

AEL—linking the knowledge from research with the wisdom from practice to improve teaching and learning

School-Based Programs to Promote Safety and Civility

by Soleil Gregg, AEL Staff

In a decent society that wishes to survive as a self-sustaining democracy, there must be a high degree of civility, because that mirrors the respect that we have, not only for our constitutional order, but for our fellow citizens.¹

The democratic process depends on the practice of civility to negotiate differences among individuals and groups. However, disputes and insults increasingly trigger violent responses, especially among the young. Adolescent homicide rates have “more than doubled since 1988”: 20 percent of suburban students in one survey endorse “shooting someone ‘who has stolen something from you,’ while eight percent believe it is acceptable to shoot a person ‘who has done something to offend or insult you’” (p. 14).² Homicide is now the leading cause of death for African American and Hispanic young adults and the second leading cause of death for all

15- to 24-year-olds.³ The violence that plagues society at large is spilling over into schools. Approximately 3 million crimes occur annually in the nation’s 85,000 public schools.⁴ Although most schools are safe, parents, educators, and students increasingly view school safety and order as major concerns. They complain that students lack civility and respect for teachers and classmates.^{4,5}

Although the causes of violence are complex and varied, our youth clearly need to learn a basic prerequisite for civilized behavior—how to settle differences nonviolently. Their survival—and the survival of a democracy such as ours—depends on it.

In response, schools across the country are beginning to implement curricula and programs^{6,7} to teach students how to behave respectfully and responsibly as members of a democratic society, who “express their concerns peacefully and seek resolutions to problems that take into account common interests and recognize the human dignity of all involved” (p. 1).⁸ Many of these programs appear promising—based on program design, anecdote, or pilot or preliminary

*This article is excerpted from AEL’s new **Policy Briefs** of the same title. The publication contains descriptions of some effective models and projects and contact information for related organizations.

In this issue:

RESEARCH NOTES

- Volunteer Tutors’ Potential to Help Improve Children’s Reading Warrants Evaluation, p. 4
- New Title I Schoolwide Programs Precipitate Changes in Schools’ Strategies, Philosophy, p. 4
- Thoughtful Implementation of Standards Can Ensure School Improvement, p. 5
- Compendium of State and National Standards Helps Schools Fine-Tune Their Own, p. 6
- Foster Students’ Self-Motivation Before Relying on Reward Incentives, p. 6
- Education Spending Requires Long-Term, Results-Based Investment, p. 7
- Children Benefit from Good Parent-Teacher Conferences, p. 7

NOTEWORTHY

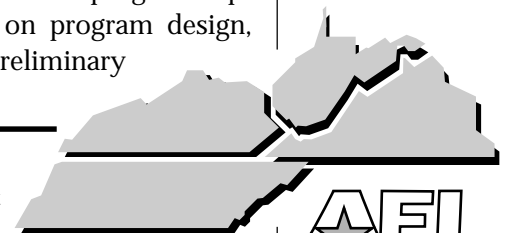
- Beacons of Excellence Project to Identify Outstanding Secondary Schools, p. 8
- Department of Education’s Web Site Offers Much, p. 8
- New Clearinghouse for Education Facilities, p. 9

FOCUS ON INSTRUCTION

- An Innovative Title I Project Gets Kentucky Parents Involved, p. 9

INSIDE AEL

- Register Now for Summer Professional Development from AEL, p. 11
- AEL Web Site Gets New Look, p. 12



AEL
more than
30 YEARS
OF SERVICE
to educators in
Kentucky,
Tennessee,
Virginia, and
West Virginia

studies—but a lack of scientific evidence proving their effectiveness has left school personnel wondering what programs really work.^{7,9,10,11,12}

To better inform schools and communities, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the General Accounting Office (GAO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have funded studies of school-based interventions over the past few years. Data from these and other rigorous studies are providing evidence that training students to manage their emotions, to respect others' viewpoints, and to settle their differences peacefully can help reduce school problems of violence and disrespect.^{9, 8,13,14,15,16,11}

School-based programs to help students manage interpersonal conflict range from simple classroom curricula to comprehensive,

schoolwide programs. Most teach a process that helps students “change from being adversaries in a face-to-face confrontation to being partners in a side-by-side search for a fair agreement that is advantageous to both” (p. 11).⁸ Effective programs teach students

Effective programs teach students how to separate people from the problem, focus on interests instead of positions, develop win-win options, and make decisions based on objective criteria.

how to separate people from the problem, focus on interests instead of positions, develop win-win options, and make decisions based on objective criteria. They also present a process for problem solving such as negotiation, mediation, or consensus building. Finally, they help individuals develop the attitudes, values, and abilities—cognitive, social, and emotional—they need to negotiate disputes.⁸

Schools have traditionally expected discipline systems to correct behavior problems. However, punishment may exacerbate rather than eliminate violence and does not teach students to be prosocial.¹⁷ Johnson and Johnson believe that teaching children the

three Cs—cooperation, civic values, and conflict resolution—can provide the structure and skills for creating safe, supportive school environments.¹⁸ Hill Walker of the Social Learning Center, University of Oregon, also believes that schools should be proactive and “teach alternative, replacement behavior patterns that are adaptive and functional” (p. 55).¹⁹ Drawing on his years of research, he says that “ultimately, students need to collectively care about and bond with their school and learn to respect the rights and well being of other students and staff” (p. 9).²⁰

Tips for Developing and Implementing Schoolwide Programs

For any program to succeed, school staff need to believe that conflict can be resolved peacefully and to model this belief in classrooms and schools. Adopting a program may require school leaders and staff to shift from traditional behavior management systems, in which discipline is an externally imposed set of rules and consequences, to helping students develop the values, attitudes, and inner discipline they need to regulate and control their own behavior.⁸

Key Characteristics of Effective Programs

A study by the General Accounting Office identifies seven key characteristics of effective violence prevention programs:

- (1) a comprehensive approach that recognizes the complexity of violence;
- (2) an early start and long-term commitment (a K-12 approach);
- (3) strong school leadership and clear, consistent discipline policies and procedures;
- (4) training for administrators, teachers, and staff in behavior management, mediation, and violence prevention strategies;
- (5) parent training and involvement;
- (6) links to law enforcement and social service agencies and the community; and
- (7) culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate materials and activities for students.⁹

Steps for Implementation

The following implementation steps can also increase the chance of program success:⁸

- Assemble a planning team comprised of administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. Many schools already have school-based decision-making teams that can fulfill this role.
- Determine the types of conflict in the school and ways conflict has been addressed. Support for the program will depend, in part, on how the program addresses perceived needs, builds on school strengths, meshes with existing school improvement plans, and promotes the school's educational mission.
- Develop goals and desired outcomes based on assessment of needs.
- Choose a program or curriculum that best matches school needs and goals.
- Select a staff development trainer, preferably one who helps the school build capacity to deliver its own continuing and future staff development.
- Seek administrative, faculty, and parental commitment and support. Building and district administrators can provide leadership and support by sharing the program's benefits and successes with local boards of education, faculties, students, parents, and civic groups; participating in training and teaching opportunities; and modeling the principles of resolving conflict. They can also involve faculties in planning, ensure adequate staff development, inform parents about the program, and even provide parent training in conflict resolution techniques.
- Evaluate results. Evaluation measures progress toward program goals and provides data for continuous improvement. Evidence of success also helps sustain enthusiasm for the program.

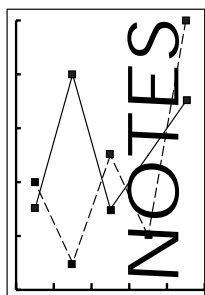
Because of the complexity and variance of violent behavior, policy makers, educators,

and parents need to understand that no one school program can possibly eliminate it.¹⁹ However, "aspects of emotional fluency and understanding can be successfully taught in the school environment by classroom teachers to both regular and special needs...children" (p. 13).²¹ School-based programs can help students understand others' points of view, develop tolerance and self-control, and learn to settle their differences peacefully—in other words, help them learn civil, respectful behavior. Therefore, such programs not only play a useful role in more comprehensive efforts to reduce violence in schools and society, but they can also prepare students to be good citizens by fostering the attitudes and skills they will need as adults to participate in and sustain our democratic nation.

References

1. Kennedy, A. (1997, Spring). 1996 speech at the Emory University School of Law by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy. *Emory Magazine*, 73(1), 11.
2. Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. (1994). A fine line: Losing American youth to violence (a special section reprinted from the 1994 Annual Report of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation). Flint, MI: Author.
3. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1996). Violence: Youth violence in the United States. Available: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/yvfacts.htm>.
4. Sautter, C. (1995, January). Standing up to school violence (Kappan Special Report). *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(5), K1-K12.
5. Johnson, J., & Farkas, S. (1997). *Getting by: What American teenagers really think about their schools*. New York: Public Agenda.
6. Schools test new ways to resolve conflict. (1993, December). *ASCD Update*, 35(10), 1-8.
7. U.S. Department of Education. (1993). *Safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools: A background paper for the Goals 2000: Educate America satellite town meeting, July 20, 1993*. Washington, DC: Author.
8. Crawford, D., & Bodine, R. (1996). *Conflict resolution education: A guide to implementing programs in schools, youth-serving organizations, and community and juvenile justice settings*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(continued on page 10)



RESEARCH

Volunteer Tutors' Potential to Help Improve Children's Reading Warrants Evaluation

With nearly 40 percent of American children reading below average for their age level, a national commitment to strengthening the reading skills of young children has turned the spotlight onto volunteer tutoring programs. Yet, little evidence has been collected to indicate what impact, if any, volunteer tutors can have on children's reading ability.

"Volunteer tutors may be able to contribute to children's reading success, but a great deal of research, development of replicable models, and evaluation of alternative models is needed if the potential of volunteer tutoring is to be realized," asserts Barbara A. Wasik in a publication from the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk. Toward this end, Wasik reviews 16 widely used adult volunteer tutoring programs in reading.

While research and practice have established the effectiveness of one-on-one tutoring in general, there have been few evaluations to determine if the hundreds of locally created tutoring programs aimed at improving children's reading development are working.

Some of these programs were created as affordable alternatives to highly successful reading programs such as Reading Recovery and Success for All. The possibility of disseminating these less expensive models only fur-

ther emphasizes the need to evaluate them, Wasik explains.

Wasik provides a description of each program, including processes and materials, dissemination information, and whatever evaluation data are available. An appendix table offers details on specific program elements. Book Buddies, Read*Right*Now, and two AmeriCorps related programs are among those reviewed.

Despite the lack of direct evaluative feedback, Wasik discusses some elements common to these popular programs, suggesting their possible beneficial impact and pinpointing them for further investigations. For example, she notes the apparent importance of having a designated coordinator and knowledgeable trainer of tutors, consistency in training and in frequency of tutoring sessions, and coordination between tutoring approaches and classroom instruction.

To Order: *Volunteer Tutoring Programs: A Review of Research on Achievement Outcomes* is available from the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk, The Johns Hopkins and Howard Universities, 3003 N. Charles St., Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21218; 410/516-8808 (cite report no. 14, 38 pages, \$7.25 prepaid).

New Title I Schoolwide Programs Precipitate Changes in Schools' Strategies, Philosophy

Changes to Title I, the legislation aimed at improving education for children in poverty, have shifted its focus away from compensatory, remedial instruction in the "basics" toward schoolwide improvements that upgrade the educational program for all students.

A resource guide from WestEd examines the new Title I schoolwide program, highlighting three key features—whole-school reform strategies in place of "add-on" services, flexibility in how schools can spend Title I

funds, and the option for schools to combine them with other federal programs.

"Schools serving our most impoverished children don't need better supplemental instruction; they need comprehensive reform," write the authors. "Disadvantaged learners will not develop higher-order skills and meet challenging standards unless the whole school is organized to make this happen for all kids."

WestEd's resource guide explains how and why whole-school reform works better to

educate Title I students. It also offers school personnel suggestions and resources for reorganizing their school and developing a schoolwide program. The guide is divided into six sections:

- Rationale and purpose of Title I schoolwide programs, detailing the research supporting the approach;
- Requirements and components of the Title I legislation to help schools implement the new schoolwide option;
- Planning framework, including tools and activities to help schools develop a schoolwide program tailored to local needs;

- Challenges and ideas to consider, focusing on fundamental design issues such as restructuring time;
- Profiles of schools that have implemented innovative programs; and
- Information and resource listings to support a school's planning efforts.

The resource guide also contains a video that profiles three successful schools.

To Order: *Schoolwide Reform: A New Outlook* is available from WestEd, 730 Harrison St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)565-3044 (cite order no. TAC-96-01, 250 pages, \$30 prepaid).

Thoughtful Implementation of Standards Can Ensure School Improvement

Mirroring a general shift in the education reform movement from inputs to results beginning in the 1980s, standards—what students should know and be able to do—have emerged as a promising way to improve student achievement outcomes.

However, the drawbacks of misguided efforts have become apparent, making it essential for educators and policy makers to carefully examine the potential benefits and challenges of standards-based education, explain Joan L. Buttram and J. Timothy Waters of the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL). They author an introduction to the September issue of the *Bulletin*, the journal of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), which devotes its articles to an exploration of standards-based education from several perspectives.

Examining the results of international tests such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), John T. Sutton and Alice B. Krueger, also from McREL, suggest that the comparatively “dismal” performance of U.S. students is the result of a lack of focus in our education standards. “There may be too many different concepts of educational standards, since

they have been framed at the national, state, and local levels,” they write.

The answer, they argue, is not to come up with new national standards in math and science, but rather to provide assistance and resources at the local level so that educators can fully implement those already on the books, which “have and will continue to serve a useful purpose in providing an articulated and informed view of how math and science education need to change.”

An article by McREL's Robert Marzano and John Kendall updates the status of national and state efforts to set standards in content areas. Colorado Governor Roy Romer champions the promise of standards-based education to ensure that all students succeed. And still other articles focus on teachers' challenges, efforts, and professional development needs in implementing standards in the classroom.

To Order: *Standards-Based Education: Helping Students To Succeed* is available from the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 20191; (703)860-0200 (cite order no. 1109709, 121 pages, \$12 for members, \$15 for non-members, prepaid).

Compendium of State and National Standards Helps Schools Fine-Tune Their Own

In its second edition resource compendium of standards and benchmarks for K-12 education, the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) provides an up-to-date synthesis of the innumerable national and state directives that can inform efforts at the local and school level.

The binder can be used “as a resource or for schools or districts generating their own standards or, more commonly, to revise and augment the standards and benchmarks provided by their state department of education,” explain researchers John Kendall and Robert Marzano.

The new volume includes 255 standards and nearly 4,000 accompanying benchmarks across various disciplines. The information was culled from more than 100 national and state documents regarding what elementary and secondary students should know and be able to do.

The standards and benchmarks refer to each discipline identified in the national goals, as well as health, physical education, behavioral studies, technology, and life skills. Each sub-

ject-area section begins with a summary of defined standards, followed by bulleted lists of benchmarks—the tasks and activities that demonstrate mastery of the standard. Tasks are grouped into four levels, each spanning three or four grades.

For example, one mathematics standard requires that a student “uses a variety of strategies in the problem-solving process.” To demonstrate this, K-2 students can draw pictures to represent problems (a procedural benchmark) or explain to others how he or she solved a problem (a contextual benchmark).

The guide also includes discussions of conceptual and historical issues, including the relationship between performance assessments and standards-based education.

To Order: *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12, Second Edition* is available from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1250 North Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314; (703)549-9110 (cite order no. 197254, 651 pages, \$39.95 for ASCD members, \$47.95 for nonmembers, prepaid).

Foster Students' Self-Motivation Before Relying on Reward Incentives

In a publication for teachers and school improvement teams, researchers Judith Meece and Wendy McColskey look at student motivation—what it is, what factors affect it, why it's important for student achievement, and how teachers and schools can assess and cultivate it.

Meece and McColskey cite research indicating that intrinsic motivators—e.g., students' desire for “mastery of tasks”—lead to better learning than do extrinsic rewards such as grades and expectations of quizzes.

That is not to say there aren't appropriate situations in which to use extrinsic incentives, the researchers are quick to point out, “but they are clearly only a piece of the moti-

vation puzzle, given the long-term goal of students becoming responsible for their own learning.... The most effective motivation program is one that encourages intrinsic reasons for engaging in learning tasks whenever possible and uses incentives in an individual and strategic manner.”

In the guide, published by the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE), the researchers also examine what classroom factors relate to students' interest and effort and, consequently, what strategies teachers can use to increase their engagement in learning. Furthermore, they explore the responsibilities of school leaders to consider the impact of schoolwide policies on student motivation.

“Efforts to enhance students’ intrinsic motivation in the classroom can be subverted by schoolwide policies and practices that over-emphasize raising test scores, offer too few opportunities for teacher collaboration, require strict adherence to textbook coverage, or limit resources for staff development or curriculum refinement,” they conclude.

To Order: *Improving Student Motivation: A Guide for Teachers and School Improvement Teams* is available from the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, 345. S. Magnolia Dr., Suite D-23, Tallahassee, FL 32301; (800)352-6001 (cite order no. RDISM, 98 pages, \$12 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling).

Education Spending Requires Long-Term, Results-Based Investment

With funding for public education likely to remain tight in the near future, policy makers must take a long-term investment approach to improving student achievement. Such an approach requires knowing what areas of concentrated spending yield the most significant results. A publication from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) helps policy makers determine ways to acquire this knowledge.

In recent years, states have increasingly concentrated efforts to improve student achievement in three areas: early childhood education, teacher quality, and stronger connections between the K-12 and postsecondary systems. ECS authors examine the approaches taken by many states and describe the “high level of creativity, leadership and commitment with which states are moving ahead in these areas.”

However, despite substantial commitments of staff talents and resource spending, for the most part there has been little evaluation of the payoff of these efforts. Without such evaluation, policy makers cannot make the shift from “a view of education spending as simply budgeting an ongoing stream of revenues to one that is based on investing in programs that provide the greatest return for the dollar.” The reality of declining revenues and competition for future financial resources make this shift a necessity.

The authors describe methods policy makers can use to make the shift to a results-based budgeting process that uses existing resources more efficiently. Their suggestions include insisting on well-documented evidence

of program results and requiring program evaluations so that this evidence becomes available. They also recommend considering whether an effective program is still worthwhile if funding shortages restrict its full im-

Children Benefit from Good Parent-Teacher Conferences

Many parents go to parent-teacher conferences thinking the teacher is in charge and that they are significantly less important. But James Comer, a child psychiatrist and one of the nation’s leading advocates of parental involvement in schools, wants parents to be more prepared and more informed. According to Comer, if the primary purpose of parent-teacher conferences is to gain information about a child as a learner, it is only logical that teachers need parent input as much as parents need input from teachers. Parents can improve the quality and effectiveness of parent-teacher conferences in several ways: (1) Ask for two conferences a year, one before the end of October and one in March; (2) Expect the teacher to show you examples of current work, including the books being used; (3) Ask the teacher about classroom rules, how they are enforced, and how your child is doing socially; (4) Find out specifically what the teacher’s expectations are and what kind of help the teacher wants from you; (5) After the conference, discuss it with your child. In addition to these tips, parents are advised not to wait until a conference if they have a concern or a question, and no matter what the problem, always go to the teacher first.

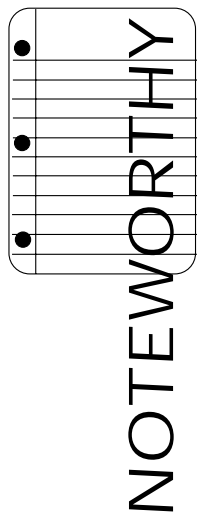
Source: Ed.Net Briefs:* Barbara F. Meltz, *The Boston Globe*, “Do your homework before conferences,” as published in *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 16, 1997

*Ed.Net Briefs is a free weekly online education newsletter sent to subscribers via e-mail each Monday, September-June. Ed.Net Briefs is a compilation of summaries of education stories with source citations. **For a free subscription**, send an e-mail message to usabriefs-request@lists.olympus.net, leave the subject area of your e-mail message blank, and type “subscribe” as the message (without quotation marks).

plementation. Lastly, they insist on legislative follow-through—making sure policies are clear, consistent, and carried out.

To Order: *Investing in Student Achievement* is available from the Education Commission

of the States, 707 17th St., Suite 2700, Denver, CO 80202-3427; (303)299-3692 (cite order no. SI-97-9, 28 pages, \$10 plus \$3 postage and handling, prepaid; discounts available for bulk orders).



Beacons of Excellence Project to Identify Outstanding Secondary Schools

In September 1998, a call for nominations to identify schools that achieve exemplary outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities, will be issued by the Beacons of Excellence Project. Conducted by the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota, in collaboration with The Council for Exceptional Children,* the project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

The three-year study will identify secondary schools that obtain exemplary results for all students—including students with disabilities—and study how secondary school curriculum, policies, administration, and instruction contribute to student success. The project will examine transition practices, vocational programs, preparation for post-secondary ed-

ucation, and academic expectations at some of the best schools in the nation. In addition, the Beacons project will develop strategies to help other schools adopt practices that allow students with disabilities to achieve exemplary results.

For more information, contact Teri Wallace, The Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 111A Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Dr., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612-626-7220.

*The Council for Exceptional Children—the largest professional association for special educators, related service providers, and parents—works to improve the educational success of students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. The Council represents members serving more than 5 million students with disabilities and 2.5 million gifted students in the United States.

Department of Education's Web Site Offers Much

Faster searches, greater access to information, and attractive layouts await users of the newly redesigned Education Department Web site (<http://www.ed.gov>). Student financial aid materials, tips for parents, statistics, and the latest findings on what works in education are among the documents stored on the site, helping make it one of the most widely used education resources on the Internet.

Among the improvements:

- A state-of-the-art search engine that sifts through more than 20,000 files to produce much faster and more accurate results;
- A new "cross-site indexing" project (<http://www.ed.gov/Search/>), extending searches beyond Education Department offices to more than 100 Department-sponsored Web sites;

- "Topics A-Z," offering an alphabetical list of links to the best starting points for several hundred topics;
- Links to the most frequently requested information;
- Revamped buttons that make popular information such as "Student Financial Assistance" and "Research and Statistics" easier to find.

A "Contact Us" page provides e-mail addresses, toll-free telephone numbers, and postal addresses for key contacts; a link to the department's ongoing Internet customer survey; and links to education-related conference and event calendars at department-sponsored sites, as well as more prominent connections to state education agencies. The Web site is hosted by the Department's National Library of Education.

New National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities

A National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities is now available to provide information and assistance for all facets of school facility planning, design, construction, and maintenance.

Established by the U.S. Department of Education, through the National Library of Education, the Clearinghouse offers

- information resources,
- technical assistance,

- training and workshops,
- critical-issue materials, and
- regional/national conferences.

For more information, contact
National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities
1750 Kraft Drive, Suite 2200
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
Toll Free: 1-888-552-0624
E-mail: ncefinfo@edfacilities.org

An Innovative Title I Project Gets Kentucky Parents Involved

by Stan Bumgardner, AEL Staff

An imaginative computer project in Bullitt County, Kentucky, challenges parents to take an active part in their children's education. The Parent Involvement Laptop Computer Program was initiated at Overdale Elementary and Maryville Elementary in February 1996 for Title I students in grades one through five. The program is supported by U.S. Department of Education Title I funds.

Classes are designed specially for the student/parent team. Neida Werner, who coordinates the program as a micro-computer specialist for Bullitt County Schools, says, "We adapt our program around parents' varied schedules. Sessions are offered every morning Monday through Thursday and two evenings a week."

The program is unusual because parents commit to working alongside their children as they learn computer skills. "The project's benefits are not confined to the walls of the classroom," she noted. "Parents find they are becoming more effective teachers at home. By examining work sheets and records of work, parents monitor student progress, which enables them to better assist with homework."

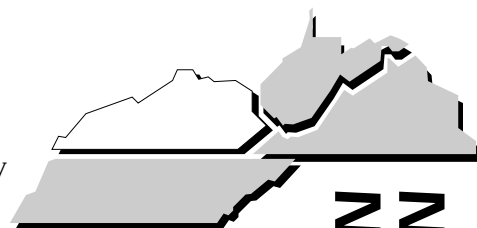
Students begin each one-hour class by practicing typing and word processing, then go on to assignments that focus on specific subjects such as math, language arts, geography, or science. The laptop computers are loaded with educational software targeted to the age and ability of each student.

It's not a one-way street. Many of the parents are working with computers for the first time. And, often as not, the children get to show their parents a thing or two on the computer.

"The kids love it when mom gets stuck on something and they have to bail her out," Werner observed. "A lot of times, kids will get programs going and be at a level where I've never been before. And they show me how to do things."

When the parent-student team becomes comfortable with the computer, they can take a laptop home for the weekend. Six to eight families check out computers each weekend. This easy access is important because most of the students have not had computers at home. However, since the program began, many parents have purchased computers.

Werner credits Overdale principal Kaye West and former Maryville principal Wayne Muscar with starting the project two years ago. Even with time constraints and a limited number of computers, 16 families participated the first year. Increased funding for the second year opened the program to every Title I student, and 75 families chose to participate. The program has become more structured as Werner learns what works and what does not. The first year, students chose what they wanted to work on, but, as the program



**FOCUS ON
INSTRUCTION**

Featuring articles from teachers in the four AEL states—this issue, Kentucky

has become more balanced, students are challenged to venture into new areas of learning.

"They are encouraged to use programs in the areas where they struggle the most," Werner says. "But it also helps their self-esteem to work in programs where they excel."

She believes teachers should continue their efforts to include parents in the educational process. To that extent, the project has succeeded overwhelmingly. Parents are involved in instructional decisions as well, filling out evaluations at the end of each class to help teachers plan for future sessions.

Werner remarked, "It gives us the opportunity to see parents, most of whom are not regular volunteers, coming into the school and participating in their child's education. At the same time, they're having fun and learning skills new to most of them."

The program fulfills another objective by giving students a foundation for 21st century technology. They learn "what the computer can do for them," while they develop essential reading and critical thinking skills. Werner believes the project "gives these children an advantage and a head start with the technology they will use all their lives."

Based on the positive responses of teachers, parents, and students, goals for the project are ambitious. Plans are in the works to use the computers to link instruction with the Internet and help students develop their writing portfolios.

Werner believes the laptop computer program demonstrates that many parents want to play a leading role in their children's education, and is pleased with students' positive response to the program. Said Werner, "the parents' visits to the classroom have become weekly highlights for the students, and evidence indicates these children are achieving at higher levels with the increased parental involvement."

For more information, contact Neida Werner, Microcomputer Specialist, Louisville, KY; Overdale Elementary 502/957-2160; Maryville Elementary 502/955-6553.

(continued from page 3)

9. U.S. General Accounting Office. (1995, April). School safety: Promising initiatives for addressing school violence (Report No. GAO/HEHS-95-106). Washington, DC: Author.
10. Howell, J. D. (Ed.) (1995, June). Guide for implementing the comprehensive strategy for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
11. Powell, K., Dahlberg, L., Friday, J., Mercy, J., Thornton, T., & Crawford, S. (1996). Prevention of youth violence: Rationale and characteristics of 15 education projects. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 12(5) (Suppl.), 3-12.
12. Aleem, D., et al. (1993). Review of research on ways to attain Goal Six: Creating safe, disciplined, & drug-free schools. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
13. DeJong, W. (n.d.). Building the peace: The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) (Program Focus). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.
14. National Institute of Justice. (1995, September). Evaluation of violence prevention programs in middle schools (Update). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.
15. Bilchik, S. (1995, November). Delinquency prevention works: Program summary. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
16. Cunningham, C., Cunningham, L., Martorelli, V., Tran, A., Young, J., & Zacharius, R. (1997). The effects of primary division, student-mediated conflict resolution programs on playground aggression. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada: Chedolce-McMaster Hospitals and McMaster University.
17. Walker, H., Horner, R., Sugai, G., Bullis, M., Sprague, J., Bricker, D., & Kaufman, M. (1996). Integrated approaches to preventing antisocial behavior patterns among school-age children and youth. *Journal of Emotional and Behavior Disorders*, 4(4), 194-209.
18. Johnson, D., Johnson, R., Stevahn, L., & Hodne, P. (1997). The three Cs of safe schools. *Educational Leadership*, 55 (2), 8-13.
19. Walker, H., Colvin, G., & Ramsey, E. (1995). *Antisocial behavior in school: Strategies and best practices*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
20. Walker, H., & Gresham, F. (1997). Making schools safer and violence free. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 32(4), 199-204.
21. Greenberg, M. (1996). Final report to NIMH: The PATHS Project: Preventive intervention for children (Grant No. RO1MH42131). Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Department of Psychology.

Register Now for Summer Professional Development from AEL

Sixth Annual Institute on Curriculum Integration

June 22-26, 1998—Lexington, KY
July 13-17, 1998—Nashville, TN

The Institute provides school and district teams and curriculum leaders with opportunities, tools, and resources for planning integrated courses, units, and lessons. The activities and materials emphasize the roles of learner-centered instruction, standards-driven curriculum, and performance-based assessment.

The Institute is a perfect setting for school and district planning in these areas:

- Interdisciplinary curriculum
- Block scheduling
- School-to-work activities
- Multiple assessment strategies

Interdisciplinary teams, career-cluster teams, multiple-site project teams, inclusionary learning teams, and professional development leaders are among those who can benefit from the institute experience. Participants leave the institute with

- a plan for implementing interdisciplinary teamed instruction;
- a team-developed integrated unit;
- specific instructional practices such as project-based learning, multiple intelligences, and community-based learning;
- strategies for developing alternative assessments, performance criteria, and scoring rubrics; and
- resources for effective teamwork, community-building, and networking.

Registrations (\$550/person) will be accepted until May 22 with accompanying check, money order, or purchase order payable to AEL. Teams of six or more receive a 10% discount. The registration fee includes tuition, all activities, materials, team consultation, daily lunches, and one breakfast. If you wish to use the Institute for continuing education, recertification, or graduate credit, AEL will supply a syllabus.

Visit our web site (<http://www.ael.org/rel/iti>) for more details and a registration form.

For more information, contact Rebecca Burns at AEL (burnsr@ael.org).

Increase Student Achievement With More Effective Questioning

A Training-for-Trainers Event
June 15-20, 1998 • Lexington, KY

Do you want to help your students become better thinkers and hold them more accountable for their own learning? You can, with a staff development program called QUILT—Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking. Designed to increase student learning by improving teachers' classroom questioning techniques, QUILT complements and supports many existing staff development programs.

QUILT encourages teachers to restructure their classrooms such that the learning environment becomes more active, more student-centered, more constructivist, more inquiry-based, and more metacognitive.

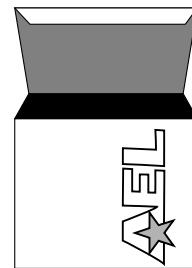
QUILT's training-of-trainers approach helps school districts prepare cadres of local teachers who then train others in their schools, districts, and states. Typically, a local school team (two teachers and an administrator) attends a week-long training where they learn how to facilitate QUILT with their own faculty. The QUILT program has been successfully implemented in elementary, middle, and high schools. AEL staff have instructed more than 650 QUILT trainers, who have presented the material to more than 4,500 teachers.

The QUILT program

- is nationally validated, certified by the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel as a "program that works";
- has a successful track record in more than 200 schools in 20 states and territories since 1991; and
- is research-based, incorporating practices and techniques linked by research to higher levels of student achievement.

Costs for the weeklong training, five group lunches, refreshments, and materials are covered in the registration fee of \$675.

For more information, contact Sandra Orletsky (orletsk@ael.org) or Beth Sattes (sattesb@ael.org) at AEL.



INSIDE

AEL Web Site Gets New Look

You may have visited our web site in the past and felt overwhelmed by the large amount of text you found. We know it was sometimes hard to look for information by categories, because we had everything organized according to the structure of our internal operations—fine for us, but confusing for you!

Well, we've changed. A few months ago, we began mounting our newly configured web site. We wanted to do several things: make our pages less text-heavy and more interactive, provide activities you can use in your home or classroom, and connect you with other resources you might find interesting and useful.

Today, you can go to www.ael.org and see the latest edition of our new magazine-style format. Our redesigned home page displays "headline stories" with brief descriptions inviting you to jump in and explore. Along the left-hand column, you'll find "buttons" for each major division of our corporation. They, too, have mini home pages with headline stories, some of which are interactive—surveys, quizzes, regis-

tration forms, and field testing opportunities await you. For example, the March 1998 edition invited Tennessee teachers to participate in a web site testing project.

Some pages offer a "Bookmarks" section, which describes other resources related to an interest area and provides contact information or direct links. Many of the listings you'll find in these sections are used regularly by our staff as tools for research and development.

And, there's fun for everyone in our various activity pages. For instance, under NSF Projects, you can choose Voices, then "Granny Did What?" You'll find an activity designed for middle school girls that can be adapted for use in any classroom. Or, under the Regional Educational Laboratory section, choose Family Connections, then go to examples of activities. Here you can download sample activities and read-alouds for preschoolers.

Don't miss the Headline Archives button near the bottom of the home page. Use it to catch up on all the issues and activities you missed, if you haven't been surfing our site recently!



Post Office Box 1348
Charleston, West Virginia
25325-1348

**Address Correction
Requested**

Telephone:
304/347-0400
800/624-9120
304/347-0487 (Fax)
aelinfo@ael.org
<http://www.ael.org>

Terry L. Eidell,
Executive Director
Carolyn Luzader, Editor

Editorial Board:
Diana Bowman
Soleil Gregg
Pat Hammer
Jane Hange
Marian Keyes
Carla McClure
Pat Penn
Beth Sattes



The Link is available free of charge to educators in the AEL Region. Readers are encouraged to reproduce its contents, giving proper credit. On request, AEL will provide a camera-ready copy on white paper.

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 2560
Charleston, WV
25301

AEL is a private, nonprofit corporation. AEL's mission is to link the knowledge from research with the wisdom from practice to improve teaching and learning. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. For these same four states, it operates both a Regional Technology in Education Consortium and the Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education. In addition, it serves as the Region IV Comprehensive Center and operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL's primary source of funding is the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This publication is produced with funds from OERI contract number RJ96006001. The contents herein do not necessarily reflect AEL or OERI policies or views.

AEL is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer