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.

Interagency Advisory Group

Doug Bennett, Laurel County School District
Sherri Clusky, Department of Education
Kara Fresh, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Barbara Hamilton, Department of Juvenile Justice
Janice Johnston, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Chrissy Jones, Franklin County School District
Sylvia Kuster, Department of Juvenile Justice
Sonny McManus, SACSAA President, Mayfield YDC
Melissa Rogers, SACSAA President-Elect, The Academy
Paula Saenz, Department for Community Based Services
Denise Weider, Department for Community Based Services

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

In accordance with the KECSAC regulations, 505 KAR 1:080, the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children, has a governing structure that includes oversight by an Interagency Advisory Group (IAG), composed of representatives of the state agencies, KDE, the State Agency Children School Administrators’ Association (SACSAA) and a superintendent from a school district that provides education to state agency children. This group is to provide recommendations for policy and procedure development for KECSAC. The independent representatives of the state agencies, including KDE, are appointed to serve on the IAG by their respective commissioners. The president and president-elect of SACSAA serve on the IAG and are elected to those positions by the membership of the independent organization. The superintendent member of the IAG is selected by standing members of the IAG, based on recommendations or nominations by SACSAA membership. All members of the IAG serve without compensation from KECSAC.
My Fellow Kentuckians,

The Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) has continued working on behalf of state agency children in an effort to ensure quality educational services across the Commonwealth. During the second quarter of this fiscal year, we have experienced many great accomplishments while working with our legislative leaders to address the needs of our kids.

As we move into a legislative session that is focusing primarily on the biennial budget, we are reminded of the very difficult economic climate of our state. Kentucky has continued to experience an economic downturn, often requiring budget reductions and redistributions as we struggle to provide high-quality education and state services with fewer funds. We know the upcoming legislative session will be one filled with many tough decisions about the future of education and we are continually collaborating with our school districts, teachers, administrators and legislative leaders to highlight the very real needs of the children we are fortunate enough to serve.

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 was honored by the Kentucky Board of Education for our work on behalf of state agency children. Other policy makers also continue to share and admire the work of our agency and the many teachers and administrators who serve on the front line. The needs of our students continue to be a primary focus as countless advocates reaffirm their commitment to 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 continually makes improvements in the quality of educational services provided to our state agency children. Program Improvement Specialists continue to provide monitoring and support to our local school districts and our programs through a comprehensive annual review process. KECSAC also provided on-site technical support when requested, to programs needing additional guidance in key academic, social and behavioral management areas. In addition, we continue to serve as a key mediator between our school district partners and the child care agencies located within their district. KECSAC offers professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators who work with state agency children throughout the year as well.

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
Dr. Nolan Honored with KBE’s Dr. Samuel Robinson Award

At its December 4 meeting in Frankfort, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) presented the annual Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to co-winners – Dr. Ronnie Nolan, director of the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) and the Fayette Co. Equity Council.

Since 2004, the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award has been conferred on an individual or groups in Kentucky for outstanding leadership, commitment and service in promoting equity and opportunity to learn at high levels for all Kentucky students.

In a letter nominating Dr. Nolan for the Robinson award, KECSAC Associate Director Kaye Parker said, “Dr. Nolan works tirelessly to ensure that state agency children, one of the most vulnerable student populations in our state, receive the educational services and opportunities they need and that these services and opportunities are equitable to those received by all students in Kentucky.”

Dr. Nolan is internationally recognized for his work on truancy and dropout prevention and under his leadership KECSAC staff organized the largest conference in Kentucky specifically designed to provide professional development for teachers of at-risk students.

In giving the award, Marcum said that Dr. Nolan devotes not only his professional skills but also his personal time and efforts to volunteer and advocate for the nearly 13,000 at-risk children in the care and/or custody of the state each year.

Dr. Samuel Robinson, for whom the award is named, is a former educator, served on the Kentucky Board of Education from 1991 until 2004, is known for being a racial and social justice advocate and for promoting the difference education can make in the lives of all students.

State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children

The State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) held their second meeting of the fiscal year in Louisville, KY on November 17-20. It coincided with the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Conference held at the Galt House. KECSAC Director Dr. Nolan, entering his third year on the Panel as an appointee of Governor Steve Beshear, was re-elected to the executive committee of the Panel.

During the meeting, members held a public hearing and heard from several constituents about the proposed regulation on accommodations for assessments being considered by the Kentucky Department of Education. In addition, the Panel reviewed pre-school qualifications as they relate to RTI. The next SAPEC meeting is scheduled for January 16-17, 2014 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort, KY. A public hearing is scheduled for January 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the hotel.

Unified Juvenile Code Task Force

The Kentucky Task Force on the Unified Juvenile Code has presented recommendations for changes to the juvenile code. It is anticipated that these recommendations will be introduced as legislation during the 2014 legislative session. The recommendations relate to the admissions/dispositions of juveniles, lengths of stay, supervision requirements, services offered, oversight, status offender updates, and placement options. Recommendations specifically related to educational programs include establishing minimum requirements schools must meet prior to filing a court referral, requiring the school to report specific dates on school referrals and implementing an increase in the use of early intervention options and disposition alternatives for juveniles.
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

The recommendations may have further impact on state agency programs as they address limitations on the length of time juveniles spend in out of home placements. This recommendation could include establishing limits on the residential commitment time for lower level offenders; requiring additional case planning by a review committee comprised of professionals outside of DJJ; or requiring periodic hearings by the court to review the appropriateness of continued out of home placement and provide continued oversight of the case. The Task Force goes on to recommend that DJJ develop additional treatment models to allow a treatment plan to be tailored to the needs of youth, including considering the reason for the commitment. Furthermore, the recommendations would prohibit the Cabinet from placing adjudicated status offenders in an out of home placement.

While the recommendations come from a preliminary report presented during the 2nd quarter of this year, legislation is anticipated to be filed shortly in the current legislative session. KECSAC, in collaboration with KSBA, KASA, KEA and other education groups have been providing feedback on the recommendations throughout the development of the recommendations.

SACSAA Becomes KASA Member in 2013

In September 2012 during their annual Fall meeting, the State Agency Children School Administrators Association (SACSAA) discussed and gave approval to seek affiliation with the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA). Since then, SACSAA President Sonny McManus of Graves County, has worked hard to complete the extensive application process which includes making sure the organization constitution is current and accurate.

The SACSAA application was reviewed at a KASA executive board meeting in June 2013 where it was preliminarily approved on its first reading. SACSAA became an official member of the organization in September 2013. Adding an affiliate of state agency children school administrators to the KASA existing affiliations will permit this group to add their voices to the pertinent issues that concern all school administrators as well as ensure KASA speaks for this unique group of administrators.

Interagency Advisory Group

KECSAC’s Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) met twice during the second quarter of the 2013/2014 year. The first meeting took place at the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) on October 29, 2013, with a tour of the The Academy day treatment program, which is located near the KSBA in Frankfort. Members of the KECSAC IAG discussed the current status of program monitoring including programs that were issued corrective action requests, possible updates and changes to the summer KECSAC At-Risk conference, as well as initiatives of each partnering state agency.

The second meeting took place at the Richmond Tourism Center located in the historic Irvinton House in Richmond, KY on December 10, 2013. The topics of discussion included updates of the National Dropout Prevention Network conference planning for the 2014 event being held in Louisville, Unified Juvenile Code Task Force legislation updates, the budget outlook for the current fiscal year, and pertinent updates from IAG members and their agencies.

Above, IAG members share important updates from their affiliated organizations pertaining to State Agency Children during the Oct. 29 meeting. Below, Dr. Ronnie Nolan updates the group on important KECSAC and legislative issues during the Dec. 10 meeting.
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

Program Improvement Update

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 91 funded KECSAC programs, operating in 52 local school districts across the Commonwealth. Throughout the monitoring period (which coincides with the school year) programs receive individual visits, or “team” visits where two or all three of the Specialists 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 scheduled. 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 53 programs during the 2013/2014 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.

Quarterly Budget Updates

*SACF fund reflects budget information totals submitted by districts as of 01/14/14
Two Teaching in Action Trainings Held this Fall

Two successful KECSAC programs, Adair Youth Development Center and Phoenix Academy, shared their strategies with colleagues from around the state this fall to discuss innovative ways to reach vulnerable youth and promote academic and personal success for two Teaching In Action Series trainings.

Adair Youth Development Center in Columbia hosted Teaching in Action on November 1. Ten staff from other Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) educational programs and KECSAC were welcomed by Sue Buley, the school administrator, for a day of rich discussion and training. The group was joined by John Shelley, the District Title 1 Coordinator, Ron Long, the DJJ Superintendent of the program and Mike Mangam, the DJJ Assistant Superintendent. These administrators shared how the program is operated, the collaboration between DJJ and the district and the incredible support that the program receives from Adair County Schools.

The DJJ staff commended the teachers at Adair, saying they were some of the best they’d worked with. Following the roundtable discussion, the participants toured the facility and observed classrooms. The teaching staff had lunch with the group and shared stories about everyday experiences at Kentucky’s highest security juvenile facility. The student panel really touched and inspired everyone present with their honesty and desire to build a better life for themselves.

The Phoenix Academy in Clark County opened its doors to 17 teachers, administrators and KECSAC staff from all over the state on November 11. Dustin Howard, the school administrator, let the group dig right in to the school day by observing the mentoring groups that occur every “Mentoring Monday.” Community members work with students to provide career counseling and a focus on education. The Teaching in Action participants spent the day talking to students, observing classrooms, attending promotion meetings and learning about the employability culture in place at Phoenix. As students led the tour and staff discussed their model, a common language was clearly evident. The students discussed their behavior in terms of what would make them employable and what would be acceptable in the workplace. The level system used in the program is based on employability and students are promoted to higher levels, just as they will be in their future jobs.

Educational staff who participated in these Teaching in Action trainings left both facilities with great ideas to implement and a renewed sense of the shared work of all state agency programs. KECSAC would like to thank the generous staff of both programs for sharing their mission and strategies.

Adam Argullin Brings a New Beat to Anti-Drug Education for Innovative Strategies Training

On December 12, 2013 more than 150 students, teachers and staff from KECSAC programs and Mercer County attended KECSAC’s Innovative Strategies Series training “Stay Tuned” featuring Adam Argullin, an experienced narcotics and DARE officer. The program, held at Mercer County Senior High, highlighted Adam’s musical background to present a drum-infused, motivational, anti-drug experience. Argullin gave students a look at the harmful effects of drugs in a positive and entertaining way, playing pop songs on the drums throughout the training, while also educating them on the dangers of drugs and how to avoid them. He left the students with a powerful motivational message that anyone can follow their dreams, and the only person standing in your way is yourself.
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Kentucky Department of Education
Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice
Kentucky Department for Community Based Services
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State Agency Children School Administrator Association
Local Education Agencies
Eastern Kentucky University/College of Education