

## Guskey Details The *Battle* Over Report Cards, Shares Ideas On Policies That Work

By Sandee Crowther  
Executive Secretary

Underlying any new look at how to use report cards gets at various notions of accountability which becomes very political, noted Dr. Tom Guskey in his keynote address at the KSDC Spring Conference. Guskey said the first question educators might want to ask is: *Why do we have grade cards?* If a building staff responded to this question in a staff meeting, they would probably find that educators give six broad categories:

1. To communicate to parents.
2. For students to self-evaluate.
3. To group students for sorting.
4. To provide incentives for students to learn.
5. To document students' performance to evaluate school programs.
6. To show lack of effort.

But rather than consensus within those categories, typically educators don't agree on why we grade. Guskey notes as educators, we must overcome this and not try to serve too many purposes. In fact, some of the purposes noted above are counter to each other. For example, a focus on 1 and 2 leads to forgoing 3 and 5. Guskey added that 90% of our school districts are failing because they do not agree on purpose. He then suggested that educators looking toward grade card reform decide *first on the purpose*.



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### *Educators don't agree on why we grade*



Jill Smith, 05-06 KSDC President-elect, visits with Dr. Tom Guskey following his presentation at the KSDC Spring Conference.

Another factor Guskey asked educators to consider is using the grade card as a link to *parental communication*. If report cards are for parents, parents have to understand them. Take a look at your grade cards. Are there words parents don't understand, such as "emerging?" If we mean "beginning" why not use that word? Another word that is confusing is "developmental." Most parents think it means "remedial."

According to Guskey, a third area where educators need to build consistency in grade card reporting involves *evidence*. What sources of evidence do we use to mark our report cards? If one teacher uses "day late means grade lower" is that using punctuality as a factor in grading? Other teachers might not agree punctuality should be factored into an academic grade. As Guskey points out, educators often disagree on what counts and it is different in different classes. Some students see this as a plus, but most see it as a mystery.

#### **In Brief**

1. Teachers don't have training in grading.

They do what was done to them – or

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## Calendar Countdown

### NSDC Summer Conference

for School-based  
Staff Developers

(a *first-time event*)

July 17-19, 2005

Chicago, IL

For additional information,  
see ad on page 3.

### 2005 Fall Institute

#### Instructional Strategies That Work

Deb Pickering

November 2-3, 2005

Wichita Airport Hilton

Wichita, KS

### NSDC Annual Conference

December 3-7, 2005

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### 2006 KSDC

#### Spring Conference

February 7-9, 2006

Wichita, KS

## KSDC Board Meetings

### Board Advance

June 8-9, 2005

The Barn

## NSDC News

### Blue Valley

High School is one of the

“12 under 12 Schools”

committed to reaching the

NCLB proficiencies by 2012.



KSDC President's Column

## Blue Ribbons In A 'Can'

By Terry Eis

KSDC President

Recently I heard Commissioner of Education Andy Tompkins describe an experience he had with three very different Kansas schools. In each situation, Commissioner Tompkins was invited to celebrate the academic successes of students attending what are considered to be Blue Ribbon Schools. These schools received the accolade because the educators and students achieved tremendous gains in spite of educational risk factors. In

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### Most of the time when

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or

'I don't  
want to.'

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responsible for the learning of all students.

I suspect that the individuals teaching in the schools Dr. Tompkins visited are no different than you and I. I suspect that the students are not unlike those in all other schools throughout the state, and I doubt that the administrations, community members, and parents rise far above the “norm.” So, if my assumptions are correct, how did these students and teachers move from “basic and unsatisfactory” to “advanced and exemplary”? I've given this some reflection time and while I can't claim to have the absolute answers, I have some speculations.

Actually, my reflections started long before I heard Dr. Tompkins' comments

because I started to challenge the well-worn reason we often give for why something isn't possible, that reason being “I CAN'T”! Frankly, as I began to ruminate over the meaning of *I can't* and the truth of the statement, I realized that most of the time when I say, “I can't,” I really mean “I won't” or “I don't want to.” Rarely does my *I can't* response have anything to do with my ability; it has lots to do with my motivation, desire, or will.

To ensure my understanding of the word *can* was accurate, I googled the word and found the following uses:

1. Used to indicate physical or mental ability
2. Used to indicate possession of a specified power, right, or privilege
3. Used to indicate possession of a specified capability or skill

What I found most interesting, though, is that the word *can* is a variation of the word *cancellation*. When I discovered that piece of information, my wandering thoughts seemed to fall into place and make sense to me.

At this point, you may be wondering what my point is so I will get *to the point*. As we end this school year and prepare for the next, we no longer will have the luxury of *planning* for changes resulting from *No Child Left Behind* and the new QPA, Kansas Professional Development Program, and Kansas Performance Licensure regulations, just to name a few. We will not be able to take a wait and see attitude toward the Kansas State Assessments and related standards. All the changes become “real” for all of us and we must take the actions required to succeed. Therefore, saying, “We can't” or “I can't” will not get us where we need to be.

Each of us has the responsibility to resist using the tired refrain of *I can't* and realize that we *can*. We have, in most cases, the physical and mental ability to do the job; we have the

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March 2005

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An affiliate  
of the  
National Staff  
Development  
Council

# Grading Practices Vary From Classroom To Classroom

*continued from page 1*

- done most recently which would be their college experience.
2. Grading and reporting are NOT essential to the instructional process. Teachers can teach without grades and students can learn.
  3. Checking is essential – this is different – checking is diagnostic and the teacher is the advocate. On the other hand, grading is evaluative; the teacher is judge. Similar to principal’s role with teachers.
  4. Teachers often punish kids academically, for behavior – there are consequences, but maybe not the grade.
  5. Decide purpose first for reporting – form follows function, method follows purpose. Staff might consider phone calls, student-led conferences, etc. Each strategy would have the purpose defined leading to a multi-purposed grading system.
  6. There are many mathematical ways to figure a grade. Some teachers use

median, mean (influenced by extreme scores) or the average by throwing out the lowest score. Some use different practices for different students which doesn’t make it objective. **However, mathematical precision does not yield fairer or more objective grading.** Courts don’t accept the defense that a grade is mathematically correct and that all students are treated in the same way.

7. Questionable Practices:
  - a. Averaging to obtain a course grade
  - b. Giving zeros for work missed or work turned in late. The intent behind a zero is to punish a student. An alternative might be to have consequences such as being assigned to attend a mandatory after-school hour in order to complete the assignment. (The school board must support this idea because it costs money.)
  - c. Taking credit away from students

## *Guidelines from Guskey*

1. Begin with **clear statement of purpose.**
2. Remember to provide accurate **understandable descriptions of student learning.**
3. Use grading and reporting to **enhance teaching and learning.**

for infractions. How do we count homework? If homework is 10%, not doing it would lower one letter grade. An alternative option might be to say homework is worth 5% and it is an add-on to major exams. Since students don’t know how well they will score on an exam, they would be wise to “feather their nests ahead of time.” ■

### Most Common Forms for Grade Cards

- **Letter Grade** is the most common. The advantages are that they are a brief description of adequacy and generally understood. But the disadvantages include that they require the abstraction of lots of information, cut offs are arbitrary, and they can easily be misinterpreted. Also with grades do we want a 5-category system or 12-category with pluses and minuses? If more is better why stop at 12? Be forewarned: With more categories, there is more subjectivity.
- **Standards Based** (a checklist of skills)  
The advantage is this is a clear description of achievement and it is useful for diagnosis and prescription for future instruction.
- **Narratives**  
These are extremely time consuming and often comments become standardized.

## NSDC Summer Conference for School-Based Staff Developers (a first-ever event)

July 16 to 19, 2005

Chicago Marriott Hotel

Three keynote speakers

45 breakout sessions

### Participants will:

- Acquire tools such as examining student work, developing common assessments, and using data to support PLCs.
- Strengthen leadership, facilitation, and coaching skills in area such as walkthroughs, effective meetings, and teacher motivation.
- Take away strategies that worked in schools to close the achievement gap primarily in literacy and math.

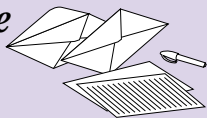
### Who should attend?

School-based staff developers    Instructional specialists  
Math and literacy coaches    Mentors  
Team leaders    Department Chairs  
School improvement facilitators

**Cost:** For early birds, registration will be only \$295 per person. After April 1, registration will be \$370 per person.

**For registration details, go to [www.nsd.org](http://www.nsd.org)**

## Conference Notes



Most schools are vague about what they want and detailed about what they do. We must be very clear about what we want and totally flexible about what we do.

-- Charlotte Danielson

All living creatures, and we are no exception, only do what they believe is most satisfying to them, and the main reason our schools are less effective than we would like them to be is that, where students are concerned, we have failed to appreciate this fact.

-- William Glaser

Control Theory  
in the Classroom

Ultimately, students are in charge of how they spend their time, how they wish to be seen, who they wish to be... when it comes to visible effort in public – in front of peers..., student decision-making becomes a high-stakes matter of self-definition in which academic behavior may directly conflict with social identity needs.

-- D. Bruce Jackson  
'Kappan,' April 2003

## KSDC Spring Conference Provides Tools For School Improvement

By Glenn Owen  
2005 Conference Chair

Tools just kept coming to assist with leadership, best practices, and deepening knowledge during the 2005 KSDC Spring Conference and pre-conference Feb. 2-4. The guarantee that came with these tools was student improvement.

The pre-conference was led by Charlotte Danielson who retooled 116 registered educators in school improvement. Danielson emphasized the leadership of the teacher for improvements in student achievement. Administrators listened to Danielson's afternoon session on the framework for evaluating teachers.

The next morning Dr. Thomas Guskey asked educators to reflect on practices concerning grading in his keynote address to 221 educators. Guskey then offered tools for reporting student learning besides report cards. A question and answer session was held following the keynote for those who wished clarification.

Within two-days, 30 breakout sessions were offered in an hour or 2-hour session for deeper understanding. Educators shared how to improve schools, teachers, and students leading to "all children learning." Professional development was shared in a variety of areas from how to be a better presenter to how to acquire more time for teacher learning. Educators gathered in hallways and during lunch discussing what they had learned in their sessions and how they could begin implementing some of these ideas in their schools.

The highlight of the conference was the presentation of KSDC awards to individuals, schools, and districts that are having success with Professional Development. Those districts are:

### 2005 KSDC

#### Systemic Learning District

- USD 500 Kansas City

2005 KSDC Recognition  
Certificates for Advanced Practices

- USD 313 Buhler
- USD 458 Basehor Linwood



Charlotte Danielson talks with Jim Karleskint, KSDC Central Office representative, during a break in the pre-conference presentation.

### 2005 KSDC Professional Learning Community Schools

- Buhler High School  
USD 313 Buhler
- Rolling Ridge Elementary  
USD 233 Olathe

2005 KSDC Recognition  
Certificates for Advanced Practices

- Piper Middle School  
USD 203 Piper
- Woodrow Wilson Elementary  
USD 383 Manhattan

### 2005 KSDC Impact Award

- Pam Ireland  
Sumner County Interlocal 619

2005 KSDC Achieving  
Application Certificates

- Mary Jo Gruwell  
Waconda USD 272
- Karla Reed  
Moonlight Elementary USD 231
- Jim Stalcup  
Waconda USD 272

(For more information on KSDC awards, see pages 6-7.)

For culmination, the Kansas Commissioner of Education, Dr. Andy Tompkins, shared the status of education in the state. Tompkins said a high number of educators are retiring within the next five years and fewer people are entering the field. He ended by saying there is a positive impact educators are having with more schools making the Standard of Excellence in math and reading. ■

## Danielson Shares Framework For Teacher Leadership

By Jill Smith  
Advocacy Co-Chair

At the Kansas Staff Development Conference, in the mini-session with Charlotte Danielson, conference attendees had a glimpse preview of Danielson's soon to be published new book. Danielson defined teacher leadership as an "informal initiative in matters of purpose and practice. Leadership may be exercised in

promoting change, or simply in improving teaching and learning."

*The skills of teacher leadership are:*

- Using evidence and data in decision-making.
- Recognizing an opportunity and taking initiative.
- Mobilizing people around a common purpose.
- Taking action, marshaling resources
- Monitoring progress and adjusting the approach with negativity.

- Sustaining the commitment of others and dealing with negativity.
- Contributing to a learning organization.

*The values and dispositions that contribute to teacher leadership include:*

- A deep commitment to student learning.
- Courage and risk-taking.
- Open-mindedness.
- Optimism and enthusiasm.
- Confidence and decisiveness.
- Critical reflection.
- Creativity and flexibility.
- Perseverance. ■

## Blue Ribbons In A Can

*continued from page 2*

power, right, and privilege to educate students; and we do have the capability or skills required. If we, for some reason, lack any of the prerequisites for having the *can do* attitude, we have a responsibility to find or request (possibly demand) the tools we need so we *can* do our jobs successfully. If we are lacking in the necessary attributes by personal choice, we have the ethical responsibility to change our attitudes and our attributes for the benefit of our students and our colleagues. We must examine what's behind our response to our professional situation and determine if *I can't* is accurate or if what we actually mean is *I won't* or *I don't want to*.

So before you decide to fire up the tar and load up on feathers, allow me to share why I am convinced we can all come to believe we *can* educate *all* students and *can* be responsible for *each* of them. Each of us is a leader. We have the power and ability to make a difference, great or small, in our communities, schools, classrooms, and most especially in the lives of our students simply by the way in which we live our lives. If we believe that what we do is vitally important to the immediate and future successes of our students, we will act in accordance with that belief; we will do all we can to enhance our professional aptitude to have greater impact on our students.

Education policy-makers will support academic success for all  
March 2005

students in the way in which they make decisions. They, too, will make a difference by sharing the *we can* belief rather than succumbing to the real and often intimidating circumstances that make operating a school community difficult. Often the best solutions are those that are the simplest, requiring single-minded focus on a worthy and shared vision for kids.

I believe those schools that are being recognized for success are schools made up of people just like us, people facing the same challenges and people who have known the same discouragement and frustrations. I believe that these individuals determined to change their conversations and work toward accomplishing a common vision. I believe that somewhere in their journeys to success they eliminated *I can't* from their collective vocabulary and began to say with confidence *I can* and *I will*. I believe that in small and great ways each of the individuals acted as leaders and inspired change.

One last thought – if the word *can* has its origin in the word *cancellation* let us endeavor to proclaim with confidence that we *can* teach *all* students at high levels. Let us commit to providing our students with experiences that will teach them to believe that they *can* achieve, *canceling* out those factors that put them at risk of failure.

Let's get our Blue Ribbons in a Can! ■

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## Session Offers Overview Of Cognitive Coaching

By Carol Simoneau  
Service Center Representative

Toni Prickett and Carol Simoneau provided a two-hour breakout session on the effectiveness of coaching.

As a part of their workshop, Prickett and Simoneau shared the *Cognitive Coaching* model. This model is a supervisory/peer coaching model that comes from the work of Art Costa and Bob Garmston. Basically, according to Prickett and Simoneau, the model involves a set of strategies that helps participants to shape and reshape their thinking and problem-solving capacities.

In *Cognitive Coaching*, the coach is trained to mediate the thinking of the person being coached to help him/her become more aware of what is going on with his/her thinking. The person being coached, not the coach, evaluates what is good or poor, appropriate or inappropriate, effective or ineffective about his/her work. Through coaching, the coachee is able to improve his/her own performance in addition to working interdependently within the school community.

*Prickett and Simoneau are both National Training Associates for the Center for Cognitive Coaching.* ■

# *KSDC Presents Awards For Exemplary Practices In Staff Development, Professional Learning*

By Sherry Reed  
Awards Chair

Eager anticipation filled the room as the Kansas Staff Development Council awards ceremony got underway at the final luncheon of the Spring Conference, held Fri., February 4. KSDC recognized one district, four buildings, and four individuals for their efforts in staff development. The KSDC Awards Team presented the awards. Mary Adcock, KSDC Awards Team member, acted as emcee, entertaining and informing the excited luncheon gathering.

## **Systemic Learning Award**

The **Systemic Learning Award** recipient for 2005 is USD 500 Kansas City public schools. The award was accepted by Diane Owen, Interim Staff Development Director of KCK. The award is a district level award for districts which can provide evidence of movement on the KLFA/KSDC/KSDE Staff Development Rubric, which is based on the NSDC Staff Development Standards. USD 500 provided quality evidence on all 12 standards, showing an understanding of the intent of the NSDC Standards, the Kansas rubric, and outstanding program development. The KSDC Awards Review Team was impressed with the level of evidence provided by the district. In addition to recognition as a System Learning Award winner, KCK received a banner for display at the district office, a framed certificate of award, an agency membership in KSDC for 2005-2006, two paid registrations for the 2005 KSDC Fall Institute, and a staff member in the KSDC mentor program.

Also recognized as "systems" of learning, demonstrating advanced practice in staff development, were USD 458 Basehor-Linwood and USD 313 Buhler. Both districts showed movement on the rubric and good evidence for program development. Both districts received recognition certificates and encouragement to

reapply for the award next year.

## **Professional Learning**

### **Community Award**

The **Professional Learning Community Award** recipients for 2005 are Buhler High School, USD 313 Buhler; and Rolling Ridge Elementary, USD 233 Olathe. Accepting the award for Buhler High were Mike Berblinger, Principal, Dayna Richardson, Assistant Superintendent, and Dr. David Brax, Superintendent. Accepting the award for Rolling Ridge Elementary were Lori Stamp, Principal, and several of her staff members. The award is a building level award for schools which can provide evidence of movement on the KLFA/KSDC/KSDE Staff Development Rubric, which is based on the NSDC Staff Development Standards. Both schools provided detailed evidence, including student data, showing an understanding of the intent of the NSDC Standards, the Kansas rubric, and the implementation of Professional Learning Communities. The KSDC Awards Review Team displayed both applications at the conference to provide models for future applicants. The applications will also be available for review at the KSDC Advance in June. In addition to recognition as a KSDC-PLC Award winner, both schools received a banner for display at school, a framed certificate of award, a building membership in KSDC for 2005-2006, two paid registrations for the 2005 KSDC Fall Institute, and a staff member in the KSDC mentor program.

Two buildings recognized for demonstrating advanced practice in staff development, were Piper Middle School, USD 203 Piper; and Woodrow Wilson Elementary, USD 383 Manhattan. Both buildings illustrated movement on the rubric and good evidence, for implementation of PLCs. Both schools received recognition certificates and encouragement to reapply for the award next year.

## **Impact Award**

One **Impact Certificate** was awarded to Pam Ireland, Sumner County Interlocal USD 619. Pam provided evidence of student impact in her reading program. The student data showed that her learning through staff development is making a real difference in her students' reading achievement! Congratulations to Pam! She received a framed certificate, and a one year membership to KSDC.

Three applicants demonstrated application in their applications, Karla Reed, Moonlight Elementary, USD 231 Gardner Edgerton; Mary Jo Gruwell, USD 272 Waconda; and Jim Stalcup, USD 272 Waconda. All three recipients received certificates of recognition.

Mary Adcock also recognized individuals with the KSDC FUN Awards, certificates for recognition of participating in KSDC and in other professional development activities.

## **Awards for 2006**

The KSDC Awards Team will continue the KSDC Awards Program in the second year of full implementation. The applications will soon be available online at [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us). **Please note that the deadline for applications is December 15, 2005.** This is the deadline for all applications: Systemic Learning Award (district); Professional Learning Communities Award (school/building); and the Impact Certificate. No certificates for application efforts will be awarded in 2006.

All award recipients will be recognized at the KSDC Spring Conference, February 7-9, 2006.

Please encourage your school and/or district to consider completing the application process for these awards. If you have questions about verification of evidence or the application process, please contact Sherry Reed, Awards Team Chair, USD 437 Auburn Washburn Curriculum Coordinator, [reedsh1@usd437.net](mailto:reedsh1@usd437.net). ■

March 2005



## Winner's Circle Story

### *Buhler High Links Student Learning To PLC, Essential Questions*

By Mike Berblinger  
Buhler High School Principal

Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) are embedded in the culture at Buhler High School. It has forced us to look at the teaching/learning process in a different way. We focus much more on the learning aspect now and the things we can do as teachers to improve the learning in all of our students.

This has also changed the way Buhler High approaches professional development with our teaching staff. We have gone from a one-size-fits all approach to a team/department platform in staff development.

Because of this change in building culture, Buhler High has shifted our local staff development days to be scheduled collaboration time for grade level and/or like subject/department/discipline time. In that scheduled collaboration time, teachers align curriculum to state standards, write essential outcomes, develop common assessments and examine data about student learning. The work is all tied to the four essential questions that are central to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):

- What is it we want students to learn?
- How will we know if they have learned it?
- What will we do differently if they do not learn it?
- What will we do if they have already learned it?

Buhler High has also created time in our regular daily schedule for teachers to collaborate. Each department has the opportunity to meet for about an hour about once a month. The main focus is on raising

*continued on page 9*

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## And The Winners Are.....

### 2005 KSDC Systemic Learning Award Winner



Diane Owen, Interim Staff Development Director for USD 500, accepts the district award. Carol Simoneau, a member of the KSDC Awards team, assists.

### 2005 KSDC Professional Learning Community Award Winners



Dr. David Brax, Dayna Richardson, and Mike Berblinger from USD 313 accept the award for Buhler High School. Berblinger is the school's principal.



Staff members from Rolling Ridge Elementary in USD 233 accept the award for their school. Lori Stamp is the school's principal.

# Professional Learning Communities, Leaders Can Help In Creating Culture Of Change

By Valora Hanzlick  
KSDC Fall Institute Chair

Implementation is often the weakest phase of any improvement or change process, short circuiting efforts to improve student achievement. The KSDC/KASDC Fall Institute held last November addressed this very issue for educators from many districts.

Dr. Anita Pankake, author of *Implementation: Making Things Happen*, Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership, University of Texas-Pan America in Edinburg, TX spent two days teaching and supporting educators learn a process to improve implementation in their districts.

Change is a difficult thing to overcome and she provided participants with some tools to overcome the barriers that often prevent changes in a district.

Part of the presentation focused on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Pankake shared that there are five dimensions of a PLC:

1. Shared and supportive leadership
2. Shared visions and values
3. Collective learning and application of that learning

## KNEA Continues Collaborations

By Peg Dunlap  
KNEA Instructional Advocacy

KNEA continues to focus on the areas of Quality Public Schools and Strengthening the Teaching Profession. With the legislature in session, much energy is being devoted to encouraging legislators to appropriately fund Kansas public schools. In conjunction with USA, KNEA is sponsoring lobbying days every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday throughout the session.

KNEA and the Southeast Kansas Education Service Center, aka Greenbush, were the recipients of NEA's 2004 Teacher Quality Professional Development Partnership Grant. They are using the money to deliver PDC II training and to increase the size of the training cadre. ■

4. Shared personal practices
5. Supportive conditions from relationships and positive structures in place

One of the most important dimensions, according to Pankake, included leadership. Leaders must support and be involved in PLCs for student achievement to be impacted. The leadership must be one of shared authority and responsibility which includes allowing staff to be part of the decision-making process. Principals,

superintendents, and other district leaders must provide a nurturing environment and support for PLCs to make a difference.

Groups were given time throughout the presentation to process information and devise a plan for their district. The plan focused on moving from implementation to institutionalization. Pankake explained that this must happen on both levels of a district (building and district level) for change to occur. ■

## Strategies To Leave No Child Behind

KSDC Fall Institute



November 2-3, 2005

Hilton Wichita Airport  
Executive Conference Center  
Wichita, KS

Are you looking to improve  
your state assessment scores for all students?

Spend two days learning  
classroom strategies for student success.

**Debra Pickering** received her B.S. degree in English/Drama Education from the University of Missouri, an M.A. in School Administration from the University of Denver, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Cognitive Psychology from the University of Denver. She is currently working as a private consultant and Director of Educational Content for [TopTutors.com](http://TopTutors.com).

Pickering, one of the authors of *Classroom Instruction that Works* has over 25 years of experience in various levels of education. This experience, coupled with her knowledge in research and development, substantiates her expertise in student learning, development of curriculum, instruction targets and assessment that identified learning goals.

Please join her and learn how certain strategies can help in the venture to *Leave No Child Behind*. Look for more information on the institute in the next issue of Direct Connection and online at [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us).

*Kansans using these strategies can submit a proposal to present at the institute, see page 12.*





## Mark Your Calendar!

# *KSDC Summer Happening To Focus On Content-Based Staff Development In Reading, Mathematics*

By Sherry Reed  
Summer Happening Chair

The KSDC Summer Happening for 2005 is being designed with a new twist in mind. With the focus on standards, assessments, and Adequate Yearly Progress being foremost in our minds during this assessment season, KSDC wants to provide your school and district with high quality content-based professional development to help your school continue to meet and exceed the expectations of NCLB. Two different opportunities are in the design phase, one in reading and one in math.

The research says that teachers need specific direction regarding content literacy in reading and mathematics. Many districts and schools are implementing literacy and math coaches to support classroom efforts and to provide effective, content-focused professional development for schools. To help Kansas schools investigate, learn, and implement more about coaching as a job-embedded school

improvement and professional development strategy, KSDC is offering coaching training in two content areas; reading and math.

First, KSDC will offer a week-long training for secondary teachers, administrators, staff development personnel, and curriculum leaders entitled: **Content Literacy Coaching: Teaching That Makes Sense for Secondary Schools.** This workshop is designed as a trainer of trainers model for secondary educators (grades 7-12), interested in developing school-based leadership to enhance literacy achievement of all students. Participants will be asked to bring the reading assessment data for their own schools to engage in reflective analysis of the needs for their individual situations. The focus of the workshop is to train participants to act as literacy coaches in their schools to improve comprehensive literacy instruction for secondary students in all subjects. This training will occur July 18-22, 2005 and will be facilitated by Mickey Bogart, KSU, and

Carol Adams, USD 383 Manhattan. Other information regarding the literacy coaching training will be released soon.

Second, KSDC will offer a week-long training for **K-8 teachers interested in learning about being math coaches.** This week-long workshop is designed as a trainer of trainers model for elementary and middle educators (grades K-8) interested in developing school-based leadership to enhance mathematics achievement of all students. Participants will be asked to bring the mathematics assessment data for their own schools to engage in reflective analysis of the needs for their individual situations. The focus of the workshop is to train participants to act as content-focused math coaches in their schools to improve mathematics instruction for all elementary and middle school students. More information on this opportunity will be available soon.

If you have questions regarding these exciting training opportunities, please contact Sherry Reed, USD 437 Auburn Washburn Curriculum Coordinator [reedsh1@usd437.net](mailto:reedsh1@usd437.net).

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## Buhler High School Builds Professional Learning Communities

*continued from page 7*  
student achievement. We receive assistance from the consultants at ESSDACK, our local educational consortium, that bring an expertise to our team meetings by bringing some of the latest research for us to learn and implement in our classrooms.

Much of our professional development is job-embedded as the staff learns how to incorporate state standards into their lessons, create effective assessment tools and examine data. Once our staff determines an area they need to target for improvement they attend workshops, study books and journals and collaborate regarding teaching strategies in order to raise student achievement. Tenured teachers may choose to develop an action *March 2005*

research project or professional inquiry in lieu of scheduled evaluations. This tool has proven much more effective in improving student achievement than has the traditional principal-focused evaluation for our experienced teachers.

This approach allows the teachers learning to match Professional Development to the need they are experiencing in the classroom. At Buhler High, we feel it is a much more effective use of our time. The changing building culture towards a professional learning community has definitely made an impact on the content, context and process of the professional learning of our staff. ■

### **Congratulations**

to newly elected members

of the KSDC board

**President-Elect**

Jill Smith

**Secretary**

Sherry Reed

**Teacher A**

Adrian Walker

**Higher Ed Rep**

Teresa Miller

**Rep A East of 281**

Vickie Bechard

**Rep B East of 281**

Tina Buck

**Central Office Rep**

Jim Karleskint

*The 05-06 term of office begins with the board advance in June.*

# Kansas Award For Excellence Foundation Brings New Voice To Kansas Learning First Alliance

Kansas Learning First Alliance (KLFA) members voted unanimously at their January meeting to approve a request from the Kansas Award for Excellence (KAE)

Foundation to become the 24th member of KLFA. KAE is a non-profit organization that provides support for businesses, hospitals and schools as they constantly seek improvement in their operations and results. KAE promotes the pursuit of a Baldrige Award as the means for

continuous improvement. Two school districts, Hutchinson USD 308 and Olathe USD 233, are working with KAE as they work towards their QPA goals. KAE's inclusion allows for even broader discussions as KLFA seeks to accomplish its mission of "making Kansas first in the nation in teaching and learning."

The three workgroups that are aligned with KLFA's three goals spent much of the meeting working on initiatives. The *Student Achievement and Professional Development groups* refined plans to create a reference manual that provides easy access to KLFA research findings. The manual

will use as themes the Kansas State Board of Education's Core Principles for school redesign and the demands of *No Child Left Behind* as embedded in

Quality Performance Accreditation. By tying together research at the national level with state initiatives, Kansas teachers and building principals will have a timely and effective school improvement resource.

The *Public Engagement group* reviewed the progress of three initiatives.

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The KLFA Education Foundation was recently incorporated and hopes to file for tax-exempt status in the next month. Almost 20% of state legislators have taken advantage of KLFA's offer to provide them two Learning First publications, *Every Child Reading* and *Every Child Mathematically Proficient*. The group also discussed using another Learning First project, "Reciprocal Accountability," as a framework to help organizations in the next six to nine months become better aware of overlaps and gaps in their work.

Other agenda items included presentations by Blake West, KNEA vice president, and Nancy Kraft, director of the Kansas Parents Information Resource Center (KPIRC). West shared a Powerpoint that gave an overview of state and national trends in the use of public dollars, particularly in schools. The presentation is being used by KNEA at civic organizations and other public meetings to help Kansans better understand the complex world of public revenue and expenditures. Groups wanting to see the presentation can get in touch with KNEA to make arrangements.

Kraft offered a look at KPIRC's work, including many of the resources it has developed to make parents more aware of what schools are demanding of their children and tools to help their children succeed. Many of the materials can be downloaded from KPIRC's Web site at [www.kpirc.org](http://www.kpirc.org).

Twenty-nine people from 15 organizations attended the meeting at KNEA. The last two meetings of the 2005-06 school year, on March 11 and June 1, will be at KASB. For more information about KLFA, visit [www.teachkansas.org](http://www.teachkansas.org). ■

## State Legislators Consider Funding For Staff Development

By Peg Dunlap  
KNEA Instructional Advocacy

In her FY2006 budget, Governor Kathleen Sebelius included \$2.5m for the inservice education line and \$1m for the mentor teacher program. This is the first time in several years that money has been included for either line.

The Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee, the first group to tackle the education budget, has retained the \$1m for the mentor teacher program but dropped the suggested amount for inservice education to \$1m.

The House Appropriations Committee will also review the Governor's budget and make its own set of recommendations. After bills have passed both the Senate and the House, they will be reconciled in a conference committee. That is not likely to happen until the closing days of the session, in late April or early May.

It is important for local legislators to know the needs of schools and teachers for both professional development and for induction/mentoring activities for new professionals. Make sure YOUR legislator knows YOUR school's needs! ■

### Staff development?

It's just a  
click away.....

**KSDC**

[www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us)

**NSDC**

[www.nsdcs.org](http://www.nsdcs.org)

**KLFA**

[www.teachkansas.org](http://www.teachkansas.org)

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## KSDC Mission

The KSDC  
will promote student learning  
by supporting educators  
in defining, refining  
and advocating best  
staff development practices.

## KSDC Beliefs

We believe:

- The ultimate purpose of staff development is to improve student learning.
- A staff developer is anyone who systematically enables others to change their professional behavior.
- Effective staff developers use a research base to continually define and refine best practices.
- Collaboration strengthens staff development.
- Effective organizational development is required if all students are to learn.
- Organizational development requires individual change.
- Each educator has a moral responsibility to improve professional effectiveness through lifelong learning.
- Reinforcement and support systems are critical to the transfer of learning into practice.
- Ongoing assessment is critical for effective staff development decisions.

Kansas Direct Connection is published four times a year by the KSDC.

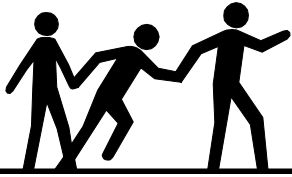
Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the KSDC Board of Directors.

Want more information on staff development?

It's just a click away.....

KSDC [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us)  
NSDC [www.nsdcd.org](http://www.nsdcd.org)  
KLFA [www.teachkansas.org](http://www.teachkansas.org)

## Does your District have experience using Marzano's *Classroom Instruction that Works*?



*Share your success!*

**Be a presenter for the 2005 Fall Institute**

**KSDC's 2005 Fall Institute  
will focus on "Strategies To Leave No Child Behind"**

Day one of the institute brings co-author, Debra J. Pickering of *Classroom Instruction that Works*. Day two features breakout sessions conducted by educators like those in your district who have implemented these strategies.

### **Items to consider in your proposal:**

- Presentations should give participants an example of how a strategy is used successfully with students.
- Each session will last an hour and one half.
- The session format must be interactive.
- If you need AV equipment, you will need to bring it with you.
- All presenters must pre-register for the conference, but will receive **free** registration.
- Presenters are responsible for handouts. You will need 60 copies. Any handouts left after the presentation will be placed on a resource table.
- Most presentations will be scheduled for two breakout sessions so as many people who want to attend a session can.



**Submit the proposal by March 18, 2005.**

E-mail your proposal to Volara Hanzlick, hanzlicv@sabetha441.k12.ks.us,  
or fax your typed proposal to the attention of: Volara Hanzlick, 785-284-3759.

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