



Working Together to Educate All of Kentucky's Children



2009-2010 1st Quarter Report

A Message from the Director



My Fellow Kentuckians,

A recent trip to the *Graduate Kentucky: A Community Approach Conference* reinforced the great work we do daily for state agency children while shining a renewed light on the needs of our state's most at-risk students. During the first quarter of this year, we have actively worked to address the educational needs of our students while simultaneously advocating for their mental, physical and emotional health. We recognize the importance of serving the whole child and have partnered with key state agencies and local school districts to provide the best, most appropriate services for our students.

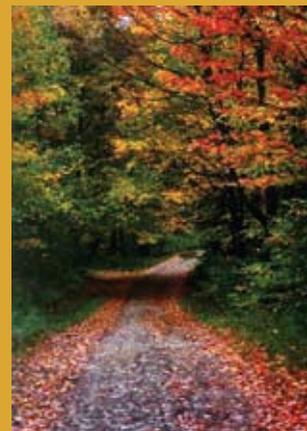
We began our journey into this fiscal year with a clear purpose of identifying the students we were created to serve. It has been tumultuous at times, but our collective partners have come together for the best interest of our students. We have worked together to identify state agency children, to address their needs and to plan for their transition to contributing citizens of this great commonwealth and world.

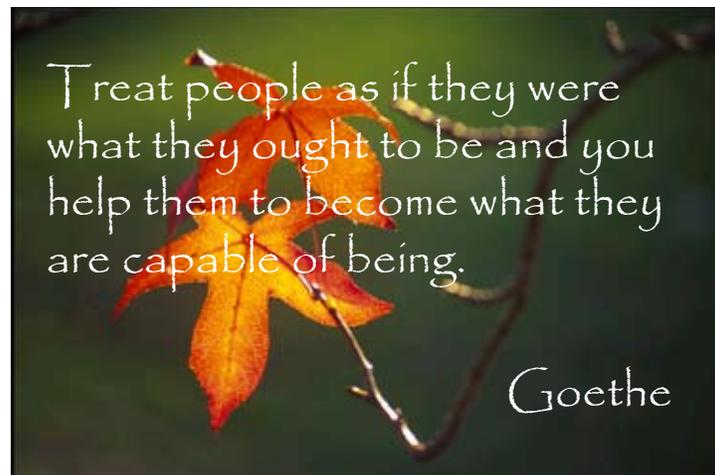
Because of this commitment, we have continued to work on an aggressive action agenda for state agency children. In the preceding months, KECSAC has worked with our partners to develop internal policies that will govern our services while holding us to our true mission of serving state agency children. We have developed and implemented professional development trainings to help our teachers, those on the front line of service to our students, expand their knowledge base and learn new, innovative teaching strategies. We initiated online learning opportunities, as well as field-based learning experiences with our best practice sites for alternative education.

These accomplishments, and many others, are highlighted in this first quarterly report. You will find enclosed a summary of our work and accomplishments, as well as details related to our ongoing initiatives. The action agenda we are highlighting here could not happen without the broad base of support we have from 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,

Ronnie Nolan, Ed.D.
Director
Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children





Professional Development



KECSAC organized the **8th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference** July 21-23, 2009 at the Perkins Conference Center on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University. The conference was designed to provide KECSAC educators, administrators and support staff the skills and resources to successfully meet the various challenges they face daily with Kentucky's at-risk student population.

Dr. Adolph Brown opened the general session as the first keynote speaker. Doc Brown overcame the perils of urban poverty and youth violence with the help of dedicated teachers and an education oriented mother who encouraged him to study hard and



Dr. Adolph Brown, dressed like a stereotypical gang-affiliated youth, talks about the dangers of stereotyping and carrying our biases into the classroom when dealing with at-risk youth.

work toward a better future. His keynote address emphasized the need for educators to question their assumptions about their students and to challenge each student based on their strengths and interests. The keynote speaker on the second day, Brian Mendler, balanced an inspirational message with practical classroom behavior management techniques for educators of at-risk students. Kim Geddie, the keynote speaker on the final day of the conference presented a practical approach to differentiated instruction for the evolving classroom. Finally, Eddie Slowikowski closed the conference with a rousing and inspirational speech for educators emphasizing individual commitment to excellence. In addition to the inspiring keynote addresses, there were forty-eight

breakout sessions covering a wide variety of topics, including "Get the Budget Monkey Off Your Back! Team Building to Tailgating... On a Shoestring," "The Philosophy and Practice of Differentiated Instruction for the 21st Century Classroom" and "Another Chance at Life and Learning: The DJJ Greyhound Program."

KECSAC's annual **New Educators' Training** was held on August 25 and 26, 2009 at Perkins Conference Center at Eastern Kentucky University. The training is designed for educators and administrators that are new to KECSAC educational programs. These may be inexperienced or veteran teachers, but all can benefit from exploring the unique challenges involved in educating state agency children.



Dr. Rios speaks with a participant at KECSAC's New Educator's Training on August 26, 2009.

Sixty participants began the two day training with an opening keynote address by Dr. Shelley Stewart of the Mattie C. Stewart Foundation. Dr. Stewart's foundation works to promote education and reduce the dropout rate. One of their biggest tools is the Choice Bus, which was a huge hit with participants. Training topics during the rest of the event included KECSAC policies and procedures, education strategies for the core content areas, classroom management and Kentucky Department of Education resources for teachers. The closing keynote address was delivered by Dr. Victor Rios. Dr. Rios's motivational story of his transformation from gang member to college professor sent the attendees back to their schools ready to change the lives of young people.



KECSAC Director Dr. Ronnie Nolan poses with the DJJ personnel who oversee the Greyhound Rehabilitation program at Morehead Youth Development Center. Mary Salsman-Buckley presented "Another Chance at Life and Learning: The DJJ Greyhound Program" in an innovative breakout session with the dogs on the second day of the conference.



Participants pose in front of The Choice Bus, a tool created by The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation for the purpose of extending the learning experience of the InsideOut documentary outside the classroom and keeping students on the road to a good education. This experience-based learning tool contains a "real" jail cell connected to an interactive learning environment.

Professional Development



Teresa Landenwich

2008-2009 SACSAA Outstanding
School Administrator of the Year
Bellewood
Jefferson County
School District



Jennifer Ann Lowe

2008-2009 SACSAA Outstanding
Support Staff of the Year
Warren Regional JDC
Bowling Green
Independent Schools



Harold Willoughby

2008-2009 SACSAA Outstanding
Teacher of the Year
Safe Harbor Academy
Woodford County
School District

Seventy-nine school administrators attended the **SACSAA (State Agency School Administrator Association) Fall Meeting** at the Elizabethtown Tourism and Convention Center on September 11, 2009. Donna Buckley, SACSAA President, presented the Outstanding School Administrator, Support Staff, and Teacher awards. KECSAC Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan led the business meeting. Some of the topics discussed were: the selection of a universal pre/post test for all KECSAC programs, Professional Development “Re-imagined,” the development of an Outstanding State Agency Child award, the budget outlook for 2009-2010, Best Practice Sites, KECSAC’s mini-grants awarded at the end of the 2008-2009 school year, academic outcomes, the extended transition research project and and he reviewed the exact wording of the Definition of “state agency child” as outlined in KRS 158.135, the legislation that governs KECSAC. Kaye Parker, KECSAC’s Associate Director, presented key data from the 2008-2009 Census.

The first installment of the **KECSAC Teaching in Action Series** was held on September 30, 2009 at Ramey-Estep High School in Rush, KY. REHS was named one of the Alternative Education Best Practice Sites in 2009 in all three categories. The **Teaching in Action Series** offer on-site professional development opportunities where programs are able to share their proven strategies with a small group of colleagues. REHS Principal Ann Brewster welcomed eight teachers and administrators from all over the state to her facility. Participants were treated to a tour of the remarkable facility led by the students themselves. The young ladies did an excellent job of describing the classrooms, laboratories and student art work displayed in the halls. One of the highlights was a visit to the herpetology lab, where proud students showed off the snakes, turtles and reptiles they care for. Following the tour was lunch with the treatment team of the facility and plenty of time for classroom observation. Participants were able to interact with teachers, students and administration throughout the day in order to gain insight into practices they can incorporate into their own programs. KECSAC staff is incredibly grateful to REHS for hosting this very successful professional development event and looks forward to similar trainings at other outstanding programs.



KECSAC Program Improvement Specialists Roy Chapman, Russell Behanan, and Lue Cole chat with Principal Ann Brewster of Ramey-Estep High School at SACSAA.



Two Ramey-Estep High School students led a tour of the facility for KECSAC's Teaching In-Action installment at REHS.

State Agency Child Definition



KECSAC was created over 18 years ago with a primary mission of assisting local educational agencies to provide quality educational services to children committed to or in the custody of the state and placed by one of the child serving state agencies in a program operated, contracted or financed by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department of Juvenile Justice or Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. Over the years, KECSAC has strived to fulfill our mission of meeting the educational needs of state agency children (SAC).

Recently, KECSAC has begun to refocus on what it means to be a state agency child. Two events happened over the past year that made the KECSAC staff focus on the definition of SAC and how state agency children's funds were being distributed. First, a KECSAC funded program refused to provide the necessary information about the students in the program because, according to their attorney, children in the program were not committed or in the custody of the state and therefore did not meet the definition of a state agency child. The second event was a change of KECSAC administration. When the program brought this information to light, the new KECSAC administration began to study our governing statutes and regulations and look at the youth being served in state agency children programs and funded by KECSAC. Attorneys from the Kentucky Department of Education and Department of Juvenile Justice were asked to review our statutes and provide a legal opinion on what it means to be a state agency child. Both attorneys agreed a state agency child must be both committed to or in the custody of the Cabinet or DJJ AND placed or financed by the Cabinet or DJJ in an operated or contracted facility. A child placed or financed by the Cabinet in a private facility pursuant to a child care agreement with the Cabinet is also considered a state agency child.

Once this information became clear, KECSAC staff realized we have a legal and fiscal responsibility to ensure SACF are used to meet the educational needs of the specific group of children we are tasked with serving. While we understand that there are many at-risk youth in our schools that need specialized educational services, our funds must be used to assist local school districts with meeting the specific needs of state agency children.

Legislators who crafted the legislation that created KECSAC in 1992 provided a clear definition of which children were to be served. Our governing statutes and regulations focus on a



specific group of children and provide a formula to ensure funding is provided equitably to all districts contracted with KECSAC to provide educational services to state agency children. 505 KAR

1:080 specifies that state agency children's funds shall be divided by the number of state agency children and the resulting per pupil amount shall be allocated for each state agency child educated in a program contracted with the local school district. Providing funding for students who are not state agency children reduced the amount available for students who are state agency children. Starting with the daily membership count in October 2009, the district must verify a student in the program fits into one of the following categories to receive funding for that student:

- **Committed to or in custody of the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) and placed or financed in a facility operated or contracted by the Cabinet.**
- **Placed or financed in a private facility pursuant to a child care agreement with the Cabinet. (This category may include funding by state Medicaid, or other resources within the Cabinet. A child care agreement with the Cabinet may include a DCBS child care agreement or a Behavioral Health service provider contract.)**
- **Committed to or in custody the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and placed in a DJJ operated or contracted facility or program.**
 - **Official court order to attend program**
 - **Probated**

Most school districts receiving state agency children's funds will see little or no change in the way SAC funds are distributed because every student served in the program meet the legal definition of a state agency child. This means that every child in the program is committed to or in the custody of a state agency and placed by that state agency in a program operated, financed or contracted with either the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

However, districts with programs that service children who do not meet the legal definition as provided by KRS 158.135, such as students referred to the program by the local school district without an official court order, out of state residents, or children who have been placed in the program by a guardian who is paying for the services directly or through private insurance, will see a decline in the district's SAC funds allocation because KECSAC will only provide funding for those students who meet the legal definition.

Our mission continues to be ensuring that our state's most vulnerable population receives a quality education that is equitable to the education provided to all Kentucky public school children. We believe clarifying the definition of state agency children will allow us to better accomplish our mission.

Policy

During the first quarter, KECSAC staff has continued to work on the development of a written policy manual that will clearly document guidelines and decision making processes within the Collaborative. Written policies will standardize processes, thus ensuring consistency, transparency and accountability while providing guidance to KECSAC staff, state agency partners, school districts and state agency children programs.

The KECSAC policy manual will clearly define such topics as:

- **the legal definition of state agency children as provided by KRS 158.135.**
- **requirements of the memorandum of agreement.**
- **the age of eligibility for state agency children funds.**
- **how programs are funded.**
- **the reimbursement process for state agency children funds.**
- **the appeal process for requesting a review of the average daily membership count.**
- **expectations during the extended school days.**
- **the Levels of Intervention process.**
- **expectations regarding assessments, records and transition of state agency children.**
- **the process for program improvement site visits.**

All policies are based on KECSAC's governing statutes and regulations as well as the memorandum of agreement with local school districts. After approval by the IAG, the policies will be distributed to all KECSAC districts and programs.

Scholarship

KECSAC in collaboration with the State Agency Children School Administrator's Association (SACSAA) is developing a scholarship program for a state agency child who has demonstrated exemplary efforts in overcoming personal and academic obstacles to attain educational goals. This award will be presented to a graduating High School Senior during the Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference in July of 2010. The application process includes a personal essay, two letters of recommendation, and an essay composed by the student's principal/school administrator regarding the kinds of obstacles the student has faced, demonstrated progress of the student (both in academic and behavioral terms) and a general endorsement of the student as Outstanding State Agency Child of the Year.

Transition

During the first quarter, KECSAC continued to conduct collaborative research with the Occupational Therapy Department at Eastern Kentucky University regarding transition services in KECSAC programs across the commonwealth. The purpose of the original study was to identify and describe key components of successful transition of students in state agency education programs and to develop models for possible implementation in all state agency programs that utilize best practices for student transition services (completed during the 2008-2009 school year). The transition research project extended into the 2009-2010 school year and is implementing pilot programs for best practices for student transition services. The Kentucky Youth At-Risk in Transition team (KYART) presented their 2008-2009 report at Yale University on October 15, 2009 at the Society for the Study of Occupation 2009 Research Conference during the first quarter.

Universal Assessment Tool

The Kentucky Department of Education issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the third quarter of the 2008-2009 school year for an assessment tool that could be adopted as a universal assessment tool in reading and math for all KECSAC programs. The hope was that the vendor would provide a hosted website with security-based access or a plan for using a dedicated server housed in Kentucky for the online version of the assessment tool with a paper-based test option as well. While the primary goal for this assessment is to provide diagnostic information that will assist in improving content knowledge and skill development for individual students, KDE and KECSAC desire the ability to use the assessment results and normative data provided by the assessment to examine growth of students and/or the growth within the facility or program. In order to meet our focus on growth, students must have the opportunity for multiple assessments across the school year (i.e., three or four times) so the pool of questions available would be adequate to allow for multiple testing sessions without exposure of the same questions. After posting the Request for Proposals twice with no applications made, KDE began making personal contacts with vendors during the first quarter of this year. Implementation of the Universal Assessment Tool is not expected in the 2009-2010 school year, but KECSAC in partnership with KDE hopes to identify a vendor in the second or third quarter of the year.





KECSAC

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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

