

John C. Settle, Executive Director

Jennifer Hale, Editor

WKEC Welcomes Dr. John C. Settle, Executive Director

The West Kentucky Educational Cooperative Board of Directors and staff welcome Dr. John C. Settle. Dr. Settle was appointed Executive Director of the WKEC by action of the Board of Directors on May 25, 2006, and assumed the leadership post on July 3, 2006.

Dr. Settle came to WKEC from the College of Education, Murray State University, where he served as Director of School Service in the Office of the Dean. Prior to assuming this position in the College of Education, Dr. Settle was superintendent of Bowling Green City Schools in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Settle served as superintendent from July of 1994 until his retirement in October of 2006. Dr. Settle holds a B.A. in History from the Kentucky Wesleyan College; an M.A. in History and Education from Western Kentucky University; an Ed.S. in Education Administration from Western Kentucky University and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Kentucky.

Dr. Settle is active in the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, American Association of School Administrators, and the Urban Superintendents Association of America.

Dr. Settle brings to the WKEC extensive experience in the areas of curriculum development and implementation, professional development to support innovation, and school and district leadership skills. Dr. Settle is married to Debbie Abbott Settle and is the father of three children -- Jennifer Settle Humphrey, a Teacher Consultant in Daviess County Schools; Tres Settle, Principal of McLean County Middle School; and Blake A. Settle, a Political Science/History teacher at Barren County High School.



Dr. John C. Settle

Dear Colleagues:

It is a great personal honor to have been chosen as the Executive Director of your Cooperative. The past months have been both enjoyable and challenging and have renewed my enthusiasm and commitment to public education.

I am pleased with the programs and services currently provided by the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative and excited and energized by the future I envision for our organization. My personal, and immediate, goal for our Cooperative is for all of our members to be proud of membership in our organization and pleased with the service we provide. I believe that our Cooperative can provide even greater service to our member districts, and to each of you, and I welcome your suggestions for avenues of future service.

I look forward to the time when the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative is viewed as the leader in instructional improvement in Kentucky. When we achieve this reputation, our Cooperative will grow in membership and strength. I ask for your support and assistance in making this vision reality.

- John C. Settle

Muhlenberg County Students Take A S.T.A.N.D

(Students Teaching About Narcotics Danger)

*By: Gail Johnson,
Community Education and Public Relations Director*



In Muhlenberg County, there is an active group of teens that you may have already heard about. Since the founding of STAND about one year ago, this community action group has created quite a stir at the local, regional and even state level. Teen members of the Drug Endangered Children's Coalition, after becoming aware of the severity of our county's drug problem, decided that they wanted to focus their energy toward eradication. In so doing, they organized their own advocacy team called STAND and met regularly to develop strategies. As a result, much community action has ensued, for example, these high school students have assisted in organizing two elementary drug prevention rallies. They have orchestrated Ghost Outs at both middle schools. Most recently, in an effort to protect youth on New Year's Eve, STAND hosted a New

Year's Bash free from alcohol and drugs for high school students and their dates. STAND's leadership was instrumental in getting a 1.2 million dollar grant earmarked for methamphetamine prevention in Muhlenberg County. A few months ago, STAND was asked by the University of Kentucky Extension Officials to assist other counties in developing youth/adult partnered advocacy groups. To their credit, a twenty county, two-day retreat entitled Basic Training in Substance Abuse Prevention was hosted at the Wendell Ford Military Training Facility in Greenville, KY. As a result many counties have now established their own STAND groups.

These Muhlenberg County North and South high school students have been featured in local, regional and statewide newspapers as well as television news broadcasts.

Webster County Has Technology Plans at Broadway Elementary School

*By: Alan Lossner,
Public Information Director*

Broadway Elementary will be undergoing a massive technology upgrade to the infrastructure and classrooms as result of the recently approved merger between the Webster County and Providence Independent school districts. This will be accomplished because of a recently approved KISTA grant, used for state-wide technology upgrades. Webster County was awarded \$119,000.00 to upgrade Broadway (additionally there was \$78,000.00 awarded for Dixon Elementary on a separate grant).

The first priority under the plan, according to Riley Ramsey, Director of Technology for the Webster County School District, is the complete rewiring of the building. The highest rated cable available today, Category 6, will be utilized in this project. Also, each classroom will receive four data lines and one digital phone line. In addition, a new computer lab will be installed with thirty-five machines. A complete restoration of the existing infrastructure will be undertaken to replace all hubs, switches, and DSU units with brand new, state of the art equipment.

Mr. Ramsey also reported the grant will also provide for Smart Board technology with LCD projectors for several classrooms. Smart Boards allow projection from a computer to a large screen which can be controlled like a computer by students and instructors.

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Owensboro High School Rose Curtain Players Are Making the World Their Stage

*By: Julie Ellis,
Owensboro Public Schools Public Relations*



The Owensboro High School Rose Curtain Players, under the direction of drama coach Carolyn Greer have gained international recognition with their productions of *Anatomy of Gray*, *The Diviners*, and many other plays. Pictured are cast members of *Anatomy of Gray*.

The world is becoming a stage for Owensboro High School Rose Curtain Players who will pack their bags in August to travel to Edinburgh, Scotland, to perform at the American High School Theatre Fringe Festival.

The Rose Curtain Players, Kentucky's first high school drama troupe founded in the early 1920's, is only the fourth Kentucky high school to have been invited to the Scotland festival. Last year, they earned "state championship" status with a performance of *Anatomy of Gray* at the Kentucky Theatre Association's One Act-Play Festival and were Kentucky's representative at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in Orlando, Florida. In the Summer of 2006, they were invited to perform on the Main Stage at the International Thespian Festival in Nebraska. This fall the

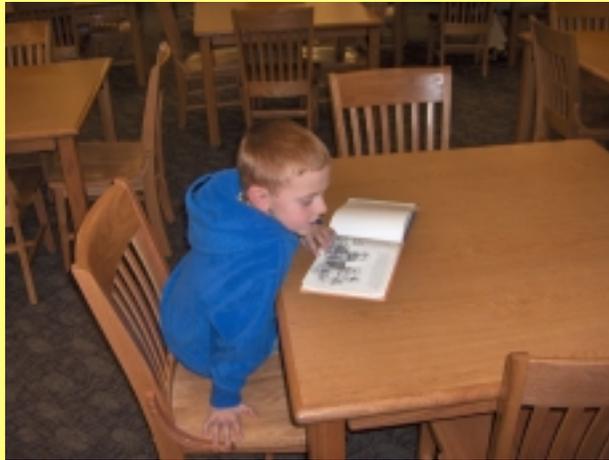
troupe took first runner-up for *The Diviners* at the Kentucky festival.

The Rose Curtain Players, under the direction of Carolyn Greer, have an ambitious and varied season staging an average of one major production a month throughout the school year. For the more serious thespians, it is a remarkable training ground for college theatrical studies. But, for most of the 120 students involved in the drama program, it is a creative outlet for their talents, an esteem-building experience, and a way of involving students who want to do everything from build sets to direct their fellow actors. The highly successful theatre program is just one part of Studio OHS, an academy for fine arts that embraces drama, vocal and instrumental music, and the visual arts.

Rose Curtain Players have exciting additional opportunities through a partnership with the city's RiverPark Center, a performing arts center that attracts Broadway touring shows. Because some of the Broadway tours are actually put together in Owensboro before going on the road, OHS students often get to work with Broadway professionals. The RiverPark Center has also developed the student theatre program YADA (Young Adult Theatre Academy) which offers year-round educational theatre opportunities to area students. The Rose Curtain Players have also become teachers and coaches for younger OPS students who are interested in drama, thus inspiring the next generation of thespians.

Livingston County Students Are Developing Passion for Reading Through New Reading Programs

By: Pat Wyatt, Public Relations Director



Cameron Bryan, South Livingston Elementary first grader, chooses to read Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day during his free reading time.



Will Hughes, second grader from North Livingston Elementary School finds a comfortable position to do his reading.

The faculty and staff at the elementary schools in Livingston County are working diligently to develop just such a passion for reading in their primary students. Both of the two elementary schools have initiated reading programs designed to provide intervention to struggling students.

North Livingston Elementary School is utilizing the "Reading First" program, funded by a federal grant that was made possible through the No Child Left Behind initiative. Reading coach Barbara Crawford leads the teachers as they identify students who need extra instruction on specific needs. The instruction occurs daily until the student masters that particular skill. NLES third graders have increased from 45% reading at grade level at the first of this 2006-2007 school year to 71% at mid-year. The second graders in-

creased 16% in the same amount of time.

"Read to Achieve" is a \$60,000 a year grant in the second year at South Livingston Elementary School. As at North, SLES has set getting students to read at grade level as their goal. The teachers have been trained to use scientifically based strategies in each classroom. The

As students improve their reading skills, the love and passion for reading increases substantially. The students have extended time each day to read material of their choice. "Through the Reading First Grant our teachers have become better trained in the essential components and strategies that create a successful reader," explained Crawford. "Students are reaping

the benefits of the effective instruction of our teachers and becoming successful readers and



"The greatest gift is the passion for reading."

Elizabeth Hardwick,
Kentucky Critic and Novelist

grant provides a full-time intervention teacher who also delivers intensive instruction daily to struggling students. The third graders increased reading at grade level percentage from 56% in the fall of 2005 to 85% in the winter of '06. Second graders reading at grade level increased by 26% in the same time period. Obviously, the strategies have proven successful.

thinkers." Jennifer Cosby, assistant principal at South Livingston Elementary School and reading coach at North is pleased with the over all progress of the students. "I believe we will reach the goal of 75% of our students reading at grade level as established by the state, and hopefully surpass that goal."

There's "Snow" Place Like the Janice Mason Art Museum

By: Eileen Kehrwald, Secretary to the Superintendent



Trigg County students proudly show their works of art to their parents.

Each year a flurry of art finds its way into the Janice Mason Art Museum in Cadiz, Kentucky. It arrives in the form of around 360 works of art completed by Trigg County Public Schools Primary and Intermediate students. Early in December the excitement begins as the Parent Teacher Association, in partnership with the Cadiz Rotary Club and the Museum, begins the annual competition for the young artist. Flurries of colors and ideas dance through their heads as they begin the journey toward that special wall in the Janice Mason Art Museum waiting just for their

finished masterpiece. Masterpiece is a good word to use because of the hundreds of outstanding pieces of work submitted. A panel of judges from the museum who select a winner from each grade and an overall winner from the two schools judges the artwork. Every student who participates receives a ribbon with winning artwork framed and displayed with award winning ribbons.

On opening night the excitement flurries as parents, grandparents, friends and masters in art ease into the Janice Mason Art Museum. Sparkling eyes, pretty dresses and ties for the young men become a part of

the reception to introduce the show to families. According to Eileen Kehrwald, Secretary to Superintendent Tim McGinnis, "It is so exciting to see the faces of the children and how proud they are to see their work on display. The young talent is just amazing. Our students have visited the museum and seen the works of professional artists, which helps them realize the importance of having their work exhibited for the public." You are invited to stop during January and enjoy the "flurry of art" created by Trigg County Primary and Intermediate students.

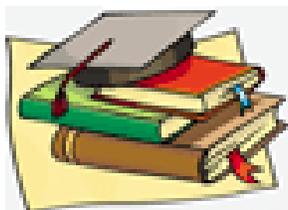
Webster County continued...

The state legislature last year approved a \$50 million program for computer upgrades in all school districts in Kentucky. This project, referred to as IDU (Institutional

Device Upgrades), according to Mr. Ramsey, will allow for the purchase of brand new computers for Broadway Elementary.

All of these upgrades are in addition to voice mail upgrades and

connectivity to the Webster County network. It is an exciting time for Webster County schools, and the addition of Broadway Elementary has become a focus of district initiatives.



Murray Independent School District Prosperes from \$130,000 "Read To Achieve Grant" Funding

By: Sherry Purdom, Public Information Director

Students at Murray Elementary School (MES) are benefiting from two "Read to Achieve" grants totaling \$130,000 in 2005 and 2006. MES is among other Kentucky schools who were also awarded this grant. In support of this grant, the research based intervention programs at MES selected to implement are "Reading Recovery (RR)," and "Fast Forward (FFW)" programs to benefit their students' reading and writing skills.

An early intervention program to assist first grade students experiencing reading and writing difficulties, RR is designed to accelerate learning so children can make faster than average progress, catch up with peers and avoid a cycle of failure. By adding short-term, intensive FFW software intervention products, students are able to develop the cognitive and oral language skills that support reading skills, including fluency, and comprehension.

Janet Caldwell, MES principal, said the grant provides a salary for

a "Reading Recovery/Reading Coach." The coach provides one on one instruction and small group instruction to help struggling MES readers reach bench-

learn to read."

Caldwell said the current 79 students participating in FFW were recently recognized by the program's Progress Monitor report. Several students have completed all five programs offered. Many other students are on target to complete all levels of the program. "Based on participation, attendance and completion rates, we were recognized for doing a good job implementing the Fast ForWord products," she said. "We were commended for showing commitment to complete the materials," she added.

Caldwell said reading assessment data shows a significant increase in students at benchmark level, with P3 (second grade students) showing an increase of 18 percent. "Students performing at the intensive need level have decreased significantly with P1 (kindergarten students) showing a decrease of 24 percent."



Vaneece Alvey, MES reading specialist, works with a student under the Reading Recovery program.

mark and meet their identified individual student needs by the conclusion of their third grade year. "We are extremely grateful that this grant provides an abundance of resources to help target our struggling readers and offer them the information and learning strategies to help children

DISTRICT ACCREDITATION AWARDED TO MCCRACKEN COUNTY SCHOOLS

By: Cheryl Lawson, Public Relations Director



McCracken County's Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Barbara Vick; Superintendent, Tim Heller; and Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Nancy Waldrop show the plaque and banner presented to the district at the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) 2006 General Assembly. McCracken County is one of only five Kentucky school districts to earn District Accreditation from the SACS Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI). Dr. Vick also was elected to serve as the 2007 State Chair of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.

The SACS Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI) honored McCracken County as one of only 57 districts awarded District Accreditation at its recent 2006 General Assembly in Atlanta. The district is one of only five Kentucky school districts to earn District Accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

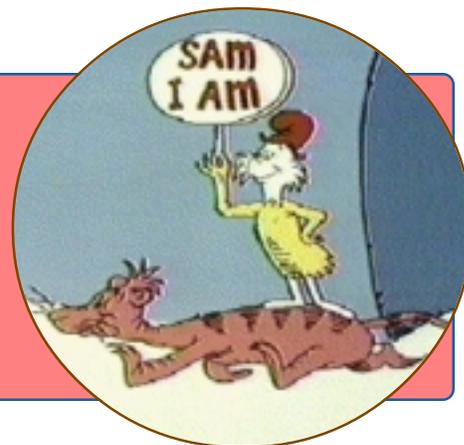
According to CASI, "This achievement recognizes the quality of education afforded the students in the McCracken County Public School District through the leadership of the superintendent and Board of Education, the dedication and service of the professional staff, and the support of community stockholders."

District Accreditation is a

process designed to recognize school systems that embrace improving student learning as a systemic process. First, the district conducted a guided self-study that successfully identifies and illustrates implementation of a continuous improvement process that supports, enhances and stimulates growth. The district then hosted its first Quality Assurance Review, conducted by an external team of trained peer professionals. The presentation of the report to the Board of Education concluded a three-day on-site visit to gather data and evidence by interviewing 326 district and school level stakeholders. The team also carefully considered the evidence provided through data, documentation, observation, and dialogue

before making the recommendation. Periodic reviews will continue to assess the district's efforts to ensure continuity and collaboration in planning for improvement. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredits more than 13,000 public and nonpublic educational institutions from early childhood centers through university level. The accreditation process helps improve quality through the systematic program of evaluation, which assures that an institution not only meets quality standards, but also that it demonstrates a commitment to providing education programs aimed at improving student performance.

Graves County Pioneers School Administrative Manager "SAM" Model



By: Paul Schaumburg, Community Relations Director

Principal is a role traditionally associated with student discipline and building management. Yet, modern principals increasingly are expected to be their schools' instructional leaders as well. The Kentucky Department of Education is piloting a program to free principals from management duties to concentrate on instructional leadership. Wingo Elementary School and the Graves County School District are part of the unique experiment.

"I handle duties like school safety, student discipline, and the traditional office duties such as overseeing the paying of bills, maintaining utilities, and similar things so our principal can concentrate on instructional leadership," said Rita Pirtle.

She's the district's first-ever School Administrative Manager – SAM, for short. And her background is not education, but rather business. She also served for two years as a parent-member of Wingo's Site-Based Decision-

Making Council. "I have every confidence that since Rita is so well-suited to this position that our project will become a guide for schools across the state," said Wingo's second-year principal, Sarah Saylor.

Local involvement in the SAM project began with the Graves

The State Action Education Leadership Project selected the Leadership Team and groups from other districts to study the evolving nature of instructional leadership in Kentucky schools. The national, philanthropic Wallace Foundation funds the research. The Pike and Fayette county school districts also are participants. A separately-funded SAM program involves three other schools.

"Graves County is a district that accepts and embraces change when they see that it will lead to improvement and achievement," said Debbie Daniels SAELP director. "Graves County has the same vision for the project that we do. When we give the principal more time to spend on instruction and working directly in the class-

room with students and teachers, it's what we really need to do to improve instruction in Kentucky. The whole state – in fact, the entire nation – is looking at this project."



Pictured is Rita Pirtle, SAM, talking with students in the lunchroom at Wingo Elementary School.

County School District's teacher-driven Leadership Team. The team of more than 20 teachers and ten administrators is the driving force for incorporating the latest research and teaching techniques into Graves County classrooms.

Fast ForWord Brings Success to Fulton County Readers

By: Carol Major, Public Relations Director



Fulton County students find Fast ForWord fun and challenging as eighth grade students Davey Worthington, Alex Shields, Corey Gansert, Kayla Kelly and Leonard Smith, l-r, concentrate in their lab that was added to all seventh graders' schedules last fall.

On average, the Fulton County students who used Fast ForWord, the district's new curriculum-aligned program last year, improved one year in eight months, moving from the 10th to the 19th percentile.

"Our students have made significant improvement and we're thrilled with the results," says Fast ForWord Coordinator Sheila Haynes who explains that the program "strengthened our students' skills and helped them benefit more from classroom curriculum."

Fast ForWord, is an intense, prescriptive computer-based program that assists students during various stages of language and reading development. It's a brain exercise that stimulates and activates parts of the brain as it builds the cognitive skills for reading - memory, attention,

processing and sequencing – that increase a student's ability to read and learn.

Last year, part of the Fulton County's third through fifth, all of

"Our students have made significant improvement and we're thrilled with the results,"

*~Sheila Haynes,
Fast ForWord Coordinator*

the seventh and eighth grades and 10 high school students went to the Fast ForWord lab on a required daily basis. This year, most of the third through eighth grades and some freshmen and sophomores are involved. "Our goal is for all of our students to complete the programs before entering high school." Haynes adds.

She met with teachers to see what impact Fast ForWord had on the students' classroom performance. They cited improved student reading skills, focus, completion of assignment, retention, as well as improved self-esteem. "Students who have never volunteered to read aloud in class are now doing so."

Sally Goodman, last year's seventh grade reading teacher, laughs when she shares that her students didn't believe the program was helping them. "We're just reading more," they explained. And read more they did. By Christmas the class had attained more accelerated reading points than they had during the entire previous year.

Benton Middle School Selected for a "School to Watch" Visit

By: Angie Murdock, Secondary Supervisor of Instruction



Pictured are 6th graders changing classes at Benton Middle School, one of 11 schools in the state selected for a visit which puts them in the running to be named as a "School to Watch."

From left: Chris Petrie, Laken Robinson, Miranda Lewis, Clay Riley, Austin Hamlett, Logan Utley



Benton Middle School, which houses grades 6-8 and is one of Marshall County's three middle schools, was chosen for a "Schools to Watch" visit. Benton Middle was one of only 11 schools in the state selected for a visit which puts them in the running to be named as a "School to Watch"—a top honor for schools that are academically, socially, and developmentally responsive, and challenge all students to achieve at the highest level.

The "Schools to Watch" team, who visited Benton Middle on November 30th and December

1st, launched a very intensive review of many data sources, interviews, and classroom visits during their evaluation of BMS.

"This was a great self-study. We gained tremendous insight into our school by going through the process. We are very excited to get feedback and utilize it to continue improving," shared Kem Cothran, principal.

"Schools to Watch" is an initiative launched by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in 1999. This alliance is composed of more than 60 educators, researchers, and national association

members dedicated to improving education for young adolescents across our country. Because only a few schools are selected for a site-visit each year, this is a tremendous honor.

According to principal Kem Cothran, "We are extremely proud to have applied for and received a review! The faculty and staff have worked incredibly hard to improve the culture and academic progress at Benton Middle. I am proud to be a part of a school where student achievement is the top priority."

Results of the visit will be made known on January 31st.



Lyon County Board of Education Ranks Ninth in National Survey

**By: Sandra Littlejohn,
Finance Officer**

The Lyon County Board of Education ranked ninth nation wide in the 2006 Digital School Boards Survey in the category for districts with 2,500 or fewer students. This award is given by the Center for Digital Education in conjunction with the National School Boards Association. More than 2,500 school districts are invited to participate in the Center for Digital Education's study which examines and documents school boards' online presence, technology applications that allow the public to interact with school board members as well as the access to information such as school board calendars, policies and agendas, and technology advancements in the school board chambers.

Only two Kentucky school districts ranked in the Top 10 of any category, Lyon County as 9th place and Russellville Independent as 7th place in the 2,500 or less enrollment category.

The Lyon County Board of Education's "presence on the web" is located at www.lyon.k12.ky.us. Information about the school board members and meetings can be found from Our District > Board of Education. Available there are current agendas, approved minutes, and archived minutes for 2005 and 2006, along with FAQ's about the roles and responsibilities of school boards and school councils, financial reports, and school report cards. Board members also view electronic copies of information via the internet rather than paper copies prior to the monthly meetings and use laptops during the meetings to access the information.

Yvette Pyle Named 2007 Principal of the Year

**Calloway County
Superintendent
Steve Hoskins
congratulates
CCHS Principal
Yvette Pyle.**

**By: Stephanie Wyatt,
Instructional Supervisor and
Linda DeVoss, CCHS Teacher**



Calloway County High School principal Yvette Watson Pyle is the MetLife/NASSP State High School Principal of the Year 2007, a distinction announced by the Kentucky Association of Secondary School Principals (KASSP). Pyle was nominated by Mr. Steve Hoskins, superintendent of Calloway County Schools, who states, "Ms. Pyle is an exemplary leader and always implements what is best for every student in Calloway County High School. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this honor than she."

Pyle's appointment six years ago made her Calloway County High School's first female principal. As a result of her leadership and of the efforts of an exceptional administrative team, faculty, staff and student body, the Total Academic Index for CCHS increased from 67.5 to 81.4, the ACT composite increased from 20.9 to 21.7 (24th of 251 reporting schools in the state of Kentucky), and the attendance rate increased from 93.76% to 94.85%, while the dropout rate decreased from 2.57% to 1.32%, as the successful transition to adult life percentage rate increased from 92.45% to 97.98%.

However, Pyle demands no more of others than she demands of herself—she scores portfolios with her teachers, attends school events of every scope and size, effects change as she sits on committees, and represents Laker interests as she attends Rotary luncheons, reads to middle school students during holiday assemblies, and monitors her granddaughter, niece and nephew as they continue a three generation tradition of

Laker pride and excellence.

Superintendent Steve Hoskins asserts, "Ms. Pyle is an exceptional instructional leader for the Calloway County School District." Fellow principal Tawnya Hunter, of Calloway County Middle School, maintains, "Her leadership of teachers, support staff and students is unmatched." CCHS teacher Linda DeVoss states, "She is the captain of our Laker ship, our head cheerleader, our most devoted educator, and our sincere friend."

Pyle received her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Biology, her Master of Arts in Secondary Education, and Licensures in Principalship and Supervisor of Instruction from Murray State University. She has been a teacher, a science department chair, an assistant principal, and a principal at CCHS from 1976 to the present.

Pyle will be honored at the KASSP Summer Conference in June in Lexington. All 51 MetLife/NASSP State High School Principals of the Year 2007 will then be honored at the Principals' Institute and Awards Banquet in Washington, D.C. in October/November. Three finalists will be hosted at the 2008 NASSP National Convention in San Antonio, Texas, with the 2008 National High School Principal of the Year winner to receive a \$5000 grant for educational programs. Secretary Margaret Spellings, U. S. Department of Education, noted, "Efforts like the MetLife and NASSP partnership to highlight outstanding principals brings well-deserved recognition to those leaders who are making a difference in the lives of our children."

Crittenden County Teachers Participate in Tiered Mentoring Program Through Murray State University

By: Holly White, Community Educator

