members of the high school Future Farmers of America chapter visited 8th-grade classrooms last spring. They explained the agriculture program and how classes would fit into an individual graduation plan if a student selected an agricultural career cluster or wanted to explore agriculture as an elective in high school.

• Connections to School Community—The school’s FFA chapter has “its own name in the county,” Kristy says. FFA is the largest student organization in the world, and Gallatin High School’s chapter ranks among the top 25 highest-ranking chapters in the nation.

Photo by Rick McComb

Gallatin County High School agriculture teachers Tony Jury (far left) and Kristy Jury (far right) help students Nathan Hendren and Sarah Roberts make flower arrangements for a fundraising project. The husband-and-wife teaching team goes beyond traditional agricultural content to provide classes that provide career experiences to nontraditional agriculture students.

See JURYs on Page 11
It’s pretty neat,” Kristy agreed. “I feel so lucky,” Tony said, “that I feel guilty. It’s great having my wife work with me.”

Despite that drawback, the Jurys say they are pleased with the way things are working out for them on the job. “I feel so lucky,” Tony said. “And we have to be careful about limiting how much we talk about school at home.” It can become too easy to keep talking about school on the ride home, over dinner and in front of the TV, Tony added.

“Perhaps the hardest part of working together is knowing how and when to ‘turn off’ school. ‘We found out we could spend too much time at school,’ Kristy said. ‘And we have to be careful about limiting how much we talk about school at home.’”

“We used to be the only agriculture teacher,” Tony said. “Now, I’m a 4-H agent. Tony is in his fourth year as the only agriculture teacher,” Kristy said. “Yet, we try to be an example for the students to participate in department activities because of the visits.”

“Garnering Support – A teacher representative on the school council, Tony got permission last year to turn an unused computer lab into a computer-aided modular agriscience lab. He wrote a successful grant application and received $31,200 from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board to equip the lab. Another $1,500 from the local conservation board buys supplies for hands-on activities.

For more information about the agriculture program at Gallatin County High School, contact the Jurys at tjury@gallatin.k12.ky.us or Kristy Jury at kjury@gallatin.k12.ky.us.

Female agriculture teachers in Kentucky public schools may not be unusual. Couples working in the same school may not be out of the ordinary. But it’s not often you’ll find a married couple teaching agriculture at the same school.

At Gallatin County High School, Tony and Kristy Jury are the agriculture department.

“They teach together, they’re advisors for FFA (a student organization) together, they collaborate together, they go home together, and they hunt together,” said former Gallatin County High School principal Ray Spahn, who hired both teachers.

Until this fall, Kristy was a 4-H agent. Tony is in his fourth year at the school. Their work often kept them going in different directions many evenings, on weekends and during the summer.

Now they work across the hall from each other, have the same planning period and lunch break, and work with the same mentor. This couple is together 24-7.

“With how much they see each other every day, they have learned to play the husband and wife against each other on classroom decisions, Tony said.

“Kristy is the disciplinarian. Tony’s a little more laid back, he admits with a grin, so students have tried to come to him to override what Kristy says. The teachers have found that the best way to handle the situation is to discuss the matter and make decisions together.”

“Agriculture students Kyle Woodward and Marybeth Robinson check pH levels and plant growth in the hydroponics section of Gallatin County High School’s new computer-aided modular agriscience lab.

“‘I used to be the only agriculture teacher,” Tony said. “Now, I’m learning to confer.’"

“We remain professional at school. I call him Mr. Jury; he calls me Mrs. Jury,” said Kristy. “Yet, we try to be an example for the students of what a marriage should be. They see us work together to make decisions.”

“Perhaps the hardest part of working together is knowing how and when to ‘turn off’ school. ‘We found out we could spend too much time at school,’ Kristy said. ‘And we have to be careful about limiting how much we talk about school at home.’”

It can become too easy to keep talking about school on the ride home, over dinner and in front of the TV, Tony added.

“Despite that drawback, the Jurys say they are pleased with the way things are working out for them on the job. ‘I feel so lucky,’ Tony said, “that I feel guilty. It’s great having my wife work with me.”

“It’s pretty neat,” Kristy agreed.
Revisiting Primary
Agency responds to frequently asked questions

In 1990, Kentucky law required that schools replace the traditional kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 3 with an approach that welcomes students at age 5 and teaches them in groups based on age or ability but on individual learning needs. This approach is called the primary program.

Students are flourishing in primary classrooms in many schools, but some educators still have questions about the program. The Department of Education’s Early Childhood-Primary Branch offers the following brief responses to some frequently asked questions.

For complete answers to these and other questions, visit the department’s Web site (www.kentuckyschools.org) and enter the keyword “primary” in the key word/search box at the top of the page.

1. Does the language in KRS 158.031 (1998) mean that the primary program is now a school council option?

No. The ungraded primary program (meaning a continuous-progress program without the traditional grade levels of kindergarten, 1, 2 and 3) remains a statutory requirement. The new language attempts to focus attention on the rationale for the primary program and its components: continuous progress and success for individual students in their earliest years of school. The language in the law emphasizes the flexibility school councils have in using the tools at their disposal, including primary’s critical attributes, to accomplish the goal of individual student success.

2. Can schools have students in single-age groups 100 percent of the time?

No. The primary program’s intention is that individual students will be grouped and regrouped (sometimes in single-age groupings and sometimes in multiage groupings) to meet their individual developmental needs and to assure continuous progress. Students may also be grouped based on common interests, talents or learning styles so they may observe and learn from other children.

3. Can schools have graded homerooms?

Schools and school councils have discretion in determining the amount of time per day individual students participate in multiage settings, so schools might group children in a single-age grouping for a portion of the day during homeroom. Multiage and multiability groupings/classrooms along with all other critical attributes must be practiced to ensure continuous progress throughout the rest of the day.

4. Does the state mandate that there should be a certain percentage of multiage and multiability grouping?

A school will have fulfilled its statutory requirements for multiage, multiability grouping if the design of the program meets the needs of individual students in the school (rather than simply administrative convenience or ease of implementation), ensures continuous progress (rather than failure) for those students, and clearly demonstrates developmentally appropriate instructional practices.

5. May 5-year-olds be totally separated from others?

Yes. Typically this happens at the beginning of the entry-level year. Some 5-year-olds need an adjustment period when they enter school. In half-day programs, the entire half-day may be initially needed for an appropriate adjustment. School councils (or schools in cases where there is no school council) must determine the extent to which 5-year-olds are included with older students. The focus has to remain on the continuous progress of the individual child.

Questions about primary?

If you don’t find answers online at www.kentuckyschools.org (enter “Primary Education” in the search box), send your questions to Audrey Proctor (aproctor@kde.state.ky.us) or Jennifer Baker (jbaker@kde.state.ky.us) or phone them at (502) 564-3064.

Leisure or Learning?

State parks offer special lodging rates and classroom resources for teachers

The Kentucky Department of Parks offers rates and resources to encourage educators to think of state parks when planning outings for leisure or learning.

For recreation and leisure travel, Kentucky’s active and retired government workers, including state, county, city, federal and school employees, qualify for reduced rates at state resort parks (except Lake Cumberland) and at John James Audubon State Park in Henderson. The reduced rates for lodge rooms and cottages are available through March 20, 2003. For information about the parks, visit www.kystateparks.com on the Web. To get details about the special rates and to make reservations, call (800) 255-PARK, or call the individual parks directly using toll-free numbers listed on the Web. Mention “Commonwealth Connection” when requesting reservations.

For teaching and learning, several state parks offer opportunities to delve into the state’s history; from the Ice Age to pioneer settlement to the Civil War. Some parks are associated with famous Kentuckians, including Daniel Boone, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Cassius Marcellus Clay.

The parks welcome school groups of every size, and teachers can plan class visits to support curriculum requirements. The Department of Parks has posted a new, teacher-focused Web page (www.kystateparks.com/history) that offers links throughout the rest of the day.

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Mountjoy receives national award

Helen W. Mountjoy, chairwoman of the Kentucky Board of Education, received the Distinguished Service Award at the National Association of State Boards of Education conference on Oct. 11 in San Diego. The association presents the award annually to a state board of education member in recognition of outstanding service to public education.

Mountjoy has served on the Kentucky Board of Education since 1991 and has chaired the board since June 1998.

Haynie’s editorial art featured at History Center


Related programs for high school students and teachers include an introductory program for high school groups and a selection of online cartoons that can be downloaded for classroom use.

For a free poster about the exhibit and using cartoons in the classroom, contact Vicky Middleworth at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4425, or vicky.middleworth@mail.state.ky.us. To schedule a visit to the exhibit, contact Carol McGurk at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4461, or carol.mcgurk@mail.state.ky.us.

“Hugh Haynie drew life in black and white, but there is plenty of color in his cartoons,” says Nancy J. Glaser, head of the Kentucky Historical Society’s museum division. “The color comes in his silent commentary, in his caricatures, in the presentation and the power of his political pen.”

Photo and writing contest open to students in all grades

Kentucky students at all grade levels, primary through 12, may enter “Cities, Towns and Countryside,” a photo and essay competition sponsored by the Kentucky Heritage Council and Preservation Kentucky Inc.

Student entrants may photograph a historic building, site, landscape or structure in an urban or rural setting and then write an essay describing the historic resource and explaining its significance and the importance of protecting the historic resource for the future.

The sponsors hope the competition will stimulate student interest in historic sites and provide opportunities for students to inform their local decision makers of the importance of historic preservation.

Every participant will receive a certificate of recognition. Photo-essay winners in each of three grade-level categories will receive cash awards and other prizes and will present their essays and photographs at a Preservation Week celebration in May 2003.

Winning essays from previous years can be reviewed online at www.preservationkentucky.org/.

For more information, contact Becky Shipp at (502) 564-7005, extension 133, or becky.shipp@mail.state.ky.us.

Grant Summit set for February

Educators involved in finding, winning or managing grants for K-12 school programs are invited to the 2003 Education Grants Summit, scheduled for Feb. 27 and 28 in Washington, D.C. Summit sessions will offer news and tips related to performance and accountability reporting requirements for education grants and funding programs and to achieving the mandates of the federal “No Child Left Behind Act.”

The event is sponsored by Performance Institute, a private think tank focused on performance-based management practices for government agencies. For details and online registration, visit www.performanceweb.org/conferences/conferences_set.htm or contact the institute by phone at (703) 894-0481, by fax at (703) 894-0482, or by e-mail at info@performanceweb.org.
Documentary traces civil rights movement in state

The Kentucky Division of Forestry has scheduled the training workshops for Jan. 23 and 24, 2003, at the Kentucky Leadership Center in Fajer. Through both programs, students from preschool through high school learn environmental content that correlates to national and state standards in science, social studies, language arts and mathematics. The programs also aim to strengthen critical thinking and problem solving skills and encourage team building.

Register by Jan. 15, 2003, and receive a free Project Learning Tree facilitator shirt. The $50 registration fee covers lodging for one night, meals and tote bags filled with supplies to help teachers use the programs in their classrooms.

Workshop times are posted at www.plt.org/events/index.cfm. Click on “Facilitator Training” in the “Topical Calendars” section, then scroll to the workshop listing for Jan. 23. Information is also available from Jennifer Turner at the Kentucky Division of Forestry. Phone her toll free at (800) 866-5155 or send e-mail to Jennifer.L.Turner@mail.state.ky.us.

For more information or to order the video, contact Kate Hesseldenz at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4477; toll-free at (877) 444-7867, extension 4477; or by e-mail at Kate.Hesseldenz@mail.state.ky.us.

For lesson plans and curriculum related to the documentary, visit www.ket.org/civilrights.

Get WILD at this workshop!

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Mini-drama tells state’s history in story and song

The winter schedule at Lexington Children’s Theatre announces several opportunities for students and teachers.

• Jan. 13 – Theatre School starts. After-school and Saturday sessions for children of preschool through high school ages
• Jan. 19 – Auditions for “The Odyssey,” open to students ages 13 to 18
• Feb. 22 – Teacher preview for “There’s a Boy in the Girls’ Bathroom” (2 p.m.)
• March 1 and 2. This play, appropriate for students 9 years old and older, is a humorous and touching tale of a boy’s struggle as he learns to believe in himself.

Herald launches another story series for students


Each of these opportunities and other programs for students and educators, visit the Web at www.kctonstage.org; phone (859) 254-4546, extension 223; or by e-mail at Kate.Hesseldenz@mail.state.ky.us.

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The Bulletin Board

By Joy Barr
Kentucky Department of Education

Language arts conference coming in February
The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts annual conference is set for Feb. 7 and 8 at the Marriott Griffin Gate in Lexington. The theme is “Voices of the Heart.”
Register in advance online at www.kcte.org/conference/register.html.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is recruiting teacher ambassadors
The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is recruiting teachers from each state to serve as ambassadors in their home states. Selected teachers will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington in July for a four-day conference on creative ways to teach students about Vietnam-era history. The teachers will then share what they learn with other teachers in their home states.

The application deadline is April 4, 2003. For details, visit www.vvmf.org. To ask questions or obtain an application, contact the Memorial Fund at (202) 393-0090 or tedwards@vvmf.org.

Eisenhower National Clearinghouse
Educators can visit the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse online to gain access to mathematics and science books, CD-ROMs, videos, kits, tapes and other resources. The site also offers the full text of the organization’s quarterly magazine plus links to other publications, national and state standards, and a wealth of instructional resources for K-12 classrooms. Visit www.enc.org.

‘We the People’ competition set
This year’s “We the People – the Citizen and the Constitution” statewide competition is scheduled for Feb. 17 at the Holiday Inn in Frankfort. The annual competition, sponsored by the Kentucky Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts, is part of the “We the People” national scholastic program for teaching students about the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. School teams compete in annual mock congressional hearings.
For details, contact Rachel Bingham at the Administrative Office of the Courts at (800) 928-2350 or rachelb@mail.aoc.state.ky.us.

AWAKE seeks teachers to pilot future Web site
The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, UK’s Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment, UK’s Cooperative Extension Service, and the Kentucky Department of Education are developing “All Wild About Kentucky’s Environment” (AWAKE). This new Web site will feature information about organisms and their Kentucky habitats, curriculum aligned with Kentucky’s content standards and more.

The sponsoring agencies are looking for educators interested in piloting the site with their students. For additional information, contact Stephanie Jenkins at swjenk2@uky.edu or Venita Bright at venita.bright@mail.state.ky.us.

Virtual Library for Kids now open for business
Kentucky Virtual Library for Kids offers free, around-the-clock access to “Space Dog,” “All the Known Information in the Universe” and other publications and resources through a fun, safe and informative portal designed for students in primary through 5th grade.

The site features access to encyclopedias in English and Spanish, a digital library of historical documents and a step-by-step guide to online research. Students will need a user name and password from a community or school librarian to enter the site, which is part of Kentucky Virtual University’s Kentucky Virtual Library.
To visit this child-friendly library, visit www.kyvl.org, click on “Kids” and turn the computer’s audio speakers up. For more information, call toll-free at (877) 588-5288.

Newsletter offers tips for helping students build ‘personal assets’
Kentucky Child Now, a nonprofit organization promoting the healthy development of children, has launched a monthly online newsletter for teachers who want to help students develop 40 assets or skills essential for achievement and avoidance of high-risk behaviors. The newsletter, “Kentucky Educator: It’s Just a Matter of Time” campaign designed to inspire and empower adults to become positive influencers in the lives of young people.

To learn more about the campaign, visit www.kychildnow.org/assets/great_kids.html online. Download the newsletter by clicking on “Educator” under the “Toolkit” heading.
Questions? Contact Carol Lopez-Blethen, executive director of Kentucky Child Now, at (502) 227-7722 or celopez@kychildnow.org.

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