Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children

Mission

We are 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

Sherri Clusky, Department of Education
Kara Fresh, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Denise Weider, Department for Community Based Services
Janice Johnston, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Sonny McManus, Graves County School District
Richard Thomas, Department of Juvenile Justice
Lu Young, Jessamine County School District
Melissa Rogers, Franklin County School District
Paula Saenz, Department for Community Based Services

The IAG is composed of members from each of KECSAC’s partner agencies as well as SACSAA and Local Education Agencies. The IAG meets quarterly to advise KECSAC, approve policies and procedures, and work collaboratively toward common goals.
A Message from KECSAC Director Dr. Ronnie Nolan

My Fellow Kentuckians,

It seems hard to believe the year has already passed and we are moving forward so quickly! I suppose it is the wealth of activity across the Commonwealth related to state agency children and education in general that has created this whirlwind of days moving so fast.

During the second quarter of this fiscal year, KECSAC has been actively engaged in many ongoing initiatives and has experienced wonderful accomplishments related to educational services to state agency children across Kentucky. As in other recent years, we have forged ahead during a difficult budget cycle, cutting expenses where we can and finding creative ways to continue our services while ensuring quality programming for our state agency partners. We are committed to providing the best possible service to the children we serve while setting an example of efficiency for our stakeholders and the taxpayers of our great state.

Within these pages you can review our internal administrative budget, a budget that we have worked to streamline by nearly 20 percent over the last several years. It is our goal to keep our students as our top priority while providing as much financial support as possible through our legislative allocation.

Beyond ongoing budgetary concerns, we are pleased to report that 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 Unified Juvenile Code Task Force of the Kentucky General Assembly, sharing our continuing needs and accomplishments while highlighting the educational services and outcomes for students in state care. The results of the Task Force are detailed in this report for your review.

In addition, KECSAC has continued to collaborate with the Kentucky Department of Education to review and modify new regulations concerning alternative education programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations include new guidelines for alternative education settings, as well as data collection requirements. The regulation is expected to be implemented in the 2013 academic year. 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,

Ronnie Nolan, Ed.D.
Director, KECSAC
Physical Restraint and Seclusion in Public Schools Regulation Finalized

After a lengthy and thorough public review and comment period, the Kentucky Board of Education has finalized an administrative regulation governing the use of physical restraint and seclusion in Kentucky public schools. 704 KAR 7:160 establishes the requirements for appropriate use of physical restraint and seclusion in districts as well as the notification and data reporting requirements for the use of physical restrain and seclusion. Necessitated by the increasing number of complaints in recent years related to physical restraint and seclusion in Kentucky public schools, this proposed regulation outlines requirements for the use of physical restraint and seclusion so that the safety of children and school personnel will not be compromised. An important component of the proposed regulation is a requirement that districts annually provide all school personnel with training in de-escalation techniques and provide intensive training for a core team within the school that may physically restrain students. Districts will need to revise current policies or procedures to align with this regulation’s requirements within ninety (90) calendar days of the effective date of the regulation as well as collect data and documentation regarding any restraint or seclusion as outlined in the regulation requirements.

Research shows that when best practices such as the ones outlined in this regulation are implemented, the number of incidents of physical restraint and seclusion decreases due to the change in culture of the school and a reduction in the number of escalated and dangerous situations. Also, the number of incidents of injury for students and school personnel decrease when implementing these best practices. More information about the proposed regulation, including Q&A may be obtained at:


Regulation Governing Alternative Education Approved by State Board

After a two-year development, review, comments, and revision process, the Kentucky Board of Education gave final approval in December 2012 to administrative regulations that establish minimum requirements for operating alternative education programs in local school districts. The administrative regulation, 704 KAR 19:002, will require alternative programs to be aligned with college and career readiness outcomes, Kentucky’s core academic standards, and state minimum graduation requirements, as well as any additional district graduation requirements.

Districts will be required to develop and annually review policies and procedures that establish eligibility requirements, as well as other processes, and parents will be invited to participate in developing an Individual Learning Plan Addendum (ILPA) to address program changes that will occur because of a change in placement. Data on types of programs, program costs, and student participation will be collected.

Districts will use the statewide financial management system to track costs and expenditures associated with each alternative education program operating in the district. The current student
information system will be used to track student participation, educational programming, achievement, and transition to and from alternative education programs.

By implementing these administrative regulations, the Kentucky Board of education believes more students in alternative school settings will graduate college and career ready and districts will have better information on the cost and effectiveness of programs to make better placement decisions.

Department for Behavioral Health (DBH) Reviews Day Treatment Requirements

A mental health day treatment (MHDT) program is a treatment alternative that allows children with emotional disabilities, as defined in KRS 200.503, to stay in their homes and communities while receiving extensive emotional and behavior services from mental health professionals. These services are more intense than found in a regular special education or alternative school setting, but less intensive than in a residential treatment facility or psychiatric hospital setting.

Standards for MHDT programs were originally established in 1998 when a call for proposals was issued by the then Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services.

KECSAC currently has Memorandums of Agreement with five programs identified as MHDT programs that serve state agency children. KECSAC provides the educational oversight for these programs while the DBH provides oversight to the mental health treatment component.

During this past quarter, KECSAC staff met with leaders from the DBH to discuss the need to update the treatment requirements of MHDT programs to ensure they comply with those imposed by the mandates of Kentucky Medicaid Managed Care and meet national and statewide best practices in mental health treatment. During this meeting, the DBH decided to visit each of the five MHDT programs to review their current program and practices.

In November, the DBH convened a meeting with mental health providers for the five MHDT programs across the state to discuss the pros and cons of working within a managed care environment as well as evidence-based best practices for treating children with intensive behavioral health needs in school settings. Mental health providers from four of the five MHDT programs attended this meeting.

On December 19, DBH staff members Janice Johnston and Beth Jordan, and KECSAC director Dr. Ronnie Nolan conducted the first of the five site visits by visiting the Western Day Treatment (Seven Counties) in Jefferson County. Visits to the remaining programs will be conducted during the months of January and February 2013. The goal of the DBH is to establish new minimum treatment requirements for MHDT programs that coincide with managed care restrictions and research-based best practices. DBH expects to have the new minimum treatment requirements in place by April 2013.
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

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 18-21. It coincided with the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Conference held at the Galt House. KECSAC Director Dr. Nolan is currently in the midst of the second year of a three year appointment by Governor Steve Beshear on the panel.

During the meeting, members held a public hearing and heard from several constituents about the proposed regulation on restraint and seclusion being adopted by the Kentucky Department of Education. As a result of the public hearing, SAPEC provided written recommendations and a letter of support for the new regulation to the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky State Board of Education. The next SAPEC meeting is scheduled for January 17-18 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort, KY. A public hearing is scheduled for January 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the hotel.

Unified Juvenile Code Task Force Recommendations

The Unified Juvenile Code Task Force is considering findings of its three working groups as it drafts proposed changes to the unified juvenile code for possible consideration by the full Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary and the Legislative Research Commission. The task force, which anticipated a report January 2013, asked for a continuation to provide more time to review and discuss all the important issues assigned to it.

The jurisdiction working group of the state’s Unified Juvenile Code Task Force reported it would advise against incarcerating any child age 12 or under in Kentucky. Current KY law prohibits placing children age 10 and under in detention unless they are charged with a serious felony, according to statute. But state law has no minimum age for charging someone with a crime.

The Jurisdiction working group also suggested that court action and detention not be used for status offenses—behaviors that include truancy or running away from home that would not be criminal if committed by an adult but are considered to be an offense due to the child’s age. Chief District Justice Lisa Jones of Owensboro, who serves on the Jurisdiction working group, said the state needs to “reroute” status offenders to services that better meet their needs.

The two other working groups reviewed and advised the task force on truancy and assessment issues. Johnson County Schools Superintendent Steve Trimble, who re-reported for the Truancy working group, said his group concluded that juvenile detention should be used as a last resort.

The Assessment working group, whose report was given by Louisville area public defender Peter Schuler, advised that
assessments tools used to determine where troubled youth should be placed need to be juvenile-specific, evidence-based, and administered by qualified individuals.

The state’s current Unified Juvenile Code, enacted in 1986, was significantly amended in 1994 but has been altered in one way or another by the General Assembly nearly every session since.

With their continuation request approved, the task force will work through the summer and fall legislative interim and present their recommendations to the 2014 General Assembly.

Interagency Advisory Group

KECSAC’s Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) met twice during the second quarter. The first meeting took place at the Gateway Children’s Services location in Montgomery County on October 30, 2012. Members of the KECSAC IAG discussed the ongoing Unified Juvenile Code Task Force, the Department of Behavioral Health’s ongoing review of mental health day treatments as well as initiatives of each partnering state agency.

The second meeting took place in Frankfort at the Berry Mansion, where the topics of discussion included the continued possibility of SACSSA affiliating with Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA), pending pre-filed legislation that would impact KECSAC programs, the budget outlook for the current fiscal year, a restructuring of the director position and organizing professional development events for the 2012-2013 academic year.
Professional Development

A GREY-T Teaching in Action at Morehead YDC

Morehead Youth Development Center and its programs and initiatives were highlighted on November 16, 2012 during the KECSAC Teaching in Action training hosted by the DJJ facility, which was named a 2012 Best Practice Site for Alternative Education by the Kentucky Department of Education.

Something you hear a lot at the center is “Have a GREYT day!” That’s because the young women at the Rowan County facility train and socialize rescued greyhounds that have been retired from racing, in collaboration with Morehead State University and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). After they spend 12 weeks working with the special animals, a graduation ceremony is held and the dogs are adopted by their “forever families.”

A group of KECSAC staff and teachers from around the state were welcomed to the program by Donna Stanley, head teacher, Paula Stafford, school administrator with Rowan County Schools, and Kris Mann, DJJ Superintendent of the facility. Before the graduation ceremony, the group was able to meet with administrators, talk to teachers, observe classrooms and get a tour of the facility from students. Many innovative strategies were observed, including integrating technology to share math skills among students – a unit in which the students practiced trading in the stock market – and the use of horticulture to teach science curriculum.

KECSAC would like to thank the staff of Morehead Youth Development Center and the remarkable students for sharing successful strategies. Outstanding programs such as this one are evidence of the great work being done by Kentucky’s educators to provide a quality education to all of Kentucky’s children.
Program Improvement Monitoring Process

As part of KECSAC’s ongoing program improvement process and continual growth model for helping local school districts meet the educational needs of state agency children, KECSAC Program Improvement Specialists perform annual site visits and monitoring of each of the 94 funded KECSAC programs, operating in 54 local school districts across the Commonwealth. Throughout the monitoring period (which coincides with the school year) programs receive individual or “team” visits where two, or all three of the Specialists will conduct a joint monitoring at the same program.

Program Improvement Specialists use the Program Improvement Tool, which is aligned with the Kentucky Standards and Indicators, to audit the educational services provided. As a companion to the Program Improvement Tool, KECSAC has developed the Standards, Indicators, Descriptors and Evidence (SIDE) document that provides examples of what the Specialists will need to see to earn a “Fully Functioning” score. To determine if the Kentucky Standards and Indicators, as well as standards pertaining to SAC, are developed and implemented accordingly, Specialists observe classrooms, review prepared evidence, and interview the school administrator, program administrator, teacher(s), and students. If needed, recommendations for improvement are communicated to the program and a follow-up visit is issued. Attention is also paid to progress made from the previous year’s report to ensure programs are continuing to meet standards and improve curriculum. To date, Program Improvement Specialists have visited 59 programs during the 2012/2013 school year. If you have questions about the Program Improvement Process feel free to contact Dr. Ronnie Nolan or Cindy Held at (859) 622-6552.

New KECSAC Staff

In late November 2012, Cindy Held joined the KECSAC team as the new Communication & Development Coordinator. She will be responsible for producing the Collaborative newsletter, quarterly and annual reports, and coordinating Program Improvement visits and reports. If you’d like to submit information for the Collaborative contact Cindy at cynthia.held@eku.edu.

KECSAC Quarterly Budget Updates

Administrative Budget

- 53% $272,154.05
- 21% $105,801.57
- 26% $131,173.38

State Agency Children’s Fund

- 68.13% $5,890,865.58
- 15.34% $1,326,668.76
- 16.53% $1,429,242.66

* SACF fund reflects totals as of 1/11/13
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State Agency Children School Administrator Association
Local Education Agencies
Eastern Kentucky University/College of Education