

# KAPS Review

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## President's Message

Alan Mullins

Life is often marked by major events which either alter our views on various issues or serve to cement our existing convictions regarding aspects of society. These events often represent celebrations (birthdays, wedding/anniversary, graduation, birth of a child, first official paycheck, etc.) or dramatic "turning points" (Kennedy's assassination, the explosion of the space shuttle Columbia, the OJ "car chase" and subsequent innocent verdict, etc.) and can occur in both our personal and professional lives. I recently experienced one of these major events which produced tremendous impact on me both personally and professionally. At 7:43 a.m. on December 1, 1997 a young teenager stood in the lobby of Heath High School (one of the schools which I serve weekly) and opened gunfire on an assembly of classmates. At 7:55 a.m. I received the phone call in my office that will forever be imprinted in

my memory bank - "Alan, you need to get out to Heath High School. There's been a shooting." While the events of that terrible morning clearly led to an incredible "turning point" in my life, the days that followed December 1 also produced a stronger commitment and conviction to many of my previously-established personal thoughts regarding education, society, "administration", kids, tolerance/acceptance of differences, school psychology, and many other ideals. In this column I would like to share some of my thoughts on these issues.

First, I must address the topic of kids. We always talk about the differences in today's kids and kids of yesteryear but we seldom talk about the similarities. I understand that society is much different today than "when you and I grew up", and out of necessity today's kids are different than we were in many respects; but, in the weeks following December 1 I was reminded

endlessly that in all the complexities of adolescence, today's kids thrive on many of the same core features of humanity that have existed for centuries. Friendship - today's teens want friendship and they value their friends more than most other relationships in their lives. Anxiety - kids are very vulnerable to anxiety-producing situations and they generally don't like being anxious (whether it be from a tragedy or from everyday "being called on in class"). Structure - the majority of kids function better in "structured" settings, whether it be a classroom or a counseling situation. Security - kids want to feel secure and safe, and if their security is threatened they truly become fearful. Turmoil - I am astounded by the prevalence of chaos which exists in the lives of many of today's youth. In the days following the shooting, countless students shared insights into their everyday lives which they had been living with quietly until the shooting made them confront these multitudes of emotions.

accomplish this goal, KAPS cannot reach this goal. This is where YOU come into the picture. If education is to adequately prepare today's kids for positive futures, ALL SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS must work harder at convincing the educational system of our talent and value. And I should add that I don't think the value of school psychologists necessarily lies in our extensive training, our understanding of individual differences, or the significant wealth of our ongoing professional development activities. I now know that the heart of our professional value comes from what is "in our hearts" - things such as compassion for humankind, empathy for others, recognition of the value of unity/teamwork, and understanding of human emotion and its impact on life. These beliefs have become convictions for me in the aftermath of December 1. Thanks to all who provided support and prayers throughout December.

### **Editor's Comments**

Laura McGrail

I am sure you are as moved as I was when I first read Alan's President's Message.

As one who is fortunate to have five fine colleagues, I cannot imagine being the sole school psychologist to serve a district. We must do all we can across district lines to support and assist each other - both in times of crisis and in dealing with the everyday stress that comes with this demanding profession.

In the aftermath of the Heath High School shooting, I am leading a committee in reviewing and revising our district's crisis intervention policies and procedures. We had previously only addressed suicide prevention and intervention in detail but are now developing a comprehensive plan to address as many possible crisis situations as we can foresee. I hope such efforts are also being taken in your district, if not previously completed.

Our district is currently undergoing its monitoring self-study. We are examining the IDEA revisions and identifying procedures we need to change to comply with the changes in the law. Some of the changes are positive but I am concerned about several of the revisions. There seems to be a new emphasis on reevaluations which will only complicate

the process and do little to improve outcomes. There also appear to be provisions in which parents can request immediate "expedited" evaluations in which prereferral interventions will be bypassed. We have worked so hard to establish the prereferral process that I worry that we will return to a "testing on demand" situation without demonstration of educational need or prior intervention.

If you have any thoughts on these or other issues, please consider writing an article for the next issue of the **KAPS Review**. Shake off the winter doldrums and explore your creativity! I now have an e-mail address (at home) so you can send your submissions to: 1805 Second Street, Henderson, KY 42420 or [lmcgrail@henderson.net](mailto:lmcgrail@henderson.net).

**Editor's Note:** Two reviews of sessions from the 1997 Conference were received too late for inclusion in the Fall issue of the **KAPS Review**. These reviews are included below.

learning characteristics as defined by our assessment instruments and the best method to teach a child a specific academic subject. Thirdly, we assume that learning growth can be measured through comparing growth on test scores. And finally, we assume that group research results can be applied to individuals.

Steps in making interventions work include the following. First know what the problem is. Define it so that everybody would agree when it happened or did not happen. Secondly, know what you would like to have happen. Set realistic goals for acceptable behavior. Third, know what changes (interventions) you are going to make. An finally, evaluate if the change was effective.

In the last part of this workshop Dr. Thomas discussed personal and organizational barriers to designing and implementing effective interventions. He provided many strategies for making ourselves better change agents. He included strategies for working with parents, teachers, students, the community, administrators, and support staff. He concluded by saying that whatever we do should

affect the learner positively. We have to look systemically to involve ourselves effectively.

### **Graduate Corner**

Marianna Wells

This article is the second in a series providing information regarding Kentucky's School Psychology graduate programs. The University of Kentucky is the school chosen to be highlighted in this article.

The University of Kentucky offers School Psychology programs within the Educational and Counseling Psychology department within the College of Education. an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) and a doctoral (Ph.D.) program are offered. The Ed.S. program consists of two years of course work and a one year internship. The Ed.S. program has full accreditation by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education (NCATE). Eligibility for certification as a school psychologist in Kentucky, as well as most other states, is obtained upon graduation from the Ed.S. program.

The Ph.D. program is comprised of approximately five years of course study, including a one year internship. Acceptance into this program occurs at the bachelors, masters and specialist levels. The Ph.D. program has full accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA) and NASP. This program also results in school psychologist certification and also qualifies graduates to obtain licensure as a psychologist.

The School Psychology programs are structured to prepare professional psychologists with educational knowledge in order to facilitate their ability to perform in a vast array of educational settings. The programs are guided by an "ecological systems" perspective which emphasizes the concept of the "whole child".

Through extensive course work, students at the University of Kentucky gain knowledge regarding general areas of psychology, research and statistics, assessment, consultation, intervention, counseling, legal and ethical issues and education areas. In addition to course work, Ed.S. students complete a

this point the bill has not received any noticeable questioning or opposition. It is important to understand that this wording change within the statutes will have no bearing on salary, employability, certification, tenure, or professional development for school psychologists. Please watch future mailings and/or the Spring KAPS Review for an update on the outcome of this important legislative action.

### Region 1 Report

Beth Huff & Wendy Watts

Region 1 had an informative meeting in the month of November. Pat Murphy, consultant with Hopkins County Schools and formerly with UK's System Change presented on the needed components of change and where school psychologists fit into the scheme. Prior to concluding her presentation, she quickly determined through a group intelligence test that only Wendy had potential with all other attendees (Laura, Alan, Cynthia, Angie) being assessed in the functional realm of abilities. Beth and Kelly were saved because they were familiar with the test. The afternoon session involved Alan presenting

IDEA changes and potential effects on school districts.

Our spring meeting is set for Lake City on March 11, 1998. The morning presenter will be Susan Phelps, psychological associate. She will present on clinical disorders commonly found in the school population, how to assess, and how to intervene. **Please send Beth and Wendy a list of disorders you are interested in/work with.** In the afternoon session, Mildred Littlepage will present on consolidated planning and then we will conclude with Alan providing an update on KAPS.

We are attempting to complete a list of test instruments that are available in the region as a lending library, but we continue to have a poor response. Please send your list to us as soon as possible!

### Region 3 Report

Erin Richardson

The first semester was a very busy one for us in Region 3. In addition to our typical job roles, we have spent a great deal of our time being trained and subsequently training our schools on the updated district policies and

procedures and the corresponding new forms. Although there is still much to be done, we think we've made a great deal of progress. We are continuing to hold our case consultation meetings and "Brown Bag Lunch Seminars" where we get together to share our knowledge or learn from other professionals in related fields. Finally, at our holiday luncheon each year, someone from all of the central office ECE (special education) department is chosen to receive the "Starfish Award". The award is named after the "Starfish Flinger" story where the man was determined to "make a difference to this one" and is given to those that go above and beyond to make sure those we serve get the help they need. This year, two of our school psychologists were nominated. We would like to recognize Barbara Armstrong and Jenny Nirmaier for their efforts. Thank you for representing us so well.

### Region 6 Report

Kathie Harris

The school psychologists in Region 6 met December 5th in Corbin at the Region 6 Service Center. The main topic was "Functional

located 1/2 mile off the main road in a self-contained secluded setting away from traffic noise. 4) With lower facility costs, we plan to provide more perks to attendees, as requested by the '97 survey (e.g., more eats and drinks, freebies, grabbies, etc.). 5) The Shelby staff is well trained for conferences, as they conduct weekly training for local corporations (UPS, etc.), and they have hosted numerous state association conferences. 6) We can use the facilities at no extra charge for our social. We can bring in our own entertainment and liquor, but they will charge a reasonable fee for snacks and soft drinks. 7) There are plenty of very good restaurants within short driving distance from Shelby for lunch and dinner purposes.

We firmly believe that the advantages outweigh the few disadvantages. Considering the constraints we must work with, it is our goal to conduct a first rate conference for 1998. In the next KAPS Review, we will have more information about hotel rooms, and conference topics and presenters.

### **KAPS Training Session** Alan Mullins

In response to growing concern of many school psychologists regarding the multitude of legal issues surrounding our everyday practice, KAPS is sponsoring a one-day workshop session on March 6, 1998. Mark Fenzell, board attorney for the Jefferson County School System, will discuss the major changes brought about through the reauthorization of IDEA for school psychologists from a legal standpoint. A major focus will be on confidentiality issues, especially relating to counseling, testing information/protocols, behavior management plans, and parents' "right to know". In addition to Mr. Fenzell's presentation, the workshop will include a roundtable, open forum session to encourage discussion among all attendees on these issues plus any other related issues which school psychologists are currently facing. Following the training, the KAPS Executive Council will hold a fairly brief official meeting to conduct association business. All KAPS members are invited to stay and participate. This training will take place in Elizabethtown and will be

free to KAPS members. Details regarding the facility address and workshop times are being finalized and will be mailed to all KAPS members in the third week of January (it may actually reach you before this edition of the KAPS Review). If you have any questions, please call Alan Mullins (President, 502-554-6800) or Mike Norris (Pres-Elect, 502-485-3546).

### **KAPS' New Student Representative** Alan Mullins

KAPS bylaws require that a representative to the Executive Council be selected each year from one of the in-state school psychology graduate training institutions. This year's representative is currently enrolled at the University of Kentucky. She is Tammy Chapman and the Executive Council greatly enjoyed her attendance and participation at the December 12 business meeting. Tammy seems very enthusiastic and interested in presenting issues which are of importance to graduate students to the KAPS EC. All current full-time university students can expect to receive communication from Tammy in the next month or two. If

opportunity to impact the delivery of school psychological services on a large scale across the state, gaining first-hand knowledge of many of the workings of the educational system in the state, developing professional relationships with other key educators, and NASP benefits such as information and some reimbursement possibilities to attend select trainings. The office of Treasurer is a two-year term which mainly requires the maintenance of the financial records of the association. Additionally, all eight Regional Representative positions are up for election this year. Regional Reps serve as the communication hub between the officers of the association and the general membership. The main responsibilities are to vote on issues regarding the direction of the association as well as keeping the members in their own regions informed about association business and relevant professional issues.

The KAPS bylaws require that the election process begin with a nomination period which is open until April 1. If you have a particular KAPS member in mind whom you feel would serve the association well in one of the positions described

previously, please complete the ballot provided on the last page of this issue and mail it to the address provided. You do not necessarily have to contact that person directly to seek his/her permission for nomination submission. I will contact each nomination member to determine if he/she truly desires to seek election. You also may nominate yourself for a position if you are interested. You may submit more than one person for nomination and you may include nominations for more than one of the positions to be elected. Early in april an official election ballot will be mailed to all KAPS members who are in good standing (i.e., have paid dues for the year). Now is certainly an exciting time to become actively involved in the work of KAPS. The association is in very sound financial condition, is continuing to gain respectability from other Kentucky educators, and is being looked to more and more for providing potential answers to many of today's dilemmas facing education and children.

**Job Opportunities**

Henderson County Schools will have an opening for a school psychologist beginning

July 1998. This position will be filled with either an experienced school psychologist or an intern. If you are interested, please contact Rebecca Cole, Special Programs Coordinator, 502-831-5010.

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**THE KAPS REVIEW**

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