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
Sue Buley, SACSAA President, Adair YDC
Sherri Clusky, Department of Education
Erica Fort, Youth Representative
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
Paula Saenz, Department for Community Based Services
Jill Tabor, SACSAA President-Elect, Maryhurst, Inc.
Denise Weider, Department for Community Based Services

“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,

“He who opens a school door, closes a prison.” – Victor Hugo

Over the last several years our Commonwealth has been engaged in rather lengthy discussions related to the juvenile justice system and, in particular, the number of young people who are being placed in residential treatment programs. Our legislative partners fiercely debated the issue, our administrative leaders provided expert testimony, and our teachers and folks in the field talked about both short-term and long-term impacts. In the end, the legislature took action and passed Senate Bill 200, a juvenile justice reform bill.

In essence, the new legislation challenges us as a community to wrap our services around our youth and provide them with the local supports and resources they need to lead active, contributing lives of promise and purpose. Tactically, the bill has some very specific requirements about placements, including reducing the number of youth placed in out of home care, and eliminating young children from being placed in residential juvenile facilities.

KECSAC, through our collaborative partnerships with local school districts, is already working to address both the educational and mental health needs of our students. We have long held the belief, illustrated above by Victor Hugo, that a quality education can alter the lives of our children and youth. The teachers and administrators working in our 89 programs across Kentucky know the education they are providing today will help our students lead promising lives in the future. This new legislation, hailed as a game changer for youth services in our Commonwealth, further supports the important work we are doing to help close our students’ academic achievement gap and our collaborative partnership with mental health service providers to meet their emotional and psychological needs. Our work is far from finished and we have much more to do, but our network of educators are on the forefront of changing lives for the better.

During the first quarter of this fiscal year, we have experienced many great accomplishments, including working with our partners to implement SB 200, while also addressing the professional growth and effectiveness system and many other critical needs of our students. PGES, professional growth plans, professional development, and program improvement monitoring are all critical components of our program and we have been actively engaged in embedding them into the culture of our educational programs.

These accomplishments, and many others, are highlighted in this 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.
Professional Development Updates

New Venue and Interactive Sessions Sets Apart the 13th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference

Along with a change of venue for this year’s At-Risk Conference came new opportunities to learn about some of the most innovative and exciting youth interventions happening throughout the Commonwealth. The 2014 Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference was held on July 23-24 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort.

This location not only enabled participants to have overnight accommodations in the same venue as the conference, but it allowed KECSAC’s state agency partners to play a more active role in the event. The commissioners of all four partnering agencies were on hand to provide remarks, encourage the educators in attendance, and present awards to outstanding professionals, community members, and students. Teresa James, Commissioner of the Department for Community Based Services, provided opening remarks and welcomed the audience before Charlie Appelstein, renowned youth behavior expert, served as the opening keynote speaker.

Commissioner Terry Holliday of the Kentucky Department of Education spoke to the teachers and administrators during the luncheon awards ceremony and awarded each deserving winner. The SACSAA Award Winners he recognized were: Harold Rainwater of Wilmore, KY as the Outstanding Community Member of the Year for his services to The Providence School in Jessamine County; Carol Butler as the Outstanding Staff Person of the Year for her work as an instructional aide at Morehead Youth Development Center in the Rowan County School District; Sue Buley as the Outstanding School Administrator of the Year for her leadership at Adair Youth Development Center in the Adair County School District; and Noah Glass as the Outstanding Teacher of the Year for his performance as an English instructor at Maryhurst in the Jefferson County School District. The KECSAC Student of the Year, Chloe Thompson was also recognized but was not able to be present to accept her award.

Department for Behavioral Health, Development and Intellectual Disabilities Commissioner Mary Begley spoke at lunch on the second day of the conference, reminding the audience of the behavioral health needs of all of Kentucky’s at-risk students. Finally, newly appointed Acting Commissioner of the Department for Juvenile Justice Bob Hayter thanked the audience for attending the conference prior to the closing keynote address by Dr. Jane Bluestein, a celebrated classroom management specialist.

In between the powerful and humorous keynote addresses, participants from all over the state attended breakout sessions on topics ranging from classroom strategies and teaching tips to mental health and substance abuse issues. While one group inside was learning about how the DJJ Greyhound Program at Morehead Youth Development Center helps students learn valuable life and vocational skills another group outside was exploring how this is also achieved with horses at the Bluegrass Training and Therapy Center. Attendees didn’t have to take the trainers’ words for it – the dogs, horses and students were all present to give hands on lessons about how these innovative programs change lives.
Professional Development Updates

Another innovative program highlighted at the conference was the art curriculum being implemented in the Rowan County School District. Inspirational student art lined the event space, giving conference goers an impactful reminder of the talent waiting to be encouraged in their students.

KECSAC would like to thank conference sponsors, the Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice, and Community Based services, along with the many talented teachers, administrators, and state agency partners who shared their experiences and passion with colleagues. By connecting and collaborating, we can all continue to work together to provide the best education possible to Kentucky’s at-risk students.

KECSAC New Educators’ Training 2014

More than 70 teachers, administrators, and state agency partners came together on August 27 to share ideas and strategies for working in state agency children programs. New Educators’ Training is designed to orient new staff in KECSAC programs to the unique challenges and rewards that come along with working with children in the care or custody of the Commonwealth. KECSAC staff along with our partners at the Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice, Community Based Services and Behavioral Health look forward to working with each of our new colleagues in the coming year! We asked a few of our new educators what they were most looking forward to in working with KECSAC programs and here’s what they said...

Jim Sullivan
Teacher
Hardin County Day Treatment

“I’m looking forward to having the opportunity to impact lives in a positive way. So many of the students in KECSAC programs have had negative school and life impacts – they need a new chance.”

Shealonda Unseld-Dorsey
Teacher
Boys’ Haven

“I am looking forward to a great year. I am excited about seeing my kids grow academically, socially and physically. Watching these children transition from childhood to young adulthood is amazing.”

Travis Anderson
School Administrator
Calloway County Day Treatment

“I am most excited about getting to know each student on a personal level so I can have a deeper understanding of their individual needs and how to better meet those needs.”

Kendra Waddell
Teacher
Home of the Innocents

“I am excited to be working with a wrap-around care team that is focused on student growth.”
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

Professional Growth and Effectiveness System

In preparation for the implementation of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) in schools across the state, including Alternative School settings, a work group of A5 and A6 school administrators, Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice representatives, and KECSAC leadership was created to ensure the needs and requirements of principals and teachers in these settings were captured. Alternative School settings, while uniquely different in almost each instance, will apply the same PGES framework for both teachers and principals that will be used for A1 schools as well.

“Over the course of the last year, many of us who work with alternative programs began to realize the original framework, including student growth and voice, had not been taken into consideration for non-A1 schools,” said Paula Stafford, program administrator for KECSAC programs in Rowan County. “The group whole-heartedly supports the use of Danielson’s framework to improve the quality of teaching and move our programs forward. None of us wanted the standards to be lowered, but we did want to be sure program differences were taken into consideration.”

As a result of the work group’s efforts certain components of PGES for teachers and principals in alternative settings may look slightly different than in a “traditional” setting. However, all components will still be used and will provide valuable feedback.

School Administrator Dan Belding of College Street Campus in Barren County is also a member of this work group who wanted to ensure school leaders had a voice in how PGES would be applied in unique alternative settings. “This group allowed principals and directors to voice our concerns and solutions, and it allowed, over a relatively short period of time, for the creation of a very good guidance document for PGES in alternative settings,” Belding said.

Guidance for PGES in Alternative Settings will provide suggestions on how or where PGES may be adapted to better fit an alternative setting. In no way does this document purport to be all-encompassing. With the varied settings within alternative schools across the Commonwealth, no document will ever be able to include every situation. Nor is there an expectation that anyone outside the alternative settings will be more insightful or knowledgeable about how PGES might be best applied in any of these settings.

“For example, the student growth piece was of special concern because many of our programs have a typical length of stay 30 days or less. To develop academic goals where ‘proficiency’ would be attained wasn’t realistic,” Stafford said. “Our group has met several times to develop sample student growth goals that reflect different ways student growth may be measured, including enduring skills, concepts and/or processes. These sample student growth goals were sent to KDE, who has been a receptive working partner with us throughout the process.”

Sample Student Growth Goals Developed by PGES Alternative Work Group

**Context:** For teachers who work in facilities where the student length of stay is typically 15-89 days, the growth goal should be written to address growth for the group.

**Example for enrollment 15-89 school days**
- During the length of the course, all students enrolled at ABC school 15-89 school days will increase their use of appropriate social skills to remain calm, have appropriate conversations, and make good decisions when interacting with peers and authority figures by 50% as measured by a facility-developed social skills rubric.

**Context:** For teachers who work in facilities where student length of stay is typically 90 or more days, growth for all students and proficiency should be included in the goal.

**Example for enrollment 90+ school days (fewer than 10 students):**
- During the 2014-15 school year, all students enrolled at ABC school 90+ school days will grow in their ability to demonstrate positive academic behaviors (on task behavior, assignment completion, etc.). Growth will be demonstrated by each student by improving one performance level on the Positive Academic Behaviors Scoring Guide. 85% of the students will demonstrate proficiency by performing at the “Consistent Level” on all scoring elements for a 4 week period.
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

This feedback has formed the basis for the Guidance Document in Alternative Settings, which can be found for download online at KDE’s teacher and principal PGES web pages, or from KECSAC’s website at www.kecsac.eku.edu/documents. It is anticipated this document will be a living document. It will be edited as new and more experiences occur in the field that will help shape how PGES can best support teachers and principals in alternative settings.

For more information about PGES in alternative settings, contact Cindy Parker at cindy.parker@education.ky.gov, or the KECSAC office at (859) 622-6552.

National Dropout Prevention Conference

The National Dropout Prevention Conference will be held November 2-5 at the Galt House in Louisville, KY. KECSAC Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan, is serving as co-chair of the planning team alongside Ms. Sherri Clusky, KECSAC IAG member and representative of the Kentucky Department of Education. During the previous quarter, the planning team has been working with the national center for dropout prevention to plan and implement the conference. We are anticipating nearly 800 attendees from across the country, with nearly half coming from Kentucky. The conference will feature Kentucky talent, with all three major keynote speakers hailing from the Commonwealth. Speakers include Dr. Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the National Center for Innovation in Education; Mr. Hasan Davis, author, actor, dropout prevention advocate and former commissioner of Juvenile Justice; and Ms. Emily Kirkpatrick, vice president of the National Center for Families Learning (formerly the National Center for Family Literacy). In addition to an amazing line-up of Kentucky talent as keynotes, attendees will have the opportunity to tour some of the finest dropout recovery programs in Kentucky. These include the Audubon Youth Development Center, the Jefferson E-School program, Bullitt Alternative Center, and YouthBuild Louisville. KECSAC has also offered scholarships to cover registration expenses for employees of KECSAC affiliated programs across Kentucky.

Kids Are Worth It! Conference

KECSAC Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan, joined DCBS Commissioner Teresa James, KSBA attorney Teresa Combs and KDE attorney, David Wickersham, for a presentation during the Kids Are Worth It! conference on how our collaborative partnership is “Working Together in the Best Interest of Children Placed in Out of Home Care.” More than 40 conference participants attended the workshop and learned about the challenges related to information sharing between schools, DCBS, foster parents, private child care agencies, and others serving this particular population. In addition, updates regarding federal and state guidelines for information sharing between child protective services and schools was discussed along with techniques to improve collaboration and communication between child welfare, education, and the courts to support and promote educational success for children in out of home care.

KY Continuous Improvement Conference

More than 700 educators and administrators, including KECSAC staff, attended the 2nd Annual Kentucky Continuous Improvement Summit: “Focusing on the Best Practice to Close the Achievement Gap” held on September 22-23 at the Lexington Convention Center. Sponsored by AdvancED Kentucky in cooperation with the Kentucky Department of Education, the summit provided support to the education community by helping schools and districts plan and implement improvement initiatives that focus on ensuring student success and closing the achievement gaps.

During the summit, nine schools and one district were recognized for best practices and new framework for advancing student performance, improving learning conditions, or enhancing organizational effectiveness. Highlights of the summit included guidance for school and system leaders implementing the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) and Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS). Ken Draut, KDE, also provided updated information on the latest assessment and accountability information that was released in late September.
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children

The State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) met at Murray State University on September 18-19, 2014. Members of the panel discussed an enhanced accountability system for students with disabilities and reviewed the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). Panel members made recommendations related to performance measures for students with disabilities as well as reviewed specific data related indicators to recommend expected growth rates for the upcoming academic years. SAPEC member Vickey Reilly, program administrator for transition and mentoring with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, presented an update on the community-based work transition program and changing federal guidance impacting the implementation of the Kentucky based program. The SAPEC will meet again at the 49th Annual Exceptional Children’s Conference at the Galt House in Louisville, on November 23-25, 2014.

Custom Tab for State Agency Children in Infinite Campus

KECSAC staff have collaborated with the Kentucky Department of Education to develop a custom tab in Infinite Campus to collect data from local school districts about students enrolled in A6 programs. Windy Newton, KDE data analyst, worked with both Infinite Campus (IC) programmers and KECSAC staff to develop this next step in accountability for state-placed students. Data gathered will be used by KDE for reporting purposes and shared with KECSAC for further analysis. Using the data gathered through IC will allow KECSAC to have a more concise picture of how often state agency children change school placement as well as exactly how many state agency youth are served in a KECSAC funded program throughout a 12-month period. After a period of evaluation, the IC data may supplement or replace much of the census reporting requirements.

KECSAC IAG Meets During First Quarter and SACSAA Votes for President-Elect

During the first quarter of the 2014/2015 school year, KECSAC’s Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) met once on August 12 at Bullitt Alternative Center in Shepherdsville, KY and the State Agency Children School Administrator’s Association (SACSAA) met for their annual Statewide Fall Meeting on September 5 at the Elizabethtown Tourism and Convention Bureau in Elizabethtown, KY.

During the August IAG meeting most of the conversation centered on updates from our partnering agencies concerning business that relates to at-risk children and educators in KECSAC programs. The implementation of PGES in alternative settings was also discussed. Dr. Ronnie Nolan shared KECSAC updates including the end of year budgets and an overview of program changes and updates for the new school year. The meeting ended with a tour of Bullitt Alternative Center lead by the School Administrator Angela Biebelhauser.

The Fall SACSAA meeting opened by recognizing all the new School Administrators of KECSAC programs for the 2014/2015 school year and then focused on voting for a new President-Elect of the Association. Three candidates were nominated for the position, and after votes were tallied, Jill Tabor of Maryhurst in Jefferson County was appointed to the position. Dan Belding of the College Street Campus in Barren County also agreed to serve as the KASA Affiliate Representative for SACSAA since SACSAA is officially an affiliate member of the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) since last year. Members also participated in networking session time and were able to ask questions about PGES to a panel of administrators who were involved in creating the PGES Guidance Document in Alternative Settings.

Jill Tabor was elected President-Elect of SACSAA at the Fall Meeting.

Angela Biebelhauser, School Administrator for Bullitt Alternative Center leads the IAG on a tour of the facility.
Quarterly Budget Updates

Administrative Budget

- 1st Qtr: 24.2% $133,211.76
- Remaining: 75.8% $417,549.24

State Agency Children’s Fund

- 1st Qtr: 3.73% $354,503.85
- Remaining: 96.27% $9,147,174.15

*SACF fund reflects budget information totals submitted by districts as of 10/15/14

KECSAC Office Has Moved!

Previously located on the ground floor of the Case Hall Annex on Eastern Kentucky University’s campus, the KECSAC central office has relocated to the historic Martin House, which is also located on EKU’s campus. The house was owned by former EKU President Dr. Robert Martin and has been used as office space for many years. KECSAC office numbers and emails remain the same. Our new mailing address is:

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