



2nd Quarter Report



2011-2012

My Fellow Kentuckians,

During the second quarter of this fiscal year, we have experienced many great accomplishments while continuing to weather a tough budget storm in the Commonwealth. As Kentucky continues to experience an economic downturn, often requiring budget reductions and redistributions, we struggle to provide high quality education and state services with fewer funds. The Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children was recently notified of a two percent budget reduction for the current fiscal year. KECSAC was able to modify the current budget to absorb the reduction without passing any reductions on to our local partnering school districts.



Dr. Ronnie Nolan
KECSAC Director

The children we serve in our education programs continue to be a priority for the Kentucky Board of Education and our political leaders. During this quarter, KECSAC presented to the Kentucky State Board of Education and other policy makers, sharing our continuing needs and accomplishments. This resulted in the SBE identifying state agency children as a budget priority for the current legislative session. While the economic outlook for the Commonwealth continues to be bleak, KDE and the SBE proposed a budget increase for state agency children. As the third quarter unfolds, we will continue working to advocate for the needs of our students. At this time, in this economic state of affairs, we are awaiting news of the projected budget allocation for the upcoming biennial budget. State lawmakers are busy working on a new fiscal plan and we will keep our partners informed as decisions are made. Until then, we appreciate your continued support.

In addition, KECSAC has continued to collaborate with the Kentucky Department of Education to propose new regulations concerning alternative education programs in the Commonwealth. The proposed regulation had its first reading by the State Board of Education and is currently being revised after the public comment period. This is just one more example of state agency programs taking the lead in ensuring quality educational programs not only for children in the care or custody of the Commonwealth, but for all Kentucky students. In addition, Program Improvement Specialists continue to provide monitoring and support to our local school districts and our programs through a comprehensive annual review process. KECSAC continues to offer professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators who work with state agency children. A full review of those activities is included within the pages of this report.

These accomplishments, and many others, are highlighted in this second quarterly report. You will find enclosed a summary of our work and accomplishments, 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

Our Mission

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.



Working together to educate all of Kentucky's children.

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

Sherry 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

KECSAC strives to provide quality and relevant professional development trainings for educators, administrators and staff who work with some of Kentucky's most at-risk students. Over the course of the fall semester, KECSAC has been able to provide professional development events designed to meet the needs of the special students we serve. *Teaching in Action* hosted by Buckhorn Children's Center School was held on September 15th, and the *Innovative Strategies Series* kicked off on November 9th at Green River Youth Development Center.

Buckhorn Children's Center School in southeastern Kentucky was named a Best Practice Site for Alternative Education by the Kentucky Department of Education and hosted the first *Teaching in Action* training of the year. Tim Wooton, Buckhorn's school administrator, greeted teachers and administrators from as far away as Ashland and shared the history of the historic Log Cathedral and the long standing children's home. The multimedia presentation, which had been developed by students, explained that what began as Witherspoon College around the turn of the 20th Century has evolved into Buckhorn Children's Center, a program where students enjoy modern technology such as smart boards in the classrooms, while nestled into the picturesque wooded hills of Perry County.



Jennifer Dixon uses the smart board in her language arts classroom at Buckhorn Children's Center School.

Participants toured the facility and viewed impressive student art work before sitting in on language arts, math and science classes. Jennifer Dixon highlighted the use of technology in her language arts classroom, using the smart board, internet clips and cross curriculum instruction to get her students excited about ancient Greece's

history and mythology. Stephanie Miller shared her strategies for differentiation with the group and how she is able to organize so many lesson plans and activities. After meeting with staff and administration, the group got to talk to the most important people on campus – the students! Three incredibly bright young men and women shared their experiences at Buckhorn and their goals for the future. They emphasized how important it is to be challenged at school in order to reach their full potential. Each student seemed to appreciate the extra attention afforded them at the program, and one stated that, “every teacher here deserves an A.”



Butler County School District Superintendent Scott Howard speaks to the group at Green River Youth Development Center.

State agency teachers and administrators, Butler County School District Board of Education representatives and KECSAC staff came together in November at Green River Youth Development Center. Those who hadn't visited the school before were immediately inspired by the welcoming and serene environment. Jim Green, school administrator, gathered the group in the school's cabin-like chapel for a day of strategy sharing designed to promote student engagement. Green River is a school that has made both its district and its state agency partner, the Department of Juvenile Justice, very proud. Butler County Schools Superintendent Scott Howard came in support of the school to speak about the importance of relationship building and how Green River truly makes a difference in the lives of its students. Bob Hader, DJJ Supervisor, was clearly impressed with the program, which had recently been named DJJ Facility of the Year. After sessions by the teachers at the school, it was easy to see why that was the case. Ben Annis, Renea Hunt and Deanna Jenkins



Participants tour Green River Youth Development Center.

trained the group in student engagement in each of their core content areas; science, language arts and math respectively. Each teacher provided the group with hands-on strategies and activities for getting distracted students interested in the curriculum. They modeled the activities with participants, who were thrilled to experience how fun math problem solving could be made through games. Mr. Annis, the science teacher, pointed out that the classes at Green River are more than just fun, however, and that he wants his instruction to be, “minds-on, not just ‘hands-on.’”

Mr. Green spoke highly of his teachers, who work together to promote literacy skills in all content areas and embed character education. He noted that one of the strengths of his staff as a whole comes from their varied backgrounds and experiences. From

business and agriculture to elementary and special education, the staff at Green River brings a variety of perspectives to their students. A highlight of the day was touring the facility, including the wood shop, aquaculture program and greenhouse. Participants observed classrooms and witnessed the impact of positive relationships on student engagement. Mr. Green emphasized that philosophy of the program throughout the day. He stated that he wanted all of the young men at Green River to feel special and he sent the group home with the simple but powerful statement, “Through these doors walk the finest young men that Green River School has to offer.”



Bradley Stephens and Gerald Hadley of Adair Youth Development Center participate in an active listening exercise at the November Innovative Strategies Series event held at Green River Youth Development Center.

Up-Coming PD

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Alternative Education Legislation and Regulations

The Kentucky State Board of Education, in partnership with the Department of Education and KECSAC, continues their work on finalizing a newly created regulation that will serve as a guide for alternative education programs in Kentucky. The regulation provides local school districts with direction on establishing programs, referring students, collecting data and tracking financial expenditures. The State Board approved a first reading of the regulation during their October Board meeting and provided a public hearing period for review by outside agencies and stakeholders. Currently the responses from the public comment period are being reviewed and the regulation is being revised as needed based on the feedback. A final regulation is expected to move forward in the third quarter.

Interagency Advisory Group

KECSAC's Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) met twice during the second quarter. The first meeting took place Fayette County Regional Detention Center in Lexington on October 18, 2011. The group toured the facility, led by student volunteers, and was able to ask a panel of students questions about their experiences at Fayette County Regional Detention Center and what improvements they would make if they were in charge. The suggestion echoed by many of the students was the desire to see regular schools as committed to individual success as they know the teachers and staff at Fayette Regional are to their success.

The second meeting took place in Richmond at Arlington, where the topics of discussion included the possibility of SACSAA affiliating with KASA, pending legislation that would impact KECSAC programs, the budget outlook, Title I amendments, the Federal Innovations Act, the introduction of new lifeskills curriculum in DJJ programs (such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, the Who Am I character education curriculum and the Thinking for a Change curriculum), and organizing professional development events for the 2012-2013 school year.

Listen to the Children - Demographic Analysis

Interviews for the Listen to the Children: Voices That Beg to be Heard project were conducted at six group homes, three day treatment programs and two youth development centers. A total of 98 youth were interviewed. This equates to 3.5% of the total population of state agency children according to the 2010 census. The age range of the students was between 13 and 17 years old with a mean age of 15.8. Gender make-up was 61% (N = 60) male and 39% (N=38) female. The race/ethnicity make-up of the youth was 70% (N=69) white, 24% (N=24) black, 2% (N=2) Hispanic and 3% (N=3) two or more races.

The average length of stay in a program is eight months with 15% (N = 14) staying twelve months or longer. Four youth reported having spent two or more years in the program and one youth reported having spent four years in a program.

This was the first placement in a treatment program for 24% of the youth interviewed. Forty-four percent of the youth interviewed has been in one or two previous placements, 21% has been in three to five previous placements and 10% has been in six to eight previous placements. Four youth reported having been in ten or more previous placements. This only includes placement in other programs, such as group homes, hospitals, and juvenile justice programs. It does not include movement from one foster care home to another. However, one 17 year old youth reported having over 50 state placement moves and a 16 year old reported 21 state placement moves.

Changing schools frequently is a major issue for youth in SAC programs. These school changes could be the result of a family move, movement from one foster placement to another, or from one program to another. Between kindergarten and high school approximately three to five school changes would be expected. However, 28% (N=27) of the youth interviewed reported changing schools between eight and twelve times and another five (N=5) reported changing schools more than 15 times.

Math is the favorite subject of nearly 40% (N=38) of all youth interviewed. “Math makes sense to me” or “it’s the only subject I’m good at” was the reply most often given when asked why math was their favorite subject. Many interviewees attributed their understanding of Math to their current teacher, saying the teacher “takes the time to work with me until I get it.” History and Social Studies is the favorite subject of 20% (N=20) of the students interviewed with English following at 13%. Science trailed with just 10% of all interviews claiming Science to be their favorite subject. Three students said Gym was their favorite subject, two loved Art best and three said they did not have a favorite subject.

How a student learns best is important both for the student as well as the teacher in order to maximize the learning experience. Over 54% (N=53) of all students interviewed indicated that they are kinesthetic learners who learn best when movement is involved in the learning process. Only 22% (N=22) of the students interviewed indicated they are visual learners and 11% (N=11) indicated they are auditory learners. Ten students said they

use multiple learning styles, nine students gave answers such as “one-on-one” or “by mistakes” and seven students didn’t know their best learning style.

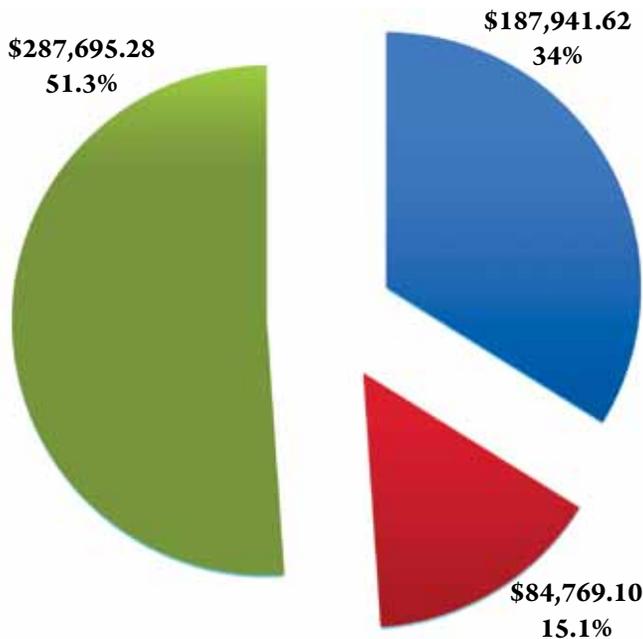
State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children

The State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) held their first meeting of the fiscal year in Louisville, KY on November 20-22. It coincided with the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Conference held at the Galt House. Dr. Nolan is currently serving a three year appointment by Governor Steve Beshear. During the meeting, members held a public hearing and heard from several constituents about the proposed changes to the Kentucky assessment program. As a result of the public hearing, SAPEC provided written recommendations to the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky State Board of Education. The next SAPEC meeting is scheduled for January, 19-20 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort, KY. A public hearing is scheduled for January 19th at 6:30 p.m. at the hotel.

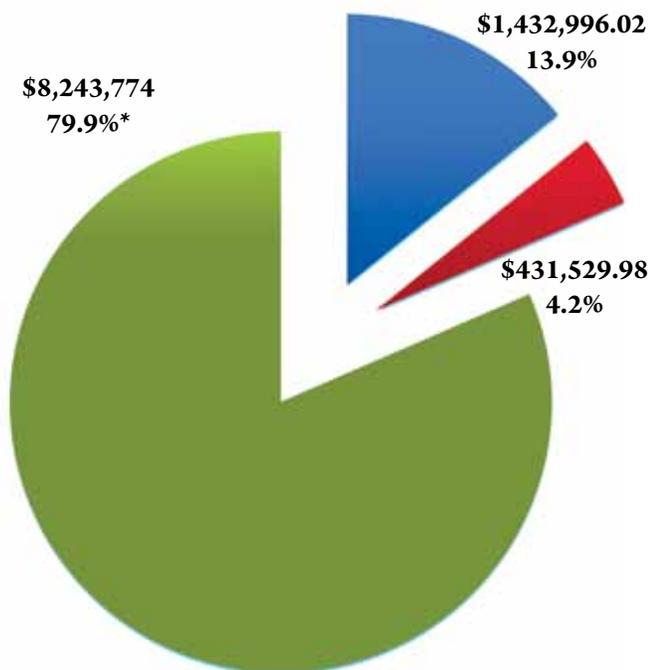
KECSAC Administrative Budget & State Agency Children’s Fund

■ 1st Quarter ■ 2nd Quarter ■ Remainder

Administrative Budget



SACF



*Represents a budget reduction of \$210,500 in the third quarter from \$10,318,800 to a new allocation of \$10,108,300.



KECSAC

104 Case Annex
Eastern Kentucky University
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, Kentucky 40475
www.kecsac.eku.edu

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

Kentucky Department of Education
Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice
Kentucky Department for Community Based Services
Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
State Agency Children School Administrator Association
Local Education Agencies
Eastern Kentucky University/College of Education

