



1st Quarter Report



2011-2012

**“Experience is not what happens to you.
It is what you do with what happens to you.”
- Aldous Huxley**



Dr. Ronnie Nolan, KECSAC Director

In our daily work with state agency children we are often reminded of the impact of Aldous Huxley’s words; our students face increasing obstacles, a home life filled with uncertainty, communities torn apart by drug use, the pain of abuse and the mental anguish of neglect. Indeed, it is not what happens to our children before we meet them that counts most, it is, rather, what they do now. It is how we help them face those challenges; how we help them develop the skills necessary to rise above the difficulties they are presented with. I have often said, and I truly believe, that teachers, administrators, policy leaders and legislators who work for our children are changing lives. We are helping them forge a path of future success, a life filled with promise instead of despair. As we move into the coming legislative session we will be addressing many issues related to our children, but none more important than their education. I am proud of the work we have accomplished on their behalf, but I am cognizant of the rough road ahead as we continue to advocate for a quality, equitable education for our Commonwealth’s most at-risk student population.

During the first quarter of this fiscal year, we have experienced many great accomplishments while sharing the needs of our students. The Kentucky Board of Education just named our children a top priority for the upcoming legislative session and they joined with us in requesting appropriate funding for our partnering school districts. In addition, we have continued our work in providing professional development opportunities for our teaching partners. Indeed, our Alternative Strategies for Educating Students’ At-Risk conference is the premier conference in Kentucky for teachers and administrators working in alternative educational settings. We have also fundamentally enhanced our new educators training to meet the changing needs of new educators in our programs. As you can see in this report, our professional development series continues to impress our educators while providing much needed, hands-on, implementable skills for our teachers and administrators.

These accomplishments are highlighted in this quarterly report. You will find enclosed a summary of our work, as well as details related to our ongoing initiatives. The ambitious action agenda we are highlighting here could not happen without the broad base of support we have formed with our state agency partners, our local school districts and the teachers and administrators working on behalf of state agency children. We appreciate your continued support as we work to enhance the educational services provided to our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronnie Nolan". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Ronnie Nolan, Ed.D.
Director, KECSAC

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

Sherri Clusky, Department of Education

Kara Fresh, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

Christina Givens, Department for Community Based Services

Janice Johnston, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

Sonny McManus, Graves County School District

Mary Salsman-Buckley, Department of Juvenile Justice

Richard Thomas, Department of Juvenile Justice

Lu Young, Jessamine County School District

Garet Wells, Woodford County School District



*Working together to educate all
of Kentucky's children.*



The Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) is committed to the belief that all children can learn and have a right to quality education. KECSAC protects and assures this right by accessing resources and providing support to programs that educate state agency children.

Those children who do not receive an education of quality cannot realize their greatest potential.

We believe these goals are achieved through the process of interagency collaboration.

To accomplish the mission, all members of this statewide partnership must exemplify and publicly promote collaborative relationships with its partners and other associates.

Our Mission

10th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference

With nearly 300 participants, First Lady Jane Beshear in attendance and inspiring words from one of our very own students, the *10th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference* was definitely a celebration. The conference turned a decade old this year and KECSAC was able to procure noted speakers and trainers to help us mark the occasion. As soon as word got out that Dr. Harry Wong and Dr. Ruby Payne would be speaking, the conference registration filled up in record time! To be able to see such phenomenal speakers at a free conference really drew the attention of Kentucky's educators.



The conference began on July 19. Participants quickly filled up the large space at Perkins Conference Center on EKU's campus, taking with them their copy of *The First Days of School* by Drs. Harry and Rosemary Wong, which they received at registration. They enjoyed breakfast while reviewing the conference materials, that were considerably more environmentally conscious this year. Handouts were provided on a CD with an



Carissa Phelps

agenda and notepad. KECSAC was able to save thousands of pieces of paper by distributing handouts electronically, especially with the record number of attendees.

Dr. Ronnie Nolan welcomed the crowd and expressed KECSAC's gratitude that so many people that care about at-risk students would come together to learn and share. Carissa Phelps then opened the conference as keynote speaker. Carissa is an attorney, author and advocate who



Back row from left to right: Garet Wells, Logan Collins, Ronnie Nolan. Front row from left to right: Donna Adkins, Susan Shelton, Denise Adams, Farryll Brown, First Lady Jane Beshear, Tom Bell.

overcame a childhood fraught with abuse in order to help young people today avoid the harmful situations she was placed in. Carissa's story of childhood prostitution, juvenile detention placements and the people that helped her become the adult she is today truly touched the audience. Teachers noted that Carissa really made them think about what their own students have to go through and realized that they are role models.

During the luncheon on day one, First Lady Jane Beshear spoke to the audience about the importance of education and the vital nature of the jobs they do. First Lady Beshear then congratulated the winners of the Annual SACSAA Awards, presenting them with plaques as SACSAA President Garet Wells spoke about their accomplishments. Each year, the State Agency Children School Administrator Association (SACSAA) awards educators and community members who display exemplary skill and passion for working with this population of students. Winners this year included Susan Shelton of Foothills Academy for Outstanding Support Staff of the Year, Donna Adkins of Ramey-Estep High School for Outstanding Teacher of the Year, Denise Adams of The Providence School for Outstanding School Administrator of the Year, and Tom Bell of State Farm Insurance in Christian County for Outstanding Community Member of the Year.

In what is becoming a highlight of the conference, SACSAA also honored two state agency students who have overcome obstacles to become successful young adults. Logan Collins, a Ramey-Estep High School graduate and Tyler Barton, a Laurel County Day Treatment graduate, were this year's Outstanding Students of the Year and both provide inspiration to educators and fellow students alike. Logan was present to accept his award and spoke to the audience. His words touched those present and seeing him accept his award from the First Lady highlighted just how much potential state agency students have. While some young people might be intimidated by receiving an award from such an important figure in our state in front of a large audience of teachers, Logan was just the opposite. He proudly stood next to the First Lady and his smile said it all – he knew everyone in the room believed in him and he believed in himself!



Dr. Harry Wong, Katie Helton, Dr. Ronnie Nolan and Dr. Rosemary Wong.

Day two of the conference began with a much anticipated training from Drs. Harry and Rosemary Wong. Drs. Wong are well respected authors and experts in the field of education. Many of the teachers and administrators present were already familiar with their work, *The First Days of School*. The excitement for this keynote was so high that KECSAC staff wondered if there would be room for everyone that wanted to see the Drs. speak. Fortunately everyone was able to be accommodated and Drs. Wong certainly did not disappoint. They provided the audience with real strategies, common sense advice and a humorous take on managing a classroom. Evaluations reflected the value of this training. Attendees remarked that they knew they would receive great information, but they didn't realize it would be so funny! Those that had heard the Drs. before



Attendees enjoy a moment of humor during the Drs. Wong session.



Dr. Ruby Payne, author of *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*.

were impressed at how up-to-date the trainers stay and how fresh each presentation is.

The last day of the conference closed with one of the foremost authorities on the dynamics of poverty and education, Dr. Ruby Payne. Dr. Payne trained the audience on her influential work, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. This work is incredibly relevant to our educators. Many state agency children are battling poverty, as well as other obstacles to their education. Dr. Payne really related to the audience, challenged their preconceived notions and helped explain reasons for the thoughts and behaviors of so many at-risk students. Dr. Payne's message was eye opening and prepared the audience to return their classrooms with a refreshed perspective. Participants stated that they not only really enjoyed the presentation, but now had a better understanding of their students.

In addition to phenomenal keynote speakers, participants also had nearly 30 breakout sessions

to choose from over the course of the conference. Topic areas ranged from the new common core standards and curriculum

strategies to bullying and iPads. One session brought together school administrators for an opportunity to share ideas for collaboration. Another training on the teen court program even involved a mock trial with students and Circuit Court Judge William Clouse of Madison and Clark Counties.

KECSAC staff would like to extend a sincere thanks to all those who made this conference possible. The planning committee, speakers, session presenters and conferencing staff worked very hard to provide a positive professional development experience for a record number of “At-Risk” attendees. KECSAC looks forward to working with our partners to produce another great celebration of our students and educators next year.

New Educator’s Conference

Sixty educators attended KECSAC’s annual New Educator’s Training on August 30-31, 2011. This training is designed for educators and administrators that are new to KECSAC programs. Attendees may be teachers in their first few years in the classroom or veteran educators, but all can benefit from exploring the unique challenges involved in educating state agency children. Training topics included: KDE’s new Common Core Standards, KDE’s Intervention and Transition Courses, KECSAC’s Program Improvement Process, Transition Services, and Managing the State Agency Classroom.



Dr. Ronnie Nolan and Erika Webb, 2011 Kentucky Teacher of the Year.

Two presentations that served as highlights on the first day were: “Common Sense Connections” by Jill Tabor and Teresa Landenwich of the Jefferson County School District and “Where the Heart Is: Building Enhanced Services for Transition” by Ann Brewster and Pam Ferguson of Ramey-Estep High School in the Boyd County School District. “Common Sense Connections” focused on connecting the dots between program improvement plans, professional development growth plans, teacher evaluations and needs assessments. “Where the Heart Is” focused on the development of a statewide transition program made up of caring educators with the common goal of creating a sense of welcome and belonging for students transition to new schools and education programs.



Classroom Behavior Management Consultant, Jason Gibson shares stories with several educators new to KECSAC programs.

The second day, had several interesting presentations, including a session on Differentiated Instruction by Nancy Gilligan of Strategy Education; a session regarding Classroom Management by Jason Gibson; and Nicholasville Police Sergeant Scott Harvey, who presented “Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse: Are Your Kids Safe?” The training was concluded by an inspiring speech by the 2011 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, Erika Webb of Jessamine County.

Denise Adams

Outstanding School Administrator of the Year, 2010-2011

Ms. Adams has served as “proud principal” of the Providence School since 2002. When you think of excellence in alternative education, many in Kentucky point to The Providence School, a combined A5 & A6 school, as the model to emulate. The Providence School was selected in 2009-2010 as one of the first “Best Practice Sites in Alternative Education” by KDE, in all three categories, an achievement that could not have been possible without Ms. Adams’ leadership and drive.



Donna Adkins

Outstanding Teacher of the Year, 2010-2011

Ms. Adkins has worked in many capacities at Ramey-Estep High School over the past twelve years. She teaches, she mentors, she continually seeks out additional funds for expanded programming by writing grants, she has organized events such as the annual Fall Carnival for Boyd County and Safe Halloween for Ramey-Estep students and she was instrumental in setting up the Marie Carbo Reading Lab at Ramey-Estep High School which is used by all the students. In short, Ms. Adkins is the kind of teacher who makes a difference.



Susan Shelton

Outstanding Support Staff of the Year, 2010-2011

Ms. Shelton has served as the transition coordinator at Foothills for six years—assisting students to integrate successfully into the program at Foothills and following them once they transition to other schools, working diligently to help each and every student succeed in school and in life.



Tom Bell

Outstanding Community Member of the Year, 2010-2011

Mr. Bell has served as a motivational speaker and event organizer for the students at Christian County Day Treatment, sharing his life experiences and motivating students to turn their life around through hard work and service.



Logan Collins

KECSAC Outstanding Student of the Year, 2010-2011

Logan graduated from Ramey-Estep High School with honors in June 2011, and he plans to recommit to the state, utilizing an Independent Living program, while attending Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Lexington with the eventual goal of enrolling at UK to get his degree in nursing and to specialize in Trauma Division Nursing.

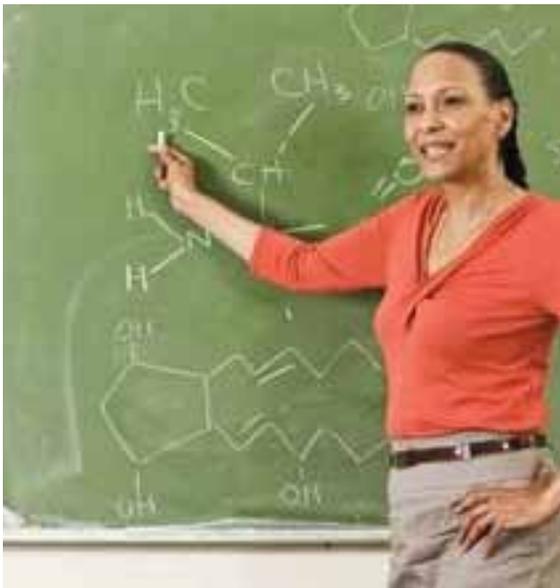
Tyler Barton

KECSAC Outstanding Student of the Year, 2010-2011

This Fall, Tyler is attending Union College in Barbourville, on a golf-scholarship. Tyler plans to pursue a career in the medical field. *No image available for Tyler Barton.*

Best Practice Sites

During the 2011-2012 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will identify and honor programs of excellence across the Commonwealth in Alternative Education. School districts will nominate their programs for recognition based on criteria developed by the KDE Alternative Education Advisory Committee. Districts are invited to nominate programs in three categories: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Culture, Support and Professional Development; and Leadership Resources/Organization and Planning.



The application process, deadlines and supporting documentation will be communicated in January of 2012. KDE's selection committee will visit the programs selected for review in the spring, concluding their work by the end of April. The 2011-2012 Best Practice Sites will be announced in May.

Funding Gap Identified

KECSAC has identified a staggering \$8 million funding gap for local school districts serving state agency children. KECSAC in partnership with our 54 local education agencies completed a comprehensive financial review of both the income and expenditures of local districts who serve state agency children. In reviewing the collected

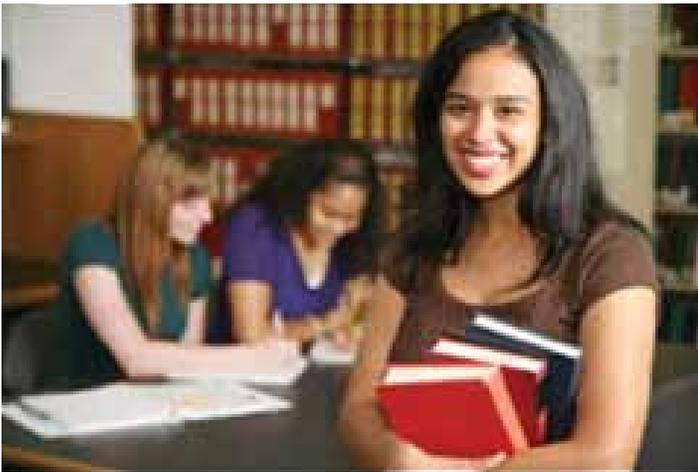


data, KECSAC determined that local school districts are compelled to fulfill state mandated requirements related to the education of state agency children without the financial support to fund those requirements. It was determined that local school districts are using local revenue, generated by permanent residents of the district, to fund programs serving state agency children who generally are not permanent residents. These requirements include smaller classroom ratios and an extended school calendar.

KECSAC Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan, presented this information to Commissioner of Education, Dr. Terry Holliday and was invited to present the findings to the full Kentucky State Board of Education. On August 3, Dr. Nolan met with the full State Board and shared details about state agency children's programs and the identified funding gap. Dr. Nolan formally requested that the State Board include state agency children, via KECSAC, as a budget priority for the upcoming legislative session. On October 5, 2011, the State Board decided to name KECSAC as one of their top financial priorities for this coming legislative session.

New Educators' Training Research Project

Since 1992, KECSAC has provided training to every educator new to a KECSAC program. The annual KECSAC New Educators' Training is a mandatory training that all new KECSAC teachers and administrators must attend. The training focuses on helping teachers understand the intense educational needs of state agency children (SAC) as well as provide strategies for handling the behavioral and emotional needs of the youth. Although many participants have voiced praise for the trainings held over the years, KECSAC has decided to conduct a thorough study to review the effectiveness of the New Educators' Training in order to determine whether the training provided meets the needs of the teachers or provides strategies that help advance the educational obtainment of the SAC in the classroom.



With a renewed focus on fiscal responsibility, teacher accountability and student achievement, KECSAC has developed a research project that will fully evaluate the effectiveness of the New Educators' Training. Based on the evaluation model developed by Donald Kirkpatrick, this research project began with KECSAC staff, in collaboration with state agency program school administrators, determining the skills and behaviors that teachers in state agency programs need most to successfully teach state agency children. The training was developed with those skills and behaviors in mind.

To assess the efficacy of the training, KECSAC has developed evaluation tools to measure participants' knowledge of specific skills and behaviors prior to the training as well as their initial reaction to the training. Before the training



began, a pre-training survey was completed by each of the 60 participants. During the two-day training, participants completed evaluations indicating whether they liked the training and found it relevant to their work. After the training, participants were asked to complete a post-training survey to assess the extent to which the event advanced their knowledge, skills or attitudes. Participants were asked to provide two specific strategies they learned during the training that they plan to implement in their classroom. A follow-up survey will be administered six months after the training to determine the extent that learning from the training has been transferred to the classroom.

Over the next year, after all the data is gathered and analyzed, KECSAC staff, in coordination with school administrators and state agency partners, will determine how effectively the New Educators' Training is meeting the needs of teachers new to KECSAC programs and whether changes need to be made to be made to accomplish KECSAC's goal of promoting teacher growth and student achievement.

SACSAA Meeting and Election



Sonny McManus, SACSAA President Elect.

Earl (Sonny) McManus, Jr was elected SACSAA President-Elect at the September 23rd Annual Fall meeting of the State Agency Children School Administrators Association (SACSAA) in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. This was a special election replacing Farryll Brown, who recently left her position as KECSAC Coordinator

to become the Jefferson County Director or Exceptional Children Services. Mr. McManus will serve as President Elect until the March 2, 2012 SACSAA meeting where he will take the reigns as SACSAA President from Garet Wells. Also, at the March 2, 2012 meeting, the SACSAA membership will elect the new SACSAA President-Elect for 2012-2014.

The Fall SACSAA meeting covered a wide range of issues including the Best Practice Site application and selection process, the restructuring of KDE, the New Educators research project, "Listen to the Children" Phase II, Census and ADM Updates, KECSAC's budget initiative and alternative education regulations and proposed legislation.

In addition to the general business meeting there were two guest speakers: Jennifer Stafford of KDE and District Judge Earl-Ray Neal.



Ms. Stafford gave a detailed presentation regarding the End of Course Assessments that are being implemented this school year as part of Senate Bill 1. She reviewed which subjects will be assessed, the testing schedule, the vendor agreements, the assessment format, the scoring guide and how the End of Course Assessments will contribute toward greater accountability.

District Judge Earl-Ray Neal presented, "How to Effectively Work with Your Local Judge." He shared his own experiences and philosophy for dealing with juvenile offenders and providing best for their educational as well as treatment needs. His candor and humor entertained as well as informed the SACSAA membership and more than one school administrator was overheard making plans to get to know their local District Court Judge better as a result of Judge Neal's presentation.



SIDE Document and Program Improvement Tool Update

The program improvement process is one of the most critical areas of KECSAC responsibilities. During the preceding year, KECSAC worked with our program improvement specialists to implement team site visits, to streamline the site visit process and to fully align the program improvement tool with the *Kentucky Department of Education's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SISI)* document. It is imperative that programs serving state agency children maintain the highest level of accountability while providing high quality educational services to our state's most at-risk populations. As the newly developed state assessment program, K-PREP, takes place and as components of Senate Bill 1 are implemented, KECSAC, in partnership with KDE and our State Agency Children School Administration Association, will initiate a process for updating and revising our current program improvement tool and accompanying Standards, Indicators, Descriptors, and Evidence (SIDE) document to reflect the newly developed Kentucky Department of Education standards for school improvement.

KECSAC wishes to express its appreciation to the following groups for their financial support of our professional development offerings:

The Kentucky Department of Education, \$21,600



**The Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice,
Title I, \$10,000**



The Kentucky Center for School Safety, \$1,500



"We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without lightening our own"
~Ben Sweetland



KECSAC

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“Working Together to Educate All of Kentucky’s Children”

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