

GEAR UP Counselor Newsletter

Volume 2/Number 13

Friday, February 23, 2007

Highlight on Best Practices.....

Fred McQueen has capitalized on a free publication from the Kentucky Education Cabinet's Department of Workforce Investment. He is using a free booklet titled, American Careers Planning Guide with the **Jackson County** 8th grade students and their parents. This magazine-type publication is eye catching and entertaining. It includes lots of fun activities and discussion exercises designed to engage families in conversation about the future. Fred shared that the books are free and an easy tool to implement—for more information and ways to use, please contact Fred McQueen.

In **Lee County**, Willie Addison tapped into the heart of the moment to let students know how important they were!



Idea to Try.....

Send copies of your school's GEAR UP Newsletters for students and parents to local doctor's offices, dentists, Jiffy Lubes, Great Clips or anywhere else people have to wait. It's a great way to tell a captive audience about GEAR UP and your school. Taken from National School Public Relations Newsletter

Remember.....

***School Based Staff Meeting** in Berea on March 1st 2007. This will be a full day meeting—beginning at 8:30 in the WaysMeet Space, Short Street (behind Boone Tavern). We will end by 3:00.

***Individual Meetings with Sara** will occur March 5th – 9th.

Information for All

March 5th – 9th is **National School Breakfast Week** according to the National School Public Relations Association Newsletter. Remember to thank everyone who works hard to keep us nutritionally healthy and satisfied!

LIKE, YOU ARE SO INVITED TO SUMMER CAMP!!

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in partnership with **NASA and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center** is announcing four Professional Development Workshops for Summer 2007!

The workshops are titled BUILDING BRIDGES FROM FORMAL TO INFORMAL EDUCATION and are designed for educators out-of-the-classroom (GEAR UP Counselors, FRYSC personnel, those involved in TRIO, librarians and after school program directors) as well as classroom teachers. Each workshop will have a different theme and will offer you the opportunity to work with NASA scientists, engineers and educators to create incredible activities and experiences for your students.

There is no charge for the Rocketry, Robotics, or Astronomy Workshops and educators from the Appalachian region are give priority. Participants may attend one or more workshops scheduled in June and August. For more information, please go to www.spacecamp.com/educators/arc

GEAR UP SBS—you are encouraged to attend if it fits your summer schedule. If you are interested, please let me know!

The following is a note from **Sarah Evans**—EKU Arts & Humanities Collaborative Coordinator:

This just came across the list-serve. So in case you didn't get it I wanted to send it on.

Testing Information for Arts and Humanities:

- *There will be 6 test forms*
- *16 multiple-choice questions per form that count*
- *1 open response per form that counts*

Now, there will also be some items that don't count and are being field tested only. There will be one open response per form and three multiple choice items per form that are being field tested. That is probably where the numbers in the message below came from.

Field test items are on the forms so that data can be collected on how reliable those items are. If a field tested item shows well it can then move forward to become an actual live item the following year.

A Reminder/Request for School-Based Staff.....regarding paperwork!

Robin Adams and our student workers have begun the task of compiling weekly paperwork since Becky's graduation. During their learning curve and our peak-APR time, it is essential that all lists of students and parents are typed. It is impossible for those of us with no connections to the students to decipher their handwriting. The second source of confusion is when students and parents both sign their names intermingled on running lists. We don't know students from parents. **Our request, is that you run student list from STI and highlight the student names in attendance (or if it's easier, highlight the absentees)—just note which method you use. And for parent events, have parents highlight their child's name on the STI list and turn in the highlighted copy with the total # of parents for each student noted. If your meeting has small #'s you may type a list of attendees or continue to write 6 or less name on the bottom of the activity sheet.**

Good Reads:

Academic Progress Slips When Snow Interrupts Class For children, it might seem a gift from above -- an unscheduled holiday of sledding and snowball fights, or a chance to sleep in and then laze in front of the TV. But what parent hasn't spent at least one snow day wondering: Shouldn't that kid be in school? Now a college professor is launching a study to measure the brain drain that comes when slick roads close schoolhouse doors. When youngsters are sliding down snow-covered hills, their test scores might also be falling, says Professor David Marcotte. There's a "quite substantial difference" in scores between years when the winters are white and when they are warm, says Marcotte, an economist who studies education. His hunch is that time lost in the heart of the school year can never really be reclaimed and that schools pay the price in lower scores on all-important standardized tests. Snowy winters can skew test scores, Marcotte says, because the first tests are administered in mid-March, regardless of school closures in recent weeks. A few makeup days tacked onto the end of the school year don't make a difference, reports Julie Scharper in The Baltimore Sun.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/bal-md.snowdays14feb14,0,773899.story?coll=bal-pe-maryland>

Beyond the Bake-sale: The Essential Guide to Family – School Partnerships This innovative guide reveals how to build strong collaborative relationships and offers practical advice for improving interactions between parents and teachers, from insuring that PTA groups are constructive and inclusive to navigating the complex issues surrounding diversity in the classroom. Written for educators as well as parent and community leaders, this book is packed with tools to engage families in ways that will improve student achievement. Anne Henderson, Karen Mapp, Vivian Johnson and Don Davies pack this one-of-a-kind volume with tips from principals and teachers, checklists, and an invaluable resource section. You can read excerpts at: <http://www.ncpie.org/>

American's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation's Future: Our nation is in the midst of a perfect storm, according to ETS researchers -- and the forecast is grim -- unless we invest in policies that will change our perilous course. A new report from ETS's Policy Information Center looks at the convergence of three powerful sociological and economical forces that are changing our nation's future: substantial disparities in skill levels (reading and math); seismic economic changes (widening wage gaps); and sweeping demographic shifts (less education, lower skills). There is little chance that economic opportunities will improve among key segments of our population if we follow our current path. To date, educational reform has not been sufficient to solve the problem. National test results show no evidence of improvement over the last 20 years. Scores are flat and achievement gaps persist. Hope for a better life -- with decent jobs and livable wages -- will vanish unless we act now. We must raise our learning levels, increase our reading and math skills and narrow the existing achievement gaps, or these forces will turn the American Dream into an American Tragedy -- putting our nation at risk.

<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.1488512ecfd5b8849a77b13bc3921509/?vgnextoid=e9f3d944c8b70110VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=f993d944c8b70110VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

Pre-College Programs Make the Difference For Many Low-Income Students

The college-readiness movement is evolving and growing, observers say. However, the sheer number and variety of college-readiness programs may be a shortcoming - even if reliable measures emerged to evaluate programs, the best practices in one initiative may not apply to another.

http://diverseeducation.com/artman/publish/article_7022.shtml

School Uniforms: There is no Free Lunch

The basic argument for adopting school uniforms is that merely a change of clothes will bring about desired behavioral and academic student outcomes. That a uniform transforms individuals appears to be at the heart of the argument. But, does just wearing a uniform bring about changes in behavior? Student behavioral change, school cultural change, and higher achievement, all for little to no cost, must be the holy grail of school remedies, writes Todd A. DeMitchell in Teachers College Record. But, will the bromide of only a change of clothes bring about these desired outcomes? Are school uniforms a real remedy for the thorny problems that beset our public schools or are they just a placebo that masks the heavy lifting that real achievement and school cultural change require? If wearing a school uniform brings about behavioral changes and enhanced academic achievement, should we require that teachers and principals also wear the same uniform? Or, does the magic of a uniform only work for students?

<http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=12891>

The Right to An Education

Education, "that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations", is one of the most critical issues in any society. How we raise our children reflects our values and beliefs and affects what our nation will become. It is vital to the preservation of our liberty, in fact. But is it a right? On what basis is education considered a right? According to the blog "Principled Discovery" the conclusion that education is a right and thus must be provided by the state is a poorly constructed argument. Such arguments are not going to serve our children well as we enter a new age of federal control and direction in education. Rights imply responsibility on the part of the individual, not society. The only role the government should have in regards to our basic rights is in securing them. If one's life, liberty or property is endangered by another human being, it is the proper role of civil government to prosecute those individuals accordingly. It is not, however, the responsibility of civil government to maintain our health or guarantee us a certain standard of living. Nor is it the responsibility of civil government to guarantee citizens a minimum standard of education or define exactly what constitutes an education. Thanks to Alexander Russo at

www.ThisWeekinEducation.com for pointing the NewsBlast to the article.

<http://gottsegnet.blogspot.com/2007/02/right-to-education-part-i.html>

Hokey Pokey or Hanky Panky?

Freak dancing. Dirty dancing. Bumping and grinding. It doesn't matter what the kids call it these days. What does matter to hundreds of Gig Harbor High School students is that administrators cut short a campus dance last weekend and have suspended dances for the rest of the year, at least temporarily. The promiscuous behavior came to a boiling point Saturday at Gig Harbor High's dance, which the school estimates drew about 700 students. Principal Greg Schellenberg said the sexually suggestive moves started with a few teens, then quickly spread even after administrators warned they would send everybody home. With a sense that he was losing control of the crowd, Schellenberg stopped the dance about 10 p.m., with more than an hour left. Some students criticized the decision because it also punished those who followed the rules. Many teens spent hundreds of dollars on tickets, semi-formal attire, dinner, corsages and other expenses related to the ritual of adolescence, reports Brent Champaco for the Tacoma News Tribune. Gig Harbor is one of the few schools where administrators have stopped an event because of risqué dancing, but it is hardly the first to tackle the issue. Some adults can remember their high school dances, when they had to face their partner and stand a minimum distance apart. Conflicting inter-generational morals were captured in movies such as "Footloose" and "Dirty Dancing" before today's crop of teens was even born. But over the past decade, pop culture loosened its standards on sexual taboos. Images of bumping and grinding in large crowds now appear regularly in movies, music videos and on the Internet.

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/education/story/6368167p-5681349c.html>

Partnership to Promote Student Wellness

More and more, creative methods are needed for school partnership efforts with community groups. Partnerships are ultimately for the benefit of your students, but can also enhance your school's community relations too. This week's scenario looks at how Portland (Ore.) Public Schools garnered a partnership with a local sports team to promote student health and wellness. One tip: In addition to the curriculum materials and ongoing messages to students regarding wellness, the team players and coaches visited the schools to share this message. For more: <http://www.nspr.org/cgi-bin/dpm.exe?FT=E&EF=sub.htm&PAGEID=5&UN=&UID=0>

Did Your Members of Congress Protect Children?

The 109th Congress met for less time on the people's business than any Congress in half a century. Not since the infamous "Do Nothing Congress" of 1948 -- so named by President Harry Truman -- has Congress chosen to convene to do the people's work for so few days. At a time when our country and children face critical issues, the 109th Congress failed to address them. According to the CDF Action Council, the 110th Congress must reverse this course. More than nine million children are uninsured and millions more are underinsured, denied the critical health and mental health care benefits all children need and get in all other industrialized nations. Despite the urgent needs of our most vulnerable children, in 2006, Congress failed to: (1) Maintain health coverage for all children currently eligible for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, help the 9 million uninsured children, or adequately respond to the needs of Katrina children who are still suffering; (2) Increase funding to maintain and expand quality services for children in the Head Start program; (3) Restore cuts in child care funding and provide the needed increase to help low-income families work; (4) Increase funding for education and special education programs; and (5) Raise the minimum wage to help millions of Americans struggling to keep a roof over their heads, food on their tables and meet their families' health care needs. Our national budget defines our national values, priorities and choices. The 109th Congress said children, the poor and low- and moderate-income working families were less important than the privileged and powerful special interests. Click the link below to read the Children's Defense Fund's 2006 Congressional Scorecard.

http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?pagename=act_learn_scorecard2006&JServSessionIdr001=qeo84cms91.app1b

That will be \$36.13 please: A California school district is asking parents to make a donation to the district for the amount it loses every time a student is absent for a reason other than illness. They say such absences cost the district \$223,500 last school year. "If a child is sick, we want that child to stay home," Superintendent Susan Silver said. "But if the child is out skiing or going to Disneyland or whatever, that has a financial effect on other children in the district."

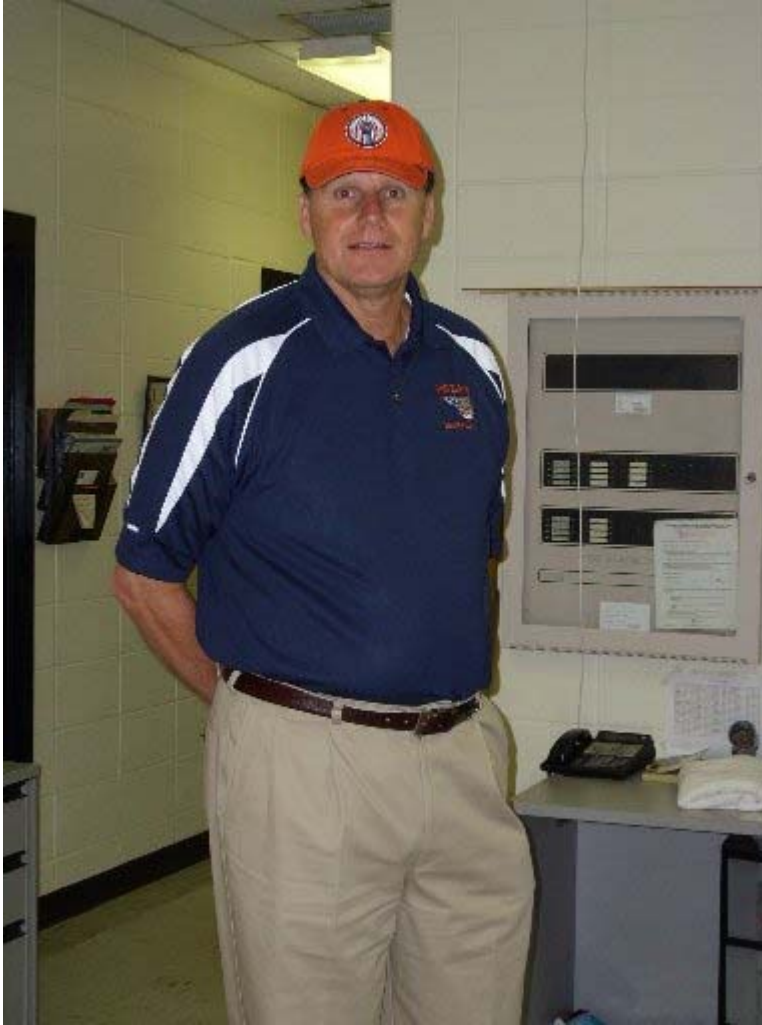
<http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/16691943.htm>

Eight for 2008: Education Policy Guidebook for Presidential Candidates Education remains a top 10 priority for the American people even during a divisive war and amid competing national concerns, according to the Gallup Poll. It is especially salient for today's presidential candidates because the historic No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has increased Washington's influence over and responsibility for local schools to unprecedented heights. And with stubbornly persistent racial and income gaps in student outcomes, it is clear that too many public schools still are not the engines of equal opportunity they should be. In a new report, Education Sector offers eight education ideas for the 2008 presidential campaign. They cover the educational spectrum, from preschool to higher education. They range in scope from big ideas that would chart entirely new directions for policymaking to others that would simply help schools and colleges improve what they are already doing. These ideas are neither Democratic nor Republican. They are pragmatic solutions to real problems that both parties can get behind. They have realistic goals and

price tags. The eight ideas include: (1) Unlock the Pre-K Door; (2) Offer Teachers a New Deal; (3) Create a National Corps of "SuperPrincipals"; (3) Open New Schools in Low-Income Neighborhoods; (4) Launch Learning into the 21st Century; (5) Reward Hard-Working Immigrant Students; (6) Give Students a Roadmap to Good Colleges; and (7) Help Students Help Others.

http://www.educationsector.org/research/research_show.htm?doc_id=464943

The Last Thing:



Mr. Norwell, Principal at Foley Middle School models his college-attire-of-choice in support of GEAR UP's recent College Awareness Activity sponsored by Cindy Saylor and Mary Anne Valentin!