



## “... Teaching and Learning Together ...”

### From the Executive Director . . .

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first issue of the JCPS Gheens Academy of Curricular Excellence and Instructional Leadership newsletter! Designed to support highly effective teaching and learning throughout the district, this monthly newsletter will provide you with information from our content area departments and timely information regarding professional development activities, research, resources and tools relative to implementing the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) and Senate Bill 1. We hope

you will find this publication enlightening and useful; we look forward to your feedback!

Gheens' recently updated mission is “to advance innovative teaching and learning for today and tomorrow.” In that vein, other innovations and changes are taking place at our facility and in our work. If you haven't visited the Gheens website recently, please check it out soon and come back often, as it will be updated frequently—sometimes daily—to provide you with information, resources and support to help with the full implementation of Senate Bill 1.

At Gheens, we believe in and strive for continuous improvement. If you have questions needing to be answered or suggestions for our newsletter, please contact us at 485-3494. We value your input! We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
*Lynne*

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### Elementary Conference for All

The 2011 *Elementary Conference for All* was held June 13-17 on the Gheens/Male Campus. More than 1293 elementary teachers attended the general sessions along with 93 administrators and 5 community partners. Literacy and math cohort groups held at Waggener accounted for another 536 teachers. The total number of individual participants was 1927.



*Participants interact with facilitator Jane Shewmaker at the Elementary Conference for All.*

This year's conference focused on the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) in mathematics and literacy, program reviews, and the Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learn-

ing (CHETL). In addition to the focus, there were sessions in social studies, writing, science, art, ECE, RTI, CARE for Kids, and bullying. Jon Saphier, founder of Research for Better Teaching provided the keynote workshop, The Skillful Teacher.

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### Dr. Freda Merriweather

Gheens Academy extends a hearty “welcome back” to Dr. Freda Merriweather, who returns officially to JCPS for the month of July as Interim Superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools.

Dr. Merriweather began her JCPS career in 1984 as Price Elementary's principal, and later became an early member of the Gheens Academy staff. She also served JCPS as executive director for curriculum and instruction, and retired in 2002 as assistant superintendent of elementary schools.



**For more information on “CHETL” and “KCAS,” go to the Gheens Academy website and click on the “Communities of Practice” (COPs) link!**

*“Thank you for treating me as a professional.”*

## Senate Bill 1 Overview

KCAS? CHETL? SB1? You may be asking, “What is all the hoopla around these new acronyms?” Bottom line: a new law goes into effect on August 1, 2011 that impacts elementary, middle, and high school education in Kentucky!

Senate Bill 1 (SB1) is Kentucky’s new law that focuses on our students’ college and career readiness. An examination of JCPS data revealed that of our students who entered 9th grade in 2002, only 75% graduated high school, and of our graduates, the vast majority did not complete a four year college program.

SB1 assures that in the future, every Kentucky stu-

dent will be “college and career ready” by providing direction on what and how we teach. It replaces Kentucky Core Content with KCAS—Kentucky Core Academic Standards—to assure our students have access to rigorous, deep content. It provides us with CHETL – Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning. These characteristics are actually a set of research-based descriptors for five components of effective classroom practice, describing the role of the teacher and student in an exemplary instructional environment. The components involve learning climate, classroom assessment and reflection, instructional rigor and stu-

dent engagement, instructional relevance, and knowledge of content. Finally, SB1 requires assessment literacy by educators, in that they are expected to be skilled in gathering accurate information about their students’ learning and using that information effectively to promote further learning.

Are you ready for SB1? Do you know the KCAS for your content area? Do you have an exemplary instructional environment? Are you assessment literate? Check out Gheens’ website for more information, or contact Gheens at 485-3494 if you have questions or need additional support. We look forward to working with you!

## Continued from page 1—Elementary Conference

Special sessions for administrators were held. Every attempt was made to truly have “something for all.” There were elementary and math cohorts, grade-band groups of teachers, who participated in 12-hour workshops on the Kentucky Core Aca-

demic Standards.

One classroom teacher commented, “Thank you for treating me as a professional.” Another said, “Thanks for giving us the foundation for understanding the standards and ways to make sure we are

meeting them with our students.” There can be no better compliment or assessment of the conference.

## 2011-2012 PD Dates

Kentucky law requires all teachers to participate in professional development each year. If you missed this summer’s PD opportunities, Gheens will offer additional sessions on each of the following dates:

**September 30, 2011**  
**March 2, 2012**  
**May 4, 2012**

For more information, contact Gheens at 485-3415.

## Are You Still Growing?

Are you still growing?

This is the time of year when teachers begin thinking about ways they want to organize their classrooms and about the content they will be teaching. As you plan for next year, consider thinking about your practice, too. Are you

as effective as you want to be? Now is the time to look over the Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning, and to do some personal reflection. We all want to be the best we can be, and that requires continuous growth. Are you still growing?