

# BRAVO!



September 2010

Kansas students, educators and schools are among the best in the nation and we want to salute their accomplishments. The Communications Office at the Kansas State Department of Education will regularly publish a list of happenings in Kansas schools. If you know of a specific award garnered by students, teachers, programs, schools, or districts, please let us know so that it may be included in our publication. Although it may not be possible to include all awards sent to us, we offer our congratulations and best wishes to the students and educators in our state.

Kathy Toelkes, Director  
Communications and Recognition Programs

Eight teachers have been named **finalists in the 2011 Kansas Teacher of the Year program**. The title of Kansas Teacher of the Year is given annually to one teacher who has proven to be an exceptional educator committed to improving schools, student performance and the teaching profession. The following are this year's finalists:

**Jodi A. Testa** of Lincoln Elementary (USD 475)  
**Nikki M. Chamberlain** of Salina South High (USD 305)  
**Linda G. Irvin-Wiersma** of Sunflower Elementary (USD 368)  
**Curtis Chandler** of Wamego Middle School (USD 320)  
**Holly R. Schreiber** of Belmont Elementary (USD 232)  
**C. Dow Tate** of Shawnee Mission East High (USD 512)  
**Kim A. Morrissey** of Dodge Literacy Magnet Elementary (USD 259)  
**Lu Anne Vides** of El Dorado Middle School (USD 490).

The 2011 Kansas Teacher of the Year will be announced in November. Congratulations to all of this year's finalists and semi-finalists!

**Goddard High School** has been named the **Kansas 2010 Green School of the Year** by the **Kansas Association of Conservation and Environmental Educators**. Students at Goddard have embraced a more eco-friendly lifestyle as demonstrated by their weekly recycling roundup, collecting paper, plastics and other recyclables from more than 20 schools! Teachers **Denise Scribner** and **Marylee Ramsay** were also named **2009 Environmental Educators of the Year** for their involvement in the school's green movement.

Kansas' overall performance on the **ACT** college readiness exam **topped the national average** for the sixth year in a row! This year's average composite score was **22 for Kansas**, up from 21.9 last year and above the national average of 21. Keep up the good work!

**Shawnee Mission West's Viking Marching Band** was recently invited to play in the **2012 London New Year's Day Parade**. Led by directors **Bill Thomas** and **Kevin Hupe**, this will be the seventh time Shawnee Mission West will perform in the parade—more than any other group ever invited!

We'd love to hear what your students and faculty are achieving! Please send submissions to:

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**West Elementary School in Wamego USD 320** won the **2010 Intel School of Distinction in Elementary Mathematics** during a ceremony in Washington, D.C. earlier this month. Awarding just six schools in the nation, the program annually recognizes schools for implementing innovative math and science programs. For achieving this top honor, West Elementary School has earned a **\$10,000 cash grant** from the Intel Foundation and an **award package valued at more than \$150,000!**

*Accepting the award in D.C.—Front Row: Director of Curriculum & Instruction Dr. Mary Kaye Siebert, third grade teacher Angie McCune, West Elementary Principal Amy Flinn, and USD 320 Board of Education Member Amy Schwein. Back Row: third grade teacher Cathy Wilber, third grade teacher Kandy Williams, Wamego USD 320 Superintendent of Schools Doug Conwell, and fifth grade teacher Teri Dow.*



**Royal Valley Middle School** social science teacher **Nathan McAlister** was recently named **Kansas History Teacher of the Year**. Among his most notable accomplishments, McAlister and his 7<sup>th</sup> grade class were successful in passing a bill through Congress—which was later signed into law—designating a section of Highway 75 as The Lane Freedom Trail. He will be presented his award in October during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

**Oswego USD 504** staff are doing their part to fight obesity. In order to provide more exercise time for students, elementary and middle schools adjusted their schedules to allow for **P.E. class five days a week for 40 minutes a day**. Along with increased exercise, students are also receiving a **healthy afternoon snack** each day thanks to a grant from the USDA's **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**. Great idea, Oswego!

**Logan Elementary School (USD 345)** recently became the **sixth Kansas school** to be recognized through the **USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge**, part of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* program. For their efforts in promoting nutrition education and physical activity, Logan earned the **Bronze Award**.

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