

GEAR UP Counselor Newsletter

Volume 2/Number 6 Monday, October 23, 2006

Highlight on Best Practices.....



If You Need A Break, Call these Babysitters in Lee County . . .

4-H Leader Crystal Price and the Lee County Youth Services Center have sponsored a Babysitting training class involving students from Lee County High school. It was a six-week class, using the 4-H Babysitting curriculum. The students who completed the course received a certificate and their names will be kept on file in the Lee County 4-H office and the Lee County Youth Services Center. If anyone from the community needs a babysitter, they can call the 4-H office 464-2759 or the Youth Services Center at 464-5023. We are excited that these caring individuals will be available to assist Mr. Addison with child care at up coming parent nights and GEAR UP activities throughout this year. Those who participated and received certification are: Haley Neiderman, Natasha Bishop, Kim Stephens, Ashley Childers, and Linda Phillips. Lee County administrators and the GEAR UP office are proud of these girls and the commitment they have made for our parents and community.

Loretta Gilbert announces that Jackson County in Partnership with KSBA (Kentucky School Board Association and the Kentucky School Council Association) for student achievement had two one-hour trainings this past week

to study the Jackson County student scores. All administrators, parents, SBDM were encouraged to attend.

Remember.....

***Mom and Dad Go to College** event (The Traditional Music Festival at Berea College) for Jackson, Estill and Lee Counties is next Saturday, October 28th (Contact Michelle Scarberry for more details.)

***Middle School Principal's Walk-Throughs** the week of October 30th.

Please note the following schedule:

Monday, October 30, 9:00 am - Berea Community Middle School

Tuesday, October 31, 8:30 am - Rockcastle County Middle School

Wednesday, November 1, 8:00 am - Estill County Middle School

Wednesday, November 1, 12:00 pm - Jackson County Middle School

Thursday, November 2, 8:20 am - Clark Moores Middle School

Friday, November 3, 8:30 am - Lee County Middle School

Madison Middle School and Foley still need to be scheduled . . .

(Contact Kim Gardner for more details.)

The following workshops have replaced the Oct 26 and Nov 9th SBS Meetings:

***Individual Learning Plan (ILP)** trainings occurring throughout the region.

(Please let me know if you are not on your school's team.)

***Kentucky Association of Financial Aid Administrators (KASFAA)** trainings occurring throughout the region. (Please let me know if you have not scheduled.)

***College Bound Visits for Berea Community Middle School, Rockcastle Middle School and Clark-Moores Middle School** should be occurring between now and Thanksgiving Break . . . If this is not happening or there are concerns, please call Sara to discuss this project immediately!

***Sara's Monthly School Visits** Wednesday, November 1st – Wednesday, November 8th, times and dates vary by school.

***8th Graders** are coming to Berea College to hear Zoe Speaks on November 14th!

Information for All

Due to the construction on I-75 South (and our good fortune), the ECU Arts and Humanities Collaborative has moved the October 26 (4-7 pm) -Elements of Music : Taking it to the classroom Professional Development workshop to (tentatively) the Artisan Center in Berea. There are still openings for this Professional Development if you are interested. Following is a detailed description of the workshop:

The workshop will be led by Zig Wajler art educator, author and professional musician. The workshop will be interactive and fun and 4.1 core content based. Simple lessons can be easily replicated in the classroom. References to African, Native American, Latin

and Asian music are made. Participants will play Classical Jeopardy and get information on the music that can then be used for testing purposes.. There will also be a songwriting (lyrics) portion. The idea of the workshop is to help teachers and administrators take the 4.1 core content to the classroom. There will also be Percussion instrument giveaways—(Pearl). Sarah emphasizes, “ these are no toys, but the real things”.

School Based Staff: If you have not turned the PERMISSION FORMS from the Fall Break trip into Linda (Sara) at the Regional Office, please do so ASAP.

[Toyota Tapestry Grants Program Offers Funding for K-12 Science Teachers](#)

Fifty grants of up to \$10,000 and twenty to twenty-five mini-grants of up to \$2,500 will be awarded to K-12 science teachers for innovative projects that enhance science education in a school or school district....

Deadline: 1/18/07

[Good Reads:](#)

JUST GOOGLE IT To court teachers, search-engine giant Google launched Google for Educators last week, including teacher guides for 12 Google services. Teachers can become "Google Certified" too. See: <http://www.google.com/educators/index.html> .

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION Since the mid-1990s, two trends have transformed the landscape of American public education: enrollment has increased because of the growth of the Hispanic population, and the number of schools has also increased. This report examines the intersection of those trends. Total public school enrollment in the United States peaked at 46.1 million in 1971 as the youngest members of the baby boom generation arrived in the nation's classrooms. Enrollment gradually dropped off, to 39.2 million in fall 1984, then began to increase once again, reaching 48.2 million -- a 23% jump -- in fall 2002. Examining data for the decade of most concentrated change -- between the 1993-94 and 2002-03 school years -- this report finds that Hispanics accounted for 64% of the students added to public school enrollment. Meanwhile, writes Rick Fry, blacks accounted for 23% of the increase and Asians 11%. White enrollment declined by 1%. During that same period, 15,368 schools, with an enrollment of 6.1 million in 2002-03, were opened. Nearly half, 2.5 million, of the students attending the new schools were white and meanwhile white enrollment in older schools dropped by 2.6 million. In contrast, about two-thirds of the increase in Latino enrollment was accommodated in older schools. Assessing the changes in the racial and ethnic composition of school enrollment, this report finds that despite population change, white students continued to attend schools populated primarily by other whites and relatively few attended schools populated primarily by minorities. The report also finds that a relatively small number of schools absorbed most of the increase in Hispanic enrollment and that those schools differ in important ways from schools less affected by Hispanic population growth. The schools that experienced the largest growth in Hispanic enrollment were generally larger, had more students on federal subsidies and also had greater teacher-student ratios--the latter an important indicator that has improved across the nation but not as significantly in Hispanic-impacted schools.

<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=72>

LOCAL EDUCATION FUNDS: LEADING TRANSFORMATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION Public Education Network (PEN) invites you to register to attend PEN's 2006 annual conference, November 12-14, in Washington, DC. Join the debate on transformation in public education and discover how community-based strategies can strengthen teaching, close the achievement gap, and build public involvement in large-scale school system reform. Keynote presenters include: Madeleine Albright, the first female U.S. Secretary of State and a bestselling author; Diane Ravitch Research Professor of Education at New York University, senior fellow at the Brookings

Institution in Washington, D.C., and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University; and Geoffrey Canada, named one of "America's Best Leaders" by U.S. News and World Report and an expert on issues concerning violence, children and community redevelopment. For more information about the conference and to register, visit:

<http://www.publiceducation.org/events.asp>

THE FUTURE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS UNIONS Over the past fifteen years, charter schools and teachers unions have battled in state legislatures, the courts, and the media. But with increasing frequency, the two groups are facing each other in the everyday operation of schools. Will on-the-ground experiences change charter schools or unions? Will existing conflicts only spread, or will direct experience lead to some moderation within each party? "The Future of Charter Schools and Teachers Unions: Results of a Symposium" summarizes the opinions expressed at the meeting and provides recommendations for how both groups might coexist while maintaining their most valued principles. Some important themes emerged from this unusual meeting: (1) Each side (often incorrectly) defines the other by the views of its most extreme members; (2) Moderate members from each group share many of the same ideas about good schooling, but each side thinks the other insists on something that will interfere with quality teaching.; (3) Both sides acknowledge the costs of their conflict, but few leaders are willing to take the first step; (4) Thin evidence about the work life of charter school teachers or how unionized charter schools operate exacerbates conflicting beliefs. This report, authored by Paul T. Hill, Lydia Rainey, and Andrew J. Rotherham, makes the case that if relations are to improve, three things are needed. First, to help ground the discussion in facts, better evidence is needed about the charter school teaching force and the impact of chartering on issues that matter to teachers. Second, more exemplars and models of effective union-charter partnerships can help show how important problems can be solved. Finally, both groups could engage in confidence-building measures to demonstrate their desire to make progress, not just give the appearance of openness.

http://www.ncsrp.org/cs/csr/print/csr_docs/pubs/charter_unions.htm

WHY MUSIC IS AN ESSENTIAL LIBERAL ART

Why is it so tragic that music is being squeezed out of the school day? Author Peter Kalkavage argues in the Fall 2006 issue of American Educator that music is an essential liberal art -- and as such, it helps students understand themselves and their world. After all, music is central to adolescents' lives. To understand the power music has over their emotions, they should study it -- especially classical music, as well as great works from other traditions such as folk songs and the blues. When studied as a liberal art, music begins to improve students' taste, to cultivate an appreciation of beauty. In a Q&A on why America's musical classics should be standard fare in schools, Wynton Marsalis concurs, explaining that the "music our children hear on the radio may feel good, like a candy bar feels good, but it has no nutrition." Public Agenda's recent look at parents', teachers', and students' educational priorities are also featured. Now that standards have been raised -- and parents in particular see that today's schoolwork is harder than what they had to do as children -- the top priorities are securing more funding for schools, reducing class size, and improving student behavior. To round out the issue, a cognitive scientist debunks the "brain-based" learning fad and American Educator takes a look at two content-rich children's magazines.

http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/index.htm

CAN PARENT GROUPS DO TOO MUCH?

Increasingly, parent teacher organizations are funding items that schools say they need but can't afford. Across the country, PTOs are picking up the tab for computers, library books, even instructor salaries and classroom aides. While most agree these items should be paid for with public funds, reports Sharron Kahn Luttrell, many PTOers say they're not going to hold their breath waiting for those funds to appear. Some worry that one-time or annual fundraisers like this are a Band-Aid that covers the need for long-term, strategic funding and could lull school boards into ignoring chronic budget shortfalls. As well-meaning and helpful as private donations are,

there will never be enough to pay for everything, says Wendy D. Puriefoy, president, Public Education Network (PEN). According to Paul Reville, if the nation's total charitable foundation dollars replaced public funding of education, America's schools could survive for two to three days before plunging into bankruptcy. "People are trying to solve a big public problem with private money, and it just doesn't work in the long run," says Puriefoy. The community's enthusiasm for equipping schools should be redirected toward advocating for increased public funding, Puriefoy says. Not only do public dollars reflect the public's priorities, but they also ensure consistency that most PTOs can't, she explains. Puriefoy's advice is, "As a PTO, ask yourself the larger question: 'What happens after my kids are gone?' If something is going to have an impact, it has to be structured, regular, and systematic." "PTOs need to say, 'The work we have to do is to help citizens understand the relationship the schools have to the quality of life,'" says Puriefoy. "Generally people know more about buying a car than they do about the way their child's school system works."

<http://www.ptotoday.com/0302ptogroups.html>

SCIENTISTS SAY VIDEO GAMES CAN RESHAPE EDUCATION Scientists call it the next great discovery, a way to captivate students so much they will spend hours learning on their own. It's the new vision of video games, reports Ben Feller. The Federation of American Scientists, which typically weighs in on matters of nuclear weaponry and government secrecy, has declared that video games can redefine education. Capping a year of study, the group called for federal research into how the addictive pizzazz of video games can be converted into serious learning tools for schools. The theory is that games teach skills that employers want: analytical thinking, team building, multitasking and problem solving under duress. Unlike humans, the games never lose patience. And they are second nature to many kids. The idea might stun those who consider games to be the symbol of teenage sloth. Yet this is not about virtual football or skateboarding. Games would have to be created and evaluated with the goal of raising achievement, said federation president Henry Kelly. There's already an audience: More than 45 million homes have video-game consoles. Doug Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Association, said there will soon be 75 million Americans who are 10 to 30 years old -- an age bracket that grew up on video games. "We would be crazy not to seek ways to exploit interactive games to teach our children."

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/education/2003309887_videogames18.html

SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTRACTING WITH PRIVATE MANAGEMENT FIRMS Five years ago, Philadelphia and its schools were in turmoil over a proposal to turn over leadership of the school system and many of its schools to a for-profit company called Edison Schools Inc. But out of discussions between city, state, and School District officials, a compromise reform plan emerged that took some of the heat off of Edison. At its core was what is now known as the "diverse provider model" of school management. This model, in which six private, outside providers now manage a total of 41 schools across the city, put Philadelphia in the national education spotlight as the forerunner in a new trend towards increased involvement of the private sector in school management. These private sector providers include both for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations. The diverse provider model has not come cheap, reports Eva Gold. Since 2002, the SRC has spent over \$80 million for school management contracts with three national for-profit companies, two local nonprofit organizations, and two area universities (although the universities negotiated for less management responsibility and more focus on support for professional development). With a vote on the renewal of providers' contracts looming next spring, however, the time to account for the providers' impact is rapidly approaching. Is this diverse provider model working? Has the rate of improvement been adequate in the schools managed by private providers and receiving extra funds? What role has the presence of private providers played in the districtwide uptick in performance? Beyond test scores, what impacts have private providers had on teaching, learning, and school climate in their schools? Developing a citywide dialogue around these questions, which includes educator and parent perspectives from the schools involved, is critical to assessing if the diverse provider model has been worth the millions already invested in it.

http://www.thenotebook.org/editions/2006/fall/diverse_provider.htm

TEST SCORES DIP WITH DISTRICTS' INCOME—*Sara's note: You have to register or have an account (free to create) to view this article.*

The first results of a new set of New York State math exams show about two-thirds of students performing at grade level, with striking disparities between rich and poor school districts, according to published test scores. The share of students at grade level in affluent districts was more than twice as big as in impoverished urban districts. The use of new tests, adopted to meet the federal No Child Left Behind law's requirements for tracking annual progress, and changes in the state math standards made it impossible to compare the results released yesterday, from 2005-6, with those from previous years. But the state education commissioner, Richard P. Mills, said there was clearly no improvement. It was the wide gap between poor cities and wealthy districts that Mr. Mills identified as a cause for alarm, reports David M. Herszenhorn. While 86.3 percent of students in rich, or so-called low-need districts scored proficiently, only 28.6 percent did so in Buffalo, 30.1 percent in Syracuse, and 33.1 percent in Rochester. "I am talking about state aid, and it's a reminder that resources have something to do with this as well," Mr. Mills said. He added: "The low-needs school districts, that is, the ones that have the resources, are higher performing -- much higher performing."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/12/nyregion/12math.html>

TWO-MINUTE DEBATE ON SCHOOLS FAILS CHILDREN & VOTERS Every survey of California voters shows that they rank education as one of the most important problems facing the state. It's constantly No. 1 or No. 2. The latest Times poll finds it No. 2 behind illegal immigration.

Democrats place it No. 1. And why not? Roughly 6.3 million kids attend 9,553 oft-maligned K-12 public schools in California. Plus, 2.5 million students are enrolled at community colleges, writes George Skelton. Taxpayers are digging deep. Counting universities, half the state general fund (\$102 billion) is consumed by education. (\$50 billion). In all, kindergartens through community colleges are spending \$55 billion -- 75% of it from the state, 25% from local property taxes -- under Proposition 98. So a lot is at stake: tax money and children's minds. Therefore, when the question of how to improve public schools in an increasingly diverse state is allotted only two minutes in an hour-long televised candidates' debate -- the only debate of the gubernatorial campaign -- it's mind-boggling and irresponsible. Candidates were asked, "What kinds of policies would you support to improve the performance in California's public schools, in one minute?" Rather than two minutes on education, the candidates should have been required to spend 20. It might have enlightened voters and certainly would have forced the candidates to think more about how to better spend the taxpayers' billions.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/education/la-me-cap16oct16.1.964685.column?coll=la-news-learning>

PUBLIC TO DRIVE SCHOOL REFORMS

Denver Public Schools Superintendent Michael Bennet's approach to improving the city's high schools is becoming clear: Give power to the community. School administrators are about to launch talks about how to improve North High, the third of 12 Denver high schools to start reform. He has made it clear that he wants all his schools to be rigorous, high-performing and headed by a strong principal. Beyond that, he wants the community to choose school designs, whether they are arts magnets, K-12 small schools or Montessori programs. He is even taking that a step further with the district's new "beacon schools," which gives parents, community advocates and teachers an opportunity to create new schools or new programs in existing schools. "I don't know of another way of doing it," Bennet said. "You can write a plan and tie a pretty ribbon around it, but ... if there is no strong leader and the community doesn't believe in it, it doesn't work." This community approach is not completely untested, reports Allison Sherry. But it is being closely watched by national urban school-reform experts who, after more than \$1 billion in private money invested in the issue nationally over the past decade, still don't have a single prescription for curing what ails most cities: low-achieving students and unacceptable graduation rates.

http://www.denverpost.com/search/ci_4498483

THE DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PHILADELPHIA'S DROPOUT CRISIS Only about half of the ninth graders in Philadelphia's public schools graduate in four years, and 30,000 young people dropped out of that city's high schools between 2000 and 2005, creating a "dropout crisis" with far-reaching economic and social consequences. according to a study released Thursday. But dropping out is predictable and preventable, especially in large city public schools that produce many of the nation's dropouts, says Johns Hopkins University researchers Ruth Curran Neild and Robert Balfanz. In "Unfulfilled Promise: The Dimensions and Characteristics of Philadelphia's Dropout Crisis, 2000-05," they draw on extensive data from Philadelphia schools and social service agencies not only to establish the problem but also to provide insight on how cities across the country can solve their dropout problem. "This report can help big city school districts gain a deeper understanding of the dimensions and characteristics of the dropout crisis. It provides a road map on how to find and establish the best prevention and intervention strategies to keep all students on the graduation track." said Balfanz, a research scientist and co-director of Talent Development High Schools at Hopkins.

http://www.csos.jhu.edu/new/Neild_Balfanz_06.pdf

BEST EVIDENCE ENCYCLOPEDIA: RESEARCH REVIEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED Which educational programs have been successfully evaluated in valid scientific research? The Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education at Johns Hopkins University, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, has created a free website called the Best Evidence Encyclopedia (The BEE). The BEE contains educator-friendly summaries of research on educational programs as well as links to the full-text scientific reviews. The reviews, written by many qualified individuals and organizations, focus on the programs educators should consider to improve their students' achievement: math and reading programs, comprehensive school reforms, technology applications, and more. At this website you will find reliable, unbiased summaries and detailed reports on high-quality evaluations of educational programs.

<http://www.bestevidence.org/>

AFTERSCHOOL & STATE EDUCATION FINANCE FORMULAS: A PRIMER This strategy brief, by Sharon Deich with Amanda Szekely, developed for the Statewide Afterschool Networks, explores the challenges and potential opportunities of incorporating funding for afterschool programs into state education finance formulas. The primer lays out the "basics" of state education finance formulas and how they vary across the states, discusses the current educational context, and provides some considerations for determining if this strategy might make sense in a state -- either in response to a legal challenge to the financing structure in a given state, or as part of a distinct effort to modify a state's finance formula. To download this brief, go to:

http://www.financeproject.org/publications/formulas_final.pdf

You Gotta Read:

Parents' Misperceptions About Financial Aid, College Savings, and Debt

Most parents have misperceptions about the amount of financial aid their children will receive, but have a relatively good idea about the cost of college, according to a recent survey published by Alliance Bernstein Investments. The survey, [*Failing Grades? American Families and Their College Saving Efforts*](#), found that 95% of all parents intend to pay at least some of their children's college expenses and feel that helping with those expenses would be the best investment they could make in their child's future. However, when asked to rate themselves on being financially prepared to pay for their children's college educations, 34% gave themselves a grade of "D" or worse. Of the 1,358 parents surveyed, only 27% felt they were very likely to reach their college savings goal. The study suggests there is a lack of urgency partly because 84% of parents

felt that there were lots of scholarships that will help them pay for some of their child's higher education costs. Meanwhile, almost all of the 200 financial aid administrators (FAAs) surveyed thought that parents "have a false sense of security that colleges will help them cover education costs."

"It's important to remember that financial aid is meant to be a last resort, not a way for mitigate college costs," said Dallas Martin, president of NASFAA.

The reality is much different than most parents' perception, according to the survey. Two-thirds of aid administrators surveyed said the current system does not meet the needs of many students and their families. Nearly 75% said that less than half of those who apply for aid are financially able to meet their expected family contribution, and 61% said they thought it would be a major financial hardship for the average family applying for aid to meet their EFC.

"The discouraging reality is that college costs have skyrocketed and federal financial aid has eroded," Martin said. "The result is that the doors of educational opportunity have closed for many of our nation's youth because they cannot afford to attend college. It's critical for parents to have more realistic expectations for financial aid and adjust their savings efforts accordingly."

An overwhelming 97% of all FAAs surveyed felt that families have become more reliant on financial aid in recent years and 99% said that even wealthier families are looking for ways to reduce or avoid college costs.

"With college costs at an all-time high, parents are more likely to limit how much they are willing to spend on higher education expenses," Martin said. "As a result, many young adults are picking up more of the tab for their undergraduate educations, and accumulating heavy debt burdens in the process."

The survey found that parents' believed that graduating without debt was an advantage, but 63% saw student debt as a "fact of life." However, 57% of the administrators surveyed said they would not let their own children take out the average loan amounts borrowed by today's college students.

Aid administrators also saw the amount of borrowing as a potential problem. Nearly 95% of administrators expressed concern about the amount students were borrowing and nearly all said that they expect borrowing to continue to increase in the next decade.

This entire [Alliance Bernstein report](#) is available online.

The above article was written By Justin Draeger, NASFAA Assistant Director for Communications

The Last Thing: It's a Boy!

Everyone,

We have a new baby! Rylan Stone arrived Wednesday morning at 1:35 a.m Rylan is 5 lbs. 15 oz and 20 1/2 inches long. We should have a link to Baby Rylan's photo after he has officially left the hospital. We will send it out when we have it.

We have worked with Linda to ensure that all her GEAR UP responsibilities are covered while she is out enjoying Baby Rylan. If you need assistance with any GEAR UP matters, please email Sara and she'll point you in the right direction.

Dreama