The month of May often looks like a revolving door in school districts as the year comes to an end and plans are made to begin the next academic year. The same can be said for Green Hills AEA. If the month of May had a sound, it might be “Whoosh!”

Green Hills AEA is a sub-grantee for the Title III federal grant. As a consortium, it includes all school districts in the agency except the Council Bluffs Community School District which, like most urban districts, has its own Title III grant. Title III funding primarily helps provide resources and professional development for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and general education teachers.

A significant investment in resources for English language learners has been made and the Green Hills AEA Media Center is full of bilingual backpacks, bilingual reading materials, audiobooks and many other high interest/low readability text materials. Keep in mind that English language learners and their parents/guardians who are currently using Rosetta Stone will be able to continue that programming during the summer if they have access to the internet.

Additionally, professional development in sheltered instruction has been offered across the agency and will continue to be offered into the next academic year. Sheltered instruction professional development helps make the Iowa Core accessible to English language learners as well as all students in a classroom by emphasizing content and language objectives.

Because Title III is federal funding, it is impacted by sequestration of federal funds that is currently in effect. Title III funding, though reduced, will still be available during the next school year to continue to build on much needed resources and professional development. In addition, during the next school year, the state of Iowa will receive a Title III visit from the U.S. Department of Education. Information will be shared as more details become available.

Gifted and Talented programming continues to evolve across the agency with a growing emphasis on enrichment with younger students and access to academic classes using technology and online opportunities. Professional development for teachers, district gifted program coordinators, administrators and parents will continue to be available next year through the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) Webinars on Wednesdays. Additionally, the
‘A look back, a look forward’ continues
Green Hills AEA professional library has many resources that will support teachers as they enhance the social-emotional nurturing and talent development of students.

For more information, contact your Green Hills AEA regional administrator or Kerry Aistrope, Christel Nelson or Jennifer Williams, Red Oak Regional Office, 712-623-2559 or 1-800-432-5804.

‘Building Brighter Futures’
May is School Board Recognition Month
Volunteer school and AEA board members spend thousands of hours each year analyzing budgets, monitoring student achievement data, adopting effective policies and making key decisions to ensure that each Iowa student receives an excellent education. The Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) invites communities to celebrate and thank their local school and AEA board members during School Board Recognition Month in May.

This year’s theme, Building Brighter Futures, recognizes that Iowa’s volunteer school and AEA board members are providing innovative leadership, through responsibilities ranging from strong financial stewardship to ensuring high-quality curriculum, to make sure all students are able to grow and prosper through education!

Thank you
GHAEA Board of Directors

Raymond Storm
District 1

Julie Wilken
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District 6

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Jere Ann “Jake” Powers
District 9
Google Apps for Education: Southwest Iowa Summit
July 15-16
Glenwood Community School District

Register at https://www.ghaea.org/register. Registration fee prior to July 15 is $75; $125 the day of the summit. Participants should bring a laptop with Google Chrome browser installed or a Chromebook. For more information, contact David VanHom, dvanhom@ghaea.org, 800-432-5804 (in Iowa) or 641-782-8443.

On the calendar

As educators, we are constantly striving to learn new skills and strategies that will improve student achievement. Green Hills AEA programs are coordinated to enhance the professional, personal, and organizational staff development needs of LEA and AEA staff. These include license renewal and graduate credit courses and informational workshops.

- **June 4**: EdInsight, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Iowa Western Community College, Atlantic
- **June 5**: Tiered Instruction, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Red Coach Inn, Red Oak
- **June 6**: EdInsight, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., The Meeting Place, Osceola
- **June 6**: Tiered Instruction, Struggling Students, K-3 Math, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Red Oak Regional Office
- **June 10**: EdInsight, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Halverson Center, Council Bluffs
- **June 13**: Dept. of Education Transition Institute, Des Moines
- **June 14**: EdInsight, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Red Oak Regional Office
- **June 17-20**: Transition Planning Institute, Red Oak Regional Office

For more information, visit the calendar link at http://www.ghaea.org
**Battle of the Books**

**A friendly competition inspired by love of reading**

Two educators at Tri-Center Community School District -- a reading teacher and a teacher librarian -- have created a fun new way to bring the love of reading to students. Battle of the Books (BOB) is a middle school program designed to enrich reading. It is the brainchild of Karene Christenson, K-12 teacher librarian, and Nyra Sondag, middle school reading teacher.

BOB is a contest for 7th and 8th grade students throughout the 15 counties served by Green Hills AEA. “Last year we had 17 schools with more than 35 teams,” said Christenson. “It was great to see students excited about reading!”

This is how it works: Twenty books are selected from award winning literature as well as recommendations from students and adults. The books are selected for a variety of reading levels, as well as genres and topics.

Schools are invited to form teams of four to six students and an adult sponsor. Each team comes up with a clever name to reflect the personality of the school and its students. Team members then read from the pre-selected list of books. “Teams may choose to divide the list among members or have each team member read all of the books,” she said.

We encourage teams to “be creative and fun -- stage mock battles and ask questions from the books, such as setting, main characters and plot,” Christenson added.

Working as a team, each group then answers a series of on-line, fact-based qualifying questions about the books and authors. The top 10 teams are then invited to participate in the Ultimate Battle of the Books, held this year on April 22 at Tri-Center Middle School.

In the Ultimate Battle, the 10 teams compete against each other in three rounds of questions. Each question requires the title of the book while other questions involve reciting a direct quote from a character in the book, a question or statement about something that happens in the book and a passage taken directly from the book.

Spectators are invited to cheer for their favorite team and applaud the winning teams who receive trophies and medals.

Photos, top to bottom: Co-founders of the Southwest Iowa Battle of the Books, Nyra Sondag and Karene Christenson; First place, The B.R.A.T.S., Red Oak; Second place, Panther Posse, Logan-Magnolia; Third place, Team Bethany, Lamoni; Fourth place, Lost Our Marbles, Red Oak
Essex, Glenwood educators named 2013 Charles E. Lakin Outstanding Teachers

On May 13, two area teachers received an honor they won’t soon forget! Liz Jensen, a preschool teacher at Northeast Elem., Glenwood, and Kimberly Peterson, a 7-12 business teacher, Essex Jr/Sr High, are the recipients of the 2013 Charles E. Lakin Outstanding Teacher Award. Each year the award is presented to two instructors within a 40-mile radius of Lakin’s hometown, Emerson. The award honors teachers who entice students to come to school each day.

Peterson received the award during a school assembly. Peterson said hearing her name announced was surprising and emotional. "I heard my name called," she said. "I had other names in mind. There's so many deserving teachers that I work with."

Peterson says she sets high standards for her students. "I don't accept late work," she said. "I just want their best effort. If they give me their best effort, I'll work with them. As in any job situation, I try to run my classroom as a job. An employer is not going to accept something a day late when it's needed the day before."

The second honoree, Liz Jensen, says she was shocked. "Well, it took a little bit, but once they said my name, I couldn't believe it. It makes me feel amazing and incredible in that all the hard work teaching everyday has paid off . . . . You never expect to get rewarded for it, other than by your students continuing to do well, and that's your biggest reward; so money, that's just crazy!"

Jensen says the supportive environment she works in is a big highlight of what she does. "One of the best things about working in the Glenwood CSD is that you build a relationship with the teachers. They're like your family. You speak on a regular basis and they ask how you are, and how it's going in your life, and you build a relationship with your administrator as well. I think that's one of the things that makes teaching successful is that you have to have support. And that is the word that sums it up here. We always support each other."

Both recipients receive $10,000, while their schools receive $2,500. Two more instructors -- one elementary and one secondary -- will receive $2,500 as honorable mention recipients. One honorable mention winner is Shannon Wehling, a special education instructor at Sidney Elem. The second honoree had not been named at press time.

Since the inception of the award, the Lakin family has awarded $155,000 to area teachers and their districts. A well-known philanthropist, Lakin created the award in 2008 to recognize teachers who see teaching as a calling, rather than a job. The award is sponsored by Green Hills AEA and KMA Radio.

Photos, left to right: Honorable Mention Shannon Wehling, Sidney Elem.; Joan Crowl, principal, Glenwood Northeast Elem., accepts a $2,500 check for the school; Essex CSD representatives April Scott (board member), Jim Dick (Supt), Robert Brecht (Principal), Blake Jensen (board president) and Christy Johnson (board vice president) joined Peterson for the announcement. The school also received a check in the amount of $2,500.
Students deliver inspirational speeches based on ‘A Person Who Has Overcome’

The Level 2 Modern Woodmen Civic Oration Contest was held on April 18 at Halverson Center, Council Bluffs. This year’s topic was “A Person Who Has Overcome.” The contest allows students to demonstrate their skills in clear thinking and speaking. Speeches are judged on originality, organization and persuasiveness, as well as the quality of delivery. The top three students in each group advanced to the state contest held May 9 in Council Bluffs (results listed in red in photo cutlines).

Group #1: 1st place, Emma Erlbacher, Harlan (1st place, state contest); 2nd place, Mercedes Harris, CAM; 3rd place, Olivia Flowman, Clarinda; Alyssa Ginter, Atlantic; Grace Kinsella, Treynor; Kennedy Komer, Lewis Central; Joe Peterson, Exira-BHK; Jaida Wilson, Glenwood

Group #2: 1st place, Jay Swanson, Harlan; 2nd place, Dane Norville, Lewis Central; 3rd place, Rebecca Coolman, Logan-Magnolia; Jordan Clemens, Missouri Valley; Dylan Marshall, St. Albert; Camryn McClintock, Essex; Shelby Stephenson, CAM; Kate Wise, A-H-S-T

Group #3: 1st place, Jenny Weisenbom, Harlan (3rd place, state contest); 2nd place, Emma Rose, Sacred Heart, Boone (2nd place, state contest); 3rd place, Katelynn Mullin, CAM; Cydney Anderson, A-H-S-T; Cameron Archer, Missouri Valley; Vivian Baucom, Stanton; Lauren Blum, Shelby County Catholic; Zena Courtier, East Mills; Maranda Culbertson, South Page
Summertime and the reading is easy!

Deanna Etherington, Supervisor, Learning Resources

Looking for a way to get students reading this summer? Green Hills AEA has 4 eBook solutions to entice summer readers!

1. **BookFlix** is a resource for students in grades K-3. There are approximately 200 paired books in BookFlix. Twenty-four pairs of books are available in Spanish as well as English. Each fiction book is paired by theme with a nonfiction counterpart. The fiction books are videos with a read-along feature. The nonfiction books are eBooks with high-quality audio support. All the books are arranged into nine categories ranging in topic from Animals and Nature to Adventure. In addition to eBooks, students can try puzzlers which are short activities related to a book. They can also learn more about the author and explore related websites. BookFlix is located at Iowa AEA Online – www.iowaaeaonline.org. Students will need a username and password for access.

2. **TrueFlix** is intended for students in grades 3-6. There are currently 84 eBooks in TrueFlix arranged into 14 science-related or social studies-related topics. The eBooks have high-quality audio support, as well as the ability to mouse-over keywords for a definition. Additional features for each book include short video clips, related encyclopedia articles, an activity center, a project idea center and an area called “Explore the Web.” BookFlix is located at Iowa AEA Online – www.iowaaeaonline.org. Students will need a username and password for access.

3. **Mackin** is an eBook resource. Mackin has 568 nonfiction and classics eBooks, with approximately 150 new titles to be added this summer. Titles are available in the science and social studies areas, as well as other areas. Apps are available for iPads, Nooks, Kindles and Android tablets. To access Mackin, go to www.mackin.com/via and type in your Iowa AEA Online username and password.

4. **Follett Shelf** is the final eBook resource offered by Green Hills AEA. There are two “shelves” or electronic areas to find eBooks – an elementary shelf containing approximately 130 eBooks and a secondary shelf containing approximately 120 eBooks. Both shelves contain an equal mix of fiction and nonfiction. To access Follett eBooks, go to http://media.ghaea.org and click either on the Elementary eBook Shelf or the Secondary eBook Shelf. iPad and Android apps are also available for those who wish to read using those devices.

For username and password for BookFlix, TrueFlix and Mackin, contact your teacher librarian or Deanna Etherington, detherington@ghaea.org. For username and password for Follett Shelf, contact Julia Hood, jhood@ghaea.org.
**Transition Planning Institute to look at IDEA**

“IDEA 2004 ushered in a new era of accountability for the monitoring of the quality and effectiveness of special education services,” says Nancy Lindgren, Green Hills AEA transition content coach. “Under the federally mandated performance indicators, two apply to transition planning. One indicator refers to the quality of the written Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the other refers to the outcomes for students with disabilities one year out of high school.”

The Transition Planning Institute, June 17-20, at the Red Oak Regional Office, will help participants to develop a thorough knowledge of the IDEA requirements and accountability measures. In addition, they will gain an understanding of age-appropriate transition assessment and the Iowa Transition Assessment Model, and the processes to develop the quality plan and the documentation requirements for the IEP and existing documents.

“Through the State Professional Development Grant (SPDG), Green Hills AEA will be able to pay teachers a stipend to attend this four-day institute,” Lindgren added. Lunch and materials will also be made available through this grant.

The institute is offered for either graduate or license renewal credit. Registration is online at https://www.ghaea.org/register/ under Learning Supports, Two Credits. For more information, contact Nancy Lindgren, nlindgren@ghaea.org, 712-623-2559.

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**In Touch returns in September!**

Stay updated throughout the summer @
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“**The bigger the summer vacation, the harder the fall.**”

~ Unknown ~