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ABSTRACT

This proceedings contains 26 summaries of conference presentations and discussions. Titles and authors are: "Is a Sexual Harassment Policy Enough To Protect Against Liability?" (Camille Barnett); "Recreating the Communities of Our Youth" (Marlyn Benson); "Creating a Language of Ethics in Rural Schooling" (Terry R. Berkeley, Linda P. Thurston); "Leadership for Changing the Small Rural School: The Excitement of School Improvement" (Steven Breckon); "Coloring Outside the Lines" (John K. Burke, Paul Martin); "Elementary Foreign Language Programs: Your Passport to World Class Schools" (David M. Cooper, Charlene White); "Educational Philosophy: Why Schools Fail or Succeed" (Gene L. Davis); "Schools at the Center: One Community's experience" (T. J. DeTurk, Jerry Hoffman); "'Channeling': The Classroom-Home Connection" (Jolene Evans); "Connecting Science and Special Education through Classroom Assessments" (Kevin D. Finson); "Intensive Block Scheduling" (Tom Foerschler, Pam Eshom, Ann Kocher); "School Technology: A Student's Perspective of the Benefits" (Tad Hernandez); "Counseling for High Skills" (Kenneth Hoyt, Judy Hughey, Kenneth Hughey); "Discovering Place and Community: Bringing Rural Education Home" (Sue Kidd); "What Do Students from Rural and Small Schools Say about Their Preparation for University Study?" (Ray Kurtz, Ron Lantaff, Larry Lysell); "3 R's for At-Risk Student Intervention" (Tim McFarland); "Annenberg Rural Challenge: School Reform and Public Policy" (Paul Nachtigal, Marty Strange); "Inexpensive Technology Solutions for Small School Districts" (Michael Renfro); "Do Rural School Districts Want Character Education?" (Janice Carner Reynolds); "Facility Planning for Technology" (Tweed W. Ross); "Getting Your Community Ready for the Internet" (Tweed W. Ross); "Correcting for the Variables That Confound Accurate Enrollment Projections" (G. Kent Stewart); "Rural School Electronic Consolidation: Better Not Bigger" (Sharon Tatge); "A Study of the Relationship between Enrollment Size and Math Achievement in Kansas School Districts" (Sharon Treaster); "Heritage Day: A School-Community Celebration" (Debbie K. Wedel); and "International Opportunities for Kansas Rural Schools" (Emmett Wright, Mikhail Korenman). (SV)

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# Nineteenth Annual Rural & Small Schools Conference October 26-27, 1997

# Making Connections, Building Communities

## Proceedings

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Manhattan, KS 66506

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## Is a Sexual Harassment Policy Enough to Protect Against Liability?

Presenter:

*Camille Barnett*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

The issue under discussion at this session is whether having a sexual harassment policy is enough to protect a school district from liability. The latest court rulings regarding school district responsibilities, strategies to reduce the institution's liabilities, some legal issues associated with the investigative process that need to be addressed, and whether consensual relations can cause problems are issues that will be addressed.

# Recreating the Communities of Our Youth

Presenter:

*Marlyn Benson*

*Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative*

*Willmar, Minnesota*

Most of us remember, from our formative years, a community which truly raised, nurtured, supported, and guided its young people to a productive and healthy adulthood. However, the institutions which provided that support -- the community, the family, and the churches -- no longer exert their former influence.

A rural community in southwest Minnesota has accepted the task of reconstituting that earlier community. Community members have adopted a new model of "at-riskness" that more specifically targets kids before major trouble strikes; they have adopted a list of "developmental assets" to assess how healthy or dangerous their kids' environments are, and they have initiated a "child guide" program to match "incipiently at-risk" youngsters with identified community assets to strengthen their resistance and build resiliency to unhealthy and dangerous behaviors.

## Objectives:

This presentation will acquaint participants with these three components -- a new model of "at-riskness," the "developmental assets model," and the "child guide" program -- and discuss how other communities can import this comprehensive model of community-building.

**Content:**

- History and development of "Successful Kids Guaranteed"
- History and development of the Child Guide Project
- Implementation of both Successful Kids and Child Guide
- Vision for the future of Successful Kids and Child Guide

## Creating a Language of Ethics in Rural Schooling

Presenters:

*Terry R. Berkeley*  
*Towson University*  
*Towson, Maryland*

*Linda P. Thurston*  
*Kansas State University*  
*Manhattan, Kansas*

With the exception of the rare article and even rarer book, there has been little coverage of ethics and schooling in rural (or urban or suburban) locales. Still, rural educators are confronted by numerous ethical dilemmas and issues regarding, for example, funding, inclusion, the reporting of suspected cases of abuse and neglect, discipline, relationships with other agencies and organizations, and interactions with those in the larger community in which they happen to be located. Since the coverage of ethical issues in the literature is as sparse as coverage in beginning and advanced professional educator training programs, a language of ethics is not available to provide a context in which these issues can be discussed, either to gain a broader understanding or to come to a resolution that might assure a balance between advocacy for children and educational programming and adherence to organizational goals and objectives.



In this presentation, session leaders and participants will interact and begin creating a language of ethics that can be used in local school districts as the basis for inservice training or daily in deliberations about ethical dilemmas. During the presentation the following will be offered:

- a. a different perspective about men's and women's approaches to moral reasoning along with James Rest's work with educators about ethics;
- b. a brief review of the elements of ethical dilemmas and features of these elements applicable in rural locales;
- c. a brief discussion of the Heinz Dilemma; and
- d. a discussion about ethical dilemmas session participants have confronted in their work in rural schools.

Handouts will be provided.

## Leadership for Changing the Small Rural School: The Excitement of School Improvement

Presenter:

*Steven Breckon*

*La Harpe Community School District*

*LaHarpe, Illinois*

As we all know, we must change to improve. In the small rural school setting, we face years of tradition in making many of the needed changes. The fact that "it has always been this way" is reason enough for many educators and community leaders to justify staying that way. To effectively guide school districts through change with positive results, school leaders must understand the human psychology of change and learn ways to manage the process of change in a complex organization. The presentation will benefit those working with school boards, students, parents, faculty, support service personnel, administrators, and the general public.

This presentation will focus on the applied psychology of change, preventing and managing the human reactions to change, and developing an overall attitude of an institutional team operation. The presenter will review specific change experiences that have resulted in significant improvements in schools. Those people attending will be asked to participate by giving some examples of situations they wish to change, and ideas will be generated to help them with that particular change effort.

This presentation will help rural and small school educators learn ways to manage situations described by statements such as:

- Why do we need to change? What we are doing now is working all right, isn't it?
- Why do you talk about a vision and what we should be doing in the next century? We have always known what kids need to learn!
- What will I personally have to change? Will I have to go back to school or change my teaching methods? Will I still have a job?
- What will it cost? Will it be cost effective? How will this fit into what we are already doing?
- The community will not like it. The parents will rebel. How do you know they will buy into it?

Everyone attending will leave the session with notes on how they can overcome some major obstacles in the path of their local school improvement process.

## Coloring Outside the Lines

Presenters:

*John K. Burke*

*Paul Martin*

*Neodesha USD 461*

*Neodesha, Kansas*

This presentation will provide the participants with the opportunity to learn how to develop relevant learning experiences for students outside the regular classroom. Topics such as service learning, youth apprenticeship, entrepreneurship, work experience, and building trades will be profiled. Connections with community and business partners will be explained.

Participants will:

1. understand relevant learning theory and its connection to authentic learning experiences;
2. discover how service learning programs can be integrated into schools;
3. determine how youth apprenticeships can expand educational opportunities for students and assist with work force training;
4. ascertain how entrepreneurship opportunities can be linked to academic classes;
5. learn how work experience programs can enhance opportunities for students;
6. discover how building trades programs can assist youth and develop communities;
7. determine how to develop business and community partnerships.

The method of presentation will include a computerized slide show, question-and-answer period, and a comprehensive handout.

## Elementary Foreign Language Programs: Your Passport to World Class Schools

Presenters:

*David M. Cooper*

*Charlene White*

*Lone Jack School District*

*Lone Jack, Missouri*

Since the fall of 1992, the Lone Jack C-6 School District has had a Spanish program at the elementary school. Students in grades K-6 have 30 minutes of Spanish twice a week. The program is based on building communication skills. The lower elementary grades practice basic vocabulary, such as numbers, colors and greetings. The focus of the upper elementary grades is more content-based. The students enhance their regular classroom study of mathematics, science and social studies by learning about them in Spanish. One grade level also interacts in Spanish with the high school Spanish 2 students via computer.

Lone Jack is in a rural area. The total population for the town is 420. What we have done in our rural school could be done in a district of any size. However, there is much support for our Spanish program. Many parents realize that their children will need skills to communicate in our changing global world. It also continues to help children identify the differences and similarities of other cultures.

Handouts which outline steps needed to start a similar program will be provided at the session.

## **Educational Philosophy: Why Schools Fail or Succeed**

Presenter:

*Gene L. Davis*  
*Dover Schools*  
*Rossville, Kansas*

Educational Philosophy is a tool that should be used to help our schools become better. Yet, in many colleges and universities, the study of Educational Philosophy is given a secondary place in courses of study. Rural and inner-city teachers and administrators were given a list of twenty philosophical questions pertaining to their beliefs. The research indicates that teachers and administrators have little understanding of Educational Philosophy and are very inconsistent in their decision-making processes. These decisions relate to the areas of learning theory, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation. The results of three studies will be examined in detail.

## Schools at the Center: One Community's Experience

Presenters:

*T. J. DeTurk*

*Palmer Public Schools  
Palmer, Nebraska*

*Jerry Hoffman*

*University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, Nebraska*

The presentation "Schools at the Center: One Community's Experience," will outline the process by which the school and community of Palmer partnered together to implement the three themes discussed in our Annenberg grant proposal. These three themes are: Local History and Heritage, Implementation of Technology, and Community Development. Each of these themes was assigned a team, consisting of school personnel, students, and community members.

The presentation will explain our successes and failures at partnering the community and school together to accomplish our goals in each of these themes. In addition, participants will be able to receive ideas for how to promote the incorporation of the community into the school, such as developing websites, providing the community student labor, capitalizing on local folklore, etc.

In conclusion, through a technically enhanced lecture the presentation will provide an opportunity to expand the grant project by recruiting new school/community partnerships.

## "Channeling:" The Classroom - Home Connection

Presenter:

*Jolene Evans*

*Attica Public Schools*

*Attica, Kansas*

This presentation will introduce school districts to the idea of a dedicated "school" television channel which will connect homes to the school through information transmission. Participants will see actual examples of information that can be put on the channel as well as the procedures involved in transmitting the information to the community. A basic overview will be presented with handouts.

Participants who attend this presentation will:

1. experience how Attica's dedicated television channel works;
2. learn how the channel was established (so they can go back and start one at their school);
3. receive numerous ideas on how to incorporate the whole school into the channel such as the homework hotline, classroom lessons, guest speakers, field trip reports, school lunch/breakfast menus, schedule of activities, student news, weather, the sports show, the coaches show, and much more.

This presentation will be done with overheads for basic information and a VCR/television connection for showing examples from our school's system. This will be an information-only session.



## Connecting Science and Special Education Through Classroom Assessments

Presenter:

*Kevin D. Finson*

*Western Illinois University*

*Macomb, Illinois*

P.L. 94-142, passed by Congress in 1975, requires teachers to provide appropriate education for all students. Over time, the interpretation of this law has been refined and is now construed such that all teachers must make their classrooms, and the materials they use, relevant and functional for students possessing virtually any of a number of disabilities. To underscore the issue, the U.S. Department of Education reported 35% of the 4.3 million disabled students in this nation's schools were mainstreamed into general education classrooms.

A project addressing science assessments in mainstreamed rural classrooms was initiated at Western Illinois University in 1995. The project's basic premise was that little help existed with regard to preparing teachers to appropriately assess science with students having exceptional education needs. As designed, most standard science assessments fail to accommodate for the difficulties encountered by students with learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and other special characteristics. In Illinois, such issues have come to the forefront as the state's School Improvement Plan is implemented, which requires all schools to assess all students' learning at specified grade levels. Presently, many students with special education needs fare poorly on science assessments.

Project components included collaborative sessions (with teaching teams of special education and general education classroom teachers from grades 3-8) on developing guidelines for retooling science assessments and the development of a "retooling" handbook useful to teachers in such efforts. Participating teachers were pre- and post-tested on their attitudes, self-efficacy, and concerns related to such retooling.

This presentation will involve an examination of the project assessment results, and will also include working through a model science assessment, working to "retool" it using project-developed guidelines, and comparing the effort to what project teachers did with it.

## Intensive Block Scheduling

Presenters:

*Tom Foerschler*

*Pam Eshom*

*Ann Kocher*

*Onaga High School*

*Onaga, Kansas*

An intensive block schedule is a concept of utilization of time, staff and facilities, not a change of curriculum. It is a change of the daily structure. The curriculum is presented in a different time format which is less stressful and more productive for the student.

Our schedule is "intensive" because students take three to four classes only for a nine-week term. We built our schedule so that we did not lose any instructional time from our eight-period day, 46-minute class format. Our classes are 92 minutes long, and we have four periods a day. Students can still take eight classes in one school year, but only four at a time.

Instruction is "intensive" because classes are 92 minutes long. We finish a traditional semester course in 9 weeks, and we finish a traditional year-long course in 18 weeks.

Projected Student Benefits:

1. Improvement in student academic success and achievement
2. Reduction in student stress and fragmentation
3. Greater opportunity to take elective courses
4. Fewer classes to prepare for in a 24-hour period

5. Increased opportunity for more individualized and personalized attention and instruction due to a longer duration and varied instructional strategies
6. Improved attendance and reduction of tardies and truancies
7. Reduction in the number of books and materials for students to manage in a 24-hour period
8. Exposure to a variety of teaching and learning modes
9. Reduction in potential student-teacher conflicts at any given time due to "less hectic" atmosphere
10. Opportunity for students to assume more responsibility for their own learning

Projected Teacher Benefits:

1. Classes are longer, allowing for more individualized instruction
2. Earlier intervention with students' problems
3. More time for effective student evaluation
4. Longer uninterrupted planning periods
5. Less time used for attendance, start-up, and clean-up
6. Offers lab-oriented classes adequate time for laboratory experiences with closure
7. Increased time for field trips, community guest presentations, interdisciplinary activities, and completion of audio-visual activities
8. Encourages use of a wide variety of teaching methods
9. Improves staff morale and effectiveness
10. Expanded time for parental contact
11. Less fragmentation of instruction with more quality assignments
12. Greater opportunity for team teaching within departments
13. Easier to supervise students
14. Enough time to present and complete concepts with time for guided practice and proper closure
15. Provides time frame to develop higher-level thinking skills

## **School Technology: A Student's Perspective of the Benefits**

Presenters:

*Tad Hernandez*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

The presenter Tad Hernandez has worked the past 5 years for the Technology Support department in the College of Education at Kansas State University. He is majoring in Business Education with computer certification. He will discuss the benefits of school technology from a student's perspective. He will also discuss what students can accomplish given the freedom to explore and learn new things on the computer.

## Counseling for High Skills

Presenters:

*Kenneth Hoyt*

*Judy Hughey*

*Kenneth Hughey*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

The presentation will focus on providing information on the Counseling for High Skills (CHS) Project and the importance of addressing the career development needs of students considering post-secondary career-oriented education (community colleges, vocational-technical institutions). Participants will be supplied with information on the changing world of work which is needed to help youth plan more effectively for post-secondary education and career choices. Also discussed will be the ways CHS seeks to increase the quality and quantity of working relationships between school counselors and vocational-technical education professionals in post-secondary programs. Data collected from over 40,000 students enrolled in community colleges and post-secondary vocational/technical institutions in 15 states (including Kansas) has been processed and made available on a computer disk program to school counselors free of charge. The CHS Kansas computer disk will be demonstrated as a part of the presentation.

Each participant will:

1. recognize the importance of addressing the career development needs of students considering post-secondary career-oriented education;
2. become aware of how Counseling for High Skills resources and the software developed from this project can be used in working with students as they make career and educational choices;
3. recognize the value of post-secondary career-oriented education in the Information-Oriented Knowledge-Based Occupational Society.

## Discovering Place and Community: Bringing Rural Education Home

Presenter:

*Sue Kidd*

*The Land Institute*

*Kansas City, Missouri*

The Land Institute and the Annenberg Rural Challenge are moving forward in their work to support "place-based" education. Our goals are:

- to develop a program through which students can acquire a deeper sense of self, a stronger appreciation for their home place, and a better understanding of their role in the community;
- to encourage teachers to incorporate into existing curricula comprehensive, multidisciplinary ways of understanding the relationship between people and their local surroundings;
- to involve schools and communities, through teams of administrators, parents, school board members, business leaders, and teachers, in learning about how "place-based" education can contribute to community development;
- to create a network of schools to share and communicate successful strategies to use "that which surrounds us" as valued educational experience.

We will explore the work that is being done in Kansas and share in a discussion some further possibilities.



## What Do Students From Rural and Small Schools Say About Their Preparation for University Study?

Presenters:

*Ray Kurtz*

*Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas*

*Ron Lantaff*

*South Brown County USD 430  
Horton, Kansas*

*Larry Lysell*

*Jefferson County North USD 339  
Winchester, Kansas*

The presenters for this session will be visiting with the following six Kansas State University students:

- Bart Peintner, a junior in Computer Engineering, from Spearville;
- Michele Severin, a senior in Life Science/Pre-Physical Therapy, from Hiawatha;
- Michael Hofer, a senior in Animal Science, from Smith Center;
- Rachel Roach, a junior in Political Science, from Alton;
- Darci Ziegler, a senior in General Management/Business, from Wheatland;
- Jennifer Stein, a freshman in Education, from Eudora.

They will be discussing how their experience at rural and small schools prepared them to enter their fields of study at Kansas State University.

### 3 R's for At-Risk Student Intervention

Presenter:

*Tim McFarland*

*Clay Center USD 379*

*Clay Center, Kansas*

At-risk students are a community issue. As a district we cannot problem solve by ourselves. We need to draw on the expertise and talent of our business community. Site Council has been a real plus in developing ownership, but we must draw all into the process.

This presentation will:

1. identify (by definition) the definition of an at-risk student;
2. identify the 3 R's of working with at-risk students;
3. discuss interventions that go beyond the classroom setting, including: community, site councils, and parents;
4. provide an open discussion of successful interventions by participants. A question-and-answer sharing will follow.

## **Annenberg Rural Challenge: School Reform and Public Policy**

Presenters:

*Paul Nachtigal*

*Marty Strange*

*Annenberg Rural Challenge*

*Granby, Colorado*

The Rural Challenge operates on the belief that more powerful learning experiences will result from schooling that is experiential, grounded in the local context, values local cultures, and places academic excellence within the larger context of learning to live well sustainably. The Rural Challenge believes that schools should serve community purposes and that fundamental school reform grows out of community development broadly defined.

The Challenge and the work of the funded projects are concerned with three central questions: What is education for? Whose interests are served? Who gets to decide? To address these issues requires questioning conventional wisdom with its continued push for centralization as embodied in further school consolidation and the establishment of standards at the state and national level.

How learning becomes more powerful, the issues of educational purpose, whose interests are being served, and who gets to decide, provide the frame for the Rural Challenge public policy initiative. Examples of what more powerful learning experiences look like and where public policy stands in the way of implementing such programs will be shared, along with strategies for creating policy which is more friendly to rural places.

## **Inexpensive Technology Solutions for Small School Districts**

Presenter:

*Michael Renfro  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS*

Although the importance of technology in education is generally accepted, funding for new technology is never enough. Most small and rural schools must budget carefully just to keep up at all. However, there are many ways to stretch your technology dollars and get the most possible out of the money you spend.

Some solutions are completely without added costs. These include the use of the internet to get Freeware and Shareware, downloading beta versions of new software, and getting service updates on your equipment. Old computers are still quite capable typing tutors and word processors, especially for beginning users. Some of the older educational software is good enough to still teach and entertain. The older computers are also a great place for students to learn some of the basics of networking and computer maintenance.

Other solutions have costs associated with them, but have the potential of saving dollars over time. Updating old networks can be a cost effective way of keeping some older computers useful for a longer time. Also, expanding networks by building WANs can save some phone costs.

The keys to stretching your technology budget include: thinking of new ways to use old equipment, using your existing resources to their fullest extent, and thinking as far as possible into what future needs you may have at your school when you choose new purchases.

## Do Rural School Districts Want Character Education?

Presenter:

*Janice Carner Reynolds*  
*Central Missouri State University*  
*Warrensburg, Missouri*

The objectives of this presentation are the following:

1. Discuss whether there is a need for character education in American schools and rural schools specifically.
2. Share the results of a survey involving 26 superintendents and 76 board members from rural districts in West Central Missouri conducted in May, 1997. The survey was designed to assess the perceived needs of character education in rural Missouri.
3. Examine the meaning and intent of character education.
4. Report respondents' choices for ways and means to teach character education, i.e., modeling by staff, curriculum, guidance, and counseling.

Teachers appear to be as concerned about serious behavior management problems as they are the curriculum they teach. In the last ten years we have observed the advent of alternative schools for those individuals who find a normal classroom environment too constraining for their needs. We are also observing more and more "special needs" classrooms for children with social and emotional behavioral problems. Edwin Delattre (1994), Dean of the School of Education, writing in The American School Board Journal, alludes to the widespread rise of barbarism in America and implores schools and school boards to sustain hope by finding the courage to oppose youth violence, gang terrorism, and drug trafficking and

consumption. It is apparent that these problems of our society extend into our schools. President Clinton, therefore, in searching for solutions to teen pregnancy, child abuse, increasing societal crime rate, and the overall degradation of family values, stressed the importance of character education in his 1996 State of the Union address.

Although the concept of Character Education is not new and has been introduced into the schools in the form of curriculum in some states, there is widespread confusion and even dissension as to its meaning. More importantly, there are political factions which have taken the issue as their "cause" and created an entirely new set of arguments as to why it should and should not be taught. If it should be taught, then they implore us to teach it their way. Regardless of how one approaches or perceives the meaning of character education, it is apparent that many of today's children are not internalizing the core values that were once taken for granted and ultimately considered by most to be a part of the fabric of our national makeup.

The presenter surveyed a group of rural school superintendents and school board members to determine whether they believed the nation's schools are doing a good job at teaching Character Education to American school children. Character Education was defined as the education of the core values shared by the citizens of the school district and included honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness.

The superintendents and board members were then asked: 1) Do you believe the nation's schools are doing a good job of teaching the core values to American school children; 2) Do you believe a need exists for character education in the public school curriculum; 3) Do you believe the children in your district should be offered some type of character education; 4) If you believe character education should be taught in your

district's schools, could it be achieved by providing an appropriate school climate and teacher/administrator modeling alone; and 5) If you believe additional teaching is needed, indicate whether character education should be taught as a curriculum subject, through the guidance/counseling program, home room period, or other.

The presentation will be informal with discussion and opinions elicited from those in attendance. Overhead transparencies will be utilized.

## Facility Planning for Technology

Presenter:

*Tweed W. Ross*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

From the mid-1980's Educational Technology has moved from an add-on to a school curriculum to an integral part of every facet of educational programming. It is no longer sufficient to instruct students in current technology at a computer lab at the end of the hall. Students need access to computers and networks in all phases of their study. The abilities of teachers and administration to conduct the day-to-day operations of the school are nearly impossible without an effective technology infrastructure. Schools, however, were never built and administrators have little experience in planning school facilities that incorporate the best of modern computing and networking technologies. This brief overview is designed to fill this void of understanding the infrastructure and facilities needs of schools for the 21st century.

Included in this session for administrators and school planners are specific suggestions, plans, and check lists dealing with:

- Classroom design
- Electrical wiring
- Network wiring
- Lighting
- Sound suppression
- Furniture
- Infrastructure spaces
- Security
- Project management



## Getting Your Community Ready for the Internet

Presenter:

*Tweed W. Ross*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

Wiring the school, acquiring the equipment, and getting the kids connected to the Internet have proved to be some of the issues which school administrators have been able to solve with the help of informed professionals. However, getting the community ready to accept the new role that schools play as a gateway to unlimited knowledge has proved to be a public relations nightmare, particularly for those administrators who have not developed a good community understanding of the advantages and pitfalls of student Internet access. This program outlines four specific public relations steps that must be undertaken to insure acceptance of student Internet access. They are:

- development of a cadre of knowledgeable, influential supports;
- open involvement of the parents;
- detailed training with the teachers and staff; and
- clear expectations of students.

## Correcting for the Variables That Confound Accurate Enrollment Projections

Presenter:

*G. Kent Stewart*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

Birth rates and grade-to-grade survival ratios continue to be the most popular data for estimating future school district enrollment. This technique represents the cohort survival method and has traditionally yielded good results in stable school districts. But many rural school districts are undergoing rather dramatic social and demographic change. Increased diversity, proximity to urban employment, highway development, and changing family structures are only four examples of over 15 factors that can confound traditional calculations of future school enrollment estimates.

State financial support is usually tied to enrollment, so it is important that predictions of future enrollment be as accurate as possible. For example, if a 200-student school district is receiving \$4100 per student in state aid, the next year's budget needs to contain a very accurate enrollment estimate as a foundation for calculating the various categories of the budget. An error of plus or minus five students can have a 20,000-dollar impact on the school district budget.

Accordingly, the emphasis in this session will be on the techniques for identifying and correcting against the impact that these confounding variables can have on the accuracy of estimates of future school district enrollment.

## Rural School Electronic Consolidation - Better not Bigger

Presenter:

*Sharon Tatge*

*Technology Excellence in Education Network (TEEN)*

*Herington, Kansas*

The Technology Excellence in Education Network (TEEN) is composed of five rural and small school districts in central Kansas: Centre USD #397, Herington USD #497, Hillsboro USD #410, Marion USD #408, and Peabody-Burns USD #398. Five years ago the superintendents of these districts listed two main objectives of this consortium: 1) to expand and enhance curriculum by offering a wider range of elective courses to high school students; and 2) to build a cooperative relationship among teachers, administrators, members of the school board, parents, and other policy makers in all five rural communities. A recent survey of these same superintendents provides the following list of the **ten top reasons** that TEEN has made their district a better educational entity:

1. expanded and enhanced curriculum at the high school level: Enrollment in ITV classes has grown from 134 students the first year to 283 students this year. The ITV schedule offers seven upper-level classes and six college classes.

2. consortium grants which have allowed each district matching funds to network both buildings and districts or to add computer work stations: TEEN has received \$281,766 in Educational Excellence grants during the last three years to provide technological access to both local and worldwide communication loops for all consortium schools.

3. Internet access to all computers in consortium schools that are networked to TEEN fiber, access to city libraries and city offices, and to district patrons in three small communities that did not have local access: TEEN fiber and equipment was

purchased through a five-year lease purchase shared equally by the five district members. By owning their own fiber, the consortium is able to bring in the Internet through a commercial provider (SouthWind of Wichita) and allow this provider to put modems on the system in the schools to allow local dial-up access for district patrons. City libraries and city offices who were willing to install work stations and end connections are receiving Internet access free. This includes the libraries and city offices in Herington, Marion, and Hillsboro. The TEEN homepage provides a database of URLs compiled by teachers to help each other integrate the Internet into curriculum. Check [www.teen.k12.ks.us](http://www.teen.k12.ks.us) It also has copies of the latest grant and all teacher inservice handouts for using such software as Power Point, Pegasus, and Netscape.

4. opportunity for the following groups to network monthly (or as scheduled) with peers from other districts: TEEN Board Members meet monthly over the network -- superintendents, principals, technology directors, librarians, counselors, curriculum coordinators, QPA directors, PDC representatives, transportation directors, site-based council leaders, and building assessment leaders. TEEN also has a grant committee comprised of one person from each district, as well as a technology support team that meets weekly for training which allows them to provide inservice for K-12 teachers as they learn to use technology as a curricular tool in active student learning.

5. a coder-decoder (received from a grant) that allows all ITV rooms to connect via compressed video with anywhere in the world, used by civic groups as well as educators: Educators are able to connect with KSBE for inservices; community workers can receive training from Topeka; and graduate-level college classes can be taught over the codec.

6. collaborative inservices for administrators, teachers, bus drivers, special education personnel, and early childhood educators and parents: The data network has provided e-mail and Internet e-mail for networking all groups, and the ITV has

provided training without travel. Teachers who teach the same grade level or like disciplines, as well as other consortium personnel, are able to receive training at the local high school studio.

7. networked library resources purchased by the consortium with a financial savings to each district: Small districts find resource software costs to be extremely expensive per pupil. The TEEN network has a backbone of fiber running at 100 megabytes that allows the consortium to purchase and share software (e.g., Americana Encyclopedia, EBSCO magazine articles, Groliers) over the Internet connection and at a great savings to the districts.

8. shared costs for an ILS (individual learning center) which can be networked and used by both consortium students and students at a Drop-Out Recovery Center: The first center for drop-out students from the consortium was opened this year in Hillsboro; others will be forthcoming if there are enough students available.

9. graduate-level and community college classes received over the network at each high school: TEEN's proximity to major Kansas universities has allowed us to have classes offered over the network for both graduate-level classes and for community college classes.

10. satellite programs over the network: Satellite programs are available over the network for teacher inservices or curriculum enhancement.

## **A Study of the Relationship Between Enrollment Size and Math Achievement in Kansas School Districts**

Presenter:

*Sharon Treaster  
Waconda USD #272  
Cawker City, Kansas*

The purpose of the study was to determine if school enrollment size and student achievement held any implications for policy makers regarding further consolidation and efficiency measures. With the rising costs of education and a cry from the public for schools to get back to basics, policy makers should be examining the school size question.

The first objective of this study was to answer the following policy question: Is there a relationship between school enrollment size and student math achievement? To find the answer, the study examined the simple correlation of school size with math achievement.

The second objective was to answer the following policy question: Is there a relationship between school enrollment size and math achievement when corrections have been made for certain other predictors of achievement? To answer this question, a regression analysis was used to determine the contribution of the variable of size when other variables were inserted in the model.

Schools in Kansas offer a good opportunity to examine these questions. Public schools are funded by state government with a weighting formula adjusted inversely to size of each school district with local and federal governments providing only a small percentage of funding. The Kansas State Board of Education

has mandated that yearly math tests be administered to certain grades. These data, examined conjointly, provided the opportunity for an in-depth study of the relationship of school enrollment size to student academic achievement in Kansas schools.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a significant relationship exists between school enrollment size and math achievement in Kansas schools. The dependent variable in this study was math achievement as measured by the Kansas Math Assessments for grades four, seven, and ten in years 1993 and 1994. The independent variables for this study were school enrollment size, average daily attendance, discipline referrals, number of dropouts, expenditure per pupil for the district, number of expulsions, number of pupils on free and reduced lunches, pupil/teacher ratio, average district salary for teachers, number of students in special education, and number of suspensions.

The population in this study included all public school students in the 304 school districts of Kansas grades four, seven, and ten in 1993 and 1994. Two types of analysis were performed on the data: a Pearson correlation of school enrollment size and academic achievement on the Kansas Math Assessment, and a multiple regression in which the control variables were used.

The following conclusions were made: expenditures per pupil and teacher's salaries appear to be significantly related to math achievement (positively); the variables of dropout suspension, pupil/teacher ratio, free and reduced lunches, and expulsion appear to be significantly related to math achievement (negatively). Based on the preponderance of data in this study, there is no evidence to support that greater achievement could be gained by further consolidation of schools.

## **Heritage Day: A School-Community Celebration**

Presenter:

*Debbie K. Wedel*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

“Heritage Day: A School-Community Celebration” is an exemplary program that has been implemented in a small rural school for several years. The model can easily be adapted to fit individual students, schools, and communities. The presentation will outline the event, including selection of presenters, scheduling, and other important information to help insure a successful day full of learning experiences.

The students gain an appreciation of the rich heritage of Kansas as they step back in time through a living museum of pioneer-type activities and demonstrations presented by community members. Instead of sitting in their regular classrooms, students take part in many hands-on demonstrations such as bread, butter, and noodle making; spinning wool into thread; blacksmithing or grinding corn conducted by community experts. Cultural activities such as music, dance, storytelling, and quilting are also part of the special day-long events. Classroom activities, songs, skits, menus, and student greeters are necessary components of a successful day. Inviting older community members to tell and teach about a specific skill or talent they possess is an innovative way to teach students about things they might otherwise only be able to read about in books. This special day combines opportunities for hands-on activities and research of many related topics. The long-term effect of this project is to help students be more aware of their heritage and create an appreciation of how their parents and grandparents grew up. Building



relationships with the community fosters great learning opportunities for students that cannot be replicated by using a textbook. "Heritage Day" is a time of learning, enjoying, and celebrating.

The presentation for the Nineteenth Annual Rural and Small Schools Conference will be a lecture and discussion format with audience participation in brainstorming ways this event could be adapted to their school and community. Overheads will be used, and handouts of a model day will be supplied to participants. Provided also will be suggestions for fundraising, including grant opportunities and business solicitation. A bibliography of quality children's and young adult literature that can be tied into the day's preparation and follow-up activities will be discussed.

## International Opportunities for Kansas Rural Schools

Presenters:

*Emmett Wright*

*Mikhail Korenman*

*Kansas State University*

*Manhattan, Kansas*

### **Kansas-Voronezh Water-Related Curriculum Development Program (Eisenhower Grant Project)**

Kansas Board of Regents has sponsored two-year Kansas-Voronezh Water Curriculum Project (\$36,000). The project is designed to promote the development of a water-related environmental issues curriculum for use in rural secondary schools within the State of Kansas and the Oblast of Voronezh. This curriculum will be jointly developed by interdisciplinary scientific researchers and teachers from both Kansas and Voronezh, and will examine our mutual water needs from various points of view.

The initial Kansas schools to collaborate on the project are Chapman High School and Moscow High School. Voronezh schools will be selected from the districts of Rossosh and Boguchar.

During the first year, the teachers and students from the participating schools will be asked to examine water sources, identify existing or potential problems, and develop possible solutions devised as a comparative study of the Voronezh Steppes with the Kansas Great Plains. During the second year, an extensive inservice program will be offered to teachers in rural schools to incorporate the water-related curriculum developed and field tested during the first year, into their instruction.

Ben Smith, Jackie Spears, and Emmett Wright will be coordinating the project for ARIOS-Kansas.

### **USIA Grant Funds**

ARIOS-Kansas has received a 1997 USIA grant for the project "Developing Land Stewardship: Kansas-Voronezh Project".

\$143,000 USIA grant money will be used to support the exchange of 30 students and nine educators from high schools in Kansas, USA and Voronezh, Russia during the 1997 academic year.

While visiting sister schools, the students and the educators will develop a joint curriculum focusing on Land Stewardship. The curriculum is scheduled for implementation in participating high schools in Fall 1998.

Three specific areas of interest include:

- environmental protection and water quality preservation;
- competing in global economy;
- education for effective citizenship.

In addition, throughout the exchange students will be gathering environmental information and sharing their discoveries via Internet as a part of the GLOBE Program. The GLOBE Program is carried by the National Science Foundation in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Project principle investigators are Emmett Wright and Jackie Spears; project evaluator - Ben Smith. Mikhail Korenman will serve as project coordinator; Elena Lyutykh and Tamara Korenman will serve as project assistants.

## **International Environmental Summer Academy**

ARIOS-Kansas has developed tentative plans for an International Environmental Summer Academy for high school students. It is our goal to conduct the first academy during the summer of 1999. We see our objectives as:

- conceptualizing and creating a model summer academy staffed by educators and scientists from participating countries;
- conceptualize and create a model international environmental curriculum for high school students which will be taught by the international team of educators and scientists;
- identifying underserved and under-represented gifted and talented high school students to participate in the academy program;
- providing appropriate instructional materials and strategies that ensure that the high school students can work effectively on global and local environmental issues and problems;
- providing opportunities for high schools students to visit participating countries and experience each country's unique natural environments and culture;
- sharing the integrated curriculum with educational organizations and institutions that conduct pre- and in-service teacher preparation programs.

The first summer academy will be ten weeks in duration. Approximately two weeks will be spent in each country (United States, Russia, Finland, and Sweden). The remaining time will be reserved for travel. The educators and scientists will jointly prepare the curriculum in advance using electronic mail, followed by two weeks of shared effort working together in Voronezh, Russia, prior to the arrival of the high school students.

The host country teachers will serve as the lead teachers for each country visited. The process will continue until the academy is completed in Kansas.

### **Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE)**

ARIOS-Kansas recently became an official franchise for the GLOBE Program. The Program currently supports K-12 students at over 1,500 schools who make environmental observations and report their data via Internet to the GLOBE Student Data Archive. GLOBE also supplies training to teachers and teacher trainers in the implementation of the Program. The Program is intended to increase:

- scientific understanding of the Earth;
- achievement in science and mathematics;
- environmental awareness.

The ARIOS-Kansas effort focuses on the Globe internationally oriented learning activities which support teachers in improving instruction for science, mathematics, geography, computer, social science, language, and inter-disciplinary studies. These activities involve and encourage the use of tools such as modeling, geographic information system, web-based mail systems and other educational technologies.

The GLOBE Program learning activities emphasize an interdisciplinary design that can be easily incorporated in traditional courses such as general science, biology, chemistry and physics.

If you would like for your school to participate in the GLOBE Program, you are welcome to contact the ARIOS-Kansas office, 244 Bluemont Hall for details.



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