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
Barbara Hamilton, Department of Juvenile Justice
Diane Gruen-Kidd, 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,

The Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) has been engaged in ongoing work to address the educational needs of children in the care or custody of the Commonwealth. During this quarter and in the months and years leading up to it, we have collaborated with our partners to find solutions to issues impacting our students. We have developed policies and practices that strive to ensure our students receive the highest quality educational services available. With our state agency partners, including the local school districts who led the way, we have developed many quality programs that serve as models for alternative learning environments and traditional schools alike. However, even with all the great work we have accomplished, and it is significant, there is still so much more to do.

As a Commonwealth, we are still failing too many students. With the recent regulatory change in GED test administration, we now have a population of students who no longer have access to this essential educational tool. We have to find innovative, creative ways to address this particular need. This issue is particularly compounded for state agency children who are relocated frequently during their time in state care and often miss opportunities for earning the credits needed to successfully complete high school. Certainly this isn’t the case with every student, but the reality we are facing is that this is happening too many times to too many students. Recently our Interagency Advisory Group, the governing board for KECSAC, began discussions on how to address this issue on a systemic scale. While only in the beginning phases, we are committed to bringing our partners together to help all of our students achieve at their highest level and ability. If we want to address college and career readiness for state agency children, we have to address their educational stability and the impact this is having on their academic progress.

This is just one of many issues KECSAC is working on to help our children and youth have a quality, equitable educational experience. 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 provides on-site technical support when requested to programs needing additional guidance in key academic, social and behavioral management areas. In addition, we recently partnered with the Kentucky Department of Education to create an “Alternative Program of Distinction” award which recognizes highly successful alternative education programs in Kentucky. A full review of those activities, and many others, are included within the pages of this 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

KECSAC Partners with National Dropout Prevention Network to Plan National Conference and Honor KY Governor & First Lady

On November 2-5, 2014 the culmination of two years of planning was realized at the 26th Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference held in Louisville. Dr. Ronnie Nolan, director of KECSAC, and Ms. Sherri Clusky, program consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and KECSAC advisory board member, both served as co-chairs of the national conference planning team and worked with the National Dropout Center to welcome nearly 800 educators from across the country to Kentucky.

The planning team, comprised of KECSAC staff and other Kentucky educational representatives, also partnered with the Center to honor Governor Steven L. Beshear and First Lady Jane Beshear during the conference awards ceremony with the 2014 Crystal Star Award for Distinguished Leadership and Service. Along with endorsement from Commissioner of Education Dr. Terry Holliday, the planning team nominated the Beshears for their work in promoting Senate Bill 97, commonly known as the Graduate Kentucky Bill.

“Governor Beshear and the first lady have demonstrated their commitment to education by championing programs and legislation designed to ensure that students throughout the state not only graduate high school but are college- and career-ready,” said Dr. Elizabeth Reynolds, the Network’s executive director. “Their example is certainly one to emulate, and we are pleased to recognize their leadership in dropout prevention.” The award is presented annually to individuals and organizations who have demonstrated their commitment to education and to bettering the lives of others.

Gov. Beshear and the first lady, a former teacher, worked with the General Assembly in 2013 to introduce, pass and implement Senate Bill 97. The legislation increases the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18. Senate Bill 97 stated that implementation would be voluntary until 55 percent, or 96, of the state’s school districts adopted the policy. As of November 2014, 160 of the state’s 173 school districts had amended their attendance policies from 16 to 18. The remainder of Kentucky’s school districts must adopt and implement the standard no later than the 2017-18 school year.

“Keeping students enrolled in school is just the first step,” said Gov. Beshear. “We must also keep them engaged and on the path to graduation and success in college, career and life. Preventing dropouts strengthens our economy and workforce, and improves the standard of living for every citizen.”

The national conference also featured many other Kentucky voices, including featured speakers Mr. Hasan Davis, former KY Department of Juvenile Justice commissioner, Mr. Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the National Center for Innovation in Education, and Ms. Emily Kirkpatrick, vice president of the National Center for Families Learning (formerly the National Center for Family Literacy). Kentucky student talent was highlighted as well from the River City Drum Corps of Louisville, directed by Mr. Ed White, the Bulldog Beats acapella group from Male High School in Louisville, directed by Alexis Paxton, and the Youth Performing Arts School of Louisville who performed numbers from their upcoming production.
of “Hairspray!” The students provided entertainment during the general sessions of the conference and impressed the audience with their talent and performances.

Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in site visits during the conference that allowed them to tour and learn about best practices from several exemplary and innovative educational programs in the area. Two of the sites featured, Audubon Youth Development Center and Bullitt Alternative Center, are also KECSAC programs.

“Having this conference in Kentucky provided us with a national platform to highlight the remarkable progress Kentucky is making in education,” Dr. Nolan said. “We had an opportunity to showcase how we are continually improving educational outcomes for our students, while demonstrating substantial growth in national rankings.”

Gov. Beshear also proclaimed November 3, 2014 to be dropout prevention awareness day in Kentucky. In doing so, he recognized the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children, the National Dropout Prevention Network and Jefferson County Public Schools, all state partners in the planning of the national conference. Gov. Beshear said of the proclamation: “It is imperative that educators, school administrators, parents and other leaders continue to explore strategies for addressing the school dropout problem among our students and encourage our young learners to finish their high school educations.”

Quarterly Budget Updates

**Administrative Budget**

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**State Agency Children’s Fund**

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*SACF fund reflects budget information totals submitted by districts as of 01/15/15*
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

KDE To Recognize Alternative Programs of Distinction

In order to formally recognize the provision of high quality educational services in alternative education programs, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is providing an opportunity for superintendents to nominate their exemplary alternative education programs for selection as an Alternative Program of Distinction. To be eligible for this recognition, the program may be defined as an A5 or A6 program. An A5 program is a district-operated and district-controlled facility designed to provide services to at-risk populations with unique needs while an A6 program is defined as a district-operated instructional program in a nondistrict-operated institution (group home, detention center, hospital, etc.) serving youth who are State Agency Children (SAC). These youth are the responsibility of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS), and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID).

Dr. Ronnie Nolan and Kaye Parker worked with KDE and the Alternative Education Cadre to develop the criteria for the selection process. Similar to a previous recognition program called Best Practice Site in Alternative Education, the Alternative Programs of Distinction program will focus on identifying alternative education programs that provide high quality instruction and a positive school climate while working with families and communities to remove barriers to learning. In addition to other criteria, a program of distinction must also show evidence of a planning process that results in high student achievement and program improvement.

Each alternative education program selected as an Alternative Program of Distinction will be recognized at an upcoming meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE), featured in Kentucky Teacher, and utilized as a hub alternative program for professional development.

Nominations for this award must be submitted by the district superintendent and received in the KDE office no later than Friday, February 6th, 2015. For more information contact Sherri Clusky at sherri.clusky@education.ky.gov.

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 23-25, 2014. It coincided with the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Conference held at the Galt House. KECSAC Director Dr. Nolan, recently reappointed by Governor Steve Beshear to a second term, was elected secretary and will serve as a member of the executive committee of the Panel.

During the meeting, members held a public hearing, reviewed the Kentucky Department of Education’s (KDE) recommendations for the State Systemic Improvement Plan as well as the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report. The next SAPEC meeting is scheduled for February 19-20, 2015 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort, KY. A public hearing is scheduled for February 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the hotel.

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 88 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.
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

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 50 programs during the 2014/2015 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.

KECSAC Interagency Advisory Group Met Twice During Second Quarter

KECSAC’s Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) met twice during the second quarter of the 2014/2015 year. The first meeting took place at the KECSAC program Knox Appalachian School in Barbourville, KY on October 28, 2014. Members of the KECSAC IAG discussed the current status of program monitoring including programs that were issued corrective action requests, and Dr. Nolan provided an overview to the new Infinite Campus Alternative Programs/KECSAC Tab and how that may replace the KECSAC Census forms in the future. Each partnering state agency representative also shared current initiatives of their organizations, and after the meeting a tour of the school was conducted. This meeting also welcomed two new IAG members, Jill Tabor and Diane Gruen-Kidd, who will be replacing Janice Johnston as the representative for the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID) on the board.

The second meeting took place at KECSAC’s new office in the Martin House on Eastern Kentucky University’s campus in Richmond, KY on December 9, 2014. The topics of discussion focused around the issue of credit recovery for students and correctional education guidelines released by the U.S. Attorney General, as well as pertinent updates from IAG members and their agencies.
“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