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
Diane Gruen-Kidd, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Barbara Hamilton, Department of Juvenile Justice
Chrissy Jones, Franklin County School District
Sylvia Kuster, Department of Juvenile Justice
Paula Saenz, Department for Community Based Services
Jill Tabor, SACSAA President-Elect, The Brook Dupont
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,

I’ve had the pleasure of serving with KECSAC for more than 11 years now, and with each passing day I become more and more diligent in our work to ensure quality educational services for our students. I thought, perhaps naively, that this work would get easier over time; that our constant chipping away at inequalities would eventually result in a utopian system of education for state agency children. But, as with most things, the mission and purpose of our work just gets more complicated, more complex, and more necessary. In a stagnant world we would be making incredible progress. Our students are demonstrating incredible academic gains in our assessments, but we don’t live in a stagnant world…nothing stands still waiting for us. As we move forward, so do all the other moving parts and we have to work harder to not only gain ground, but to close the gaps that continue to appear.

In our efforts to help our school districts meet the ever changing needs of our students, we have strengthened our partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education to recognize Alternative Programs of Distinction. When we have high expectations for our districts and the programs they serve, we have to not only set the bar high, we have to show them how to reach it. It’s exactly how our classrooms work and we are modeling this behavior in sharing Alternative Programs of Distinction with our partnering districts. KDE recently named 11 alternative programs from across Kentucky as Programs of Distinction. We are honored that many of those identified are KECSAC programs. Our districts, administrators, and teachers are on the forefront of innovation in meeting the diverse learning needs of students and it is critical that we celebrate their great work while also encouraging other developing districts to continue raising the bar.

The Alternative Programs of Distinction will serve not only as a model for other districts, but also as training facilities as we continue hosting our “Teaching in Action” professional development series. This series allows administrators and educators to learn in a hands-on, feet-on-the-ground, butts-in-the-seat, learning environment. By modeling our expectation for our districts and by providing relevant, real world professional development opportunities, it is our mission to ensure every state agency child has the educational experience they need to lead successful, contributing, purposeful lives.

We have experienced many great accomplishments during our first quarter, while continuing to share the needs of our children with our state agency partners, legislators, and policy makers. Our professional development series continues to impress our educators while providing much needed, hands-on, implementable skills for our teachers and administrators. More than 300 of our teachers and administrators participated in the largest alternative education conference in Kentucky, hosted by KECSAC and sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice and the Kentucky Center for School Safety, allowing them to learn from other teachers who are actively implementing challenging and rigorous academic offerings in their programs across the Commonwealth. In addition, our New Educators Training provided smaller group discussions with current practitioners and large group instruction with experts in various fields of education. We also continue to actively engage with our local school districts in meeting the educational needs of our children while collaborating with partnering private child care agencies, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and behavioral health professionals from across the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Nolan, Ed. D.
Another Successful At-Risk Conference Ushers In the New School Year

The 14th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference returned home to Eastern Kentucky University this year on July 29-30. Educators from all over the Commonwealth engaged in learning and networking while attending keynote addresses and breakout sessions presented by their colleagues and other experts in the field of educating at-risk students. The young men of Cadet Leadership Education Program started off the conference with their Presentation of Colors during the National Anthem. Dr. Diane Heacox, noted differentiation expert, kicked off the two days of training with her opening keynote address and training session by sharing crucial strategies for differentiating instruction, a key skill for KECSAC and traditional classroom teachers. Breakout sessions throughout the conference focused on a wide range of topics, from classroom management and behavioral health challenges to technology use and core content curriculum.

Highlights included a presentation by Animal Tales, LLC., an educational organization that brings science lessons to life for students using reptiles and other exotic animals. Conference goers got to meet a large tortoise, snakes, lizards and other exciting creatures as they learned about how they can bring Animal Tales to their students.

Those participants wishing to enjoy some fresh air could go outside and visit the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) College Info Road Show Bus. This mobile classroom is a fantastic resource available to Kentucky teachers and can aid in some of the vital steps of preparing their students to continue their education after graduation.

A featured session at the end of day one allowed everyone in attendance to take part in Current Drug Trends with Officer Adam Argullin. Officer Argullin is a very popular trainer and his sessions in the past have been standing room only. This full group featured session ensured that all of the participants could gain valuable information about an issue that can affect all of Kentucky’s at-risk students.

Commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice Bob Hayter shared remarks and awarded winners during the Annual State Agency Children School Administrator Association (SACSAA) Awards Luncheon. SACSAA awards deserving teachers, support personnel, administrators, students, and community members each year for their dedication to serving this special population of students. Several award winners were on hand to receive their awards from Commissioner Hayter and celebrate the day with their colleagues and families.

The conference ended on a particularly high note with the closing keynote address by Dr. Debra Peppers. Dr. Peppers is a former at-risk student who, through the hard work of some dedicated teachers, found education to be the way to a better life. She became a National Teachers Hall of Fame inductee and has spent her career teaching, speaking, training, and giving back to the profession that became her calling.

KECSAC would like to thank the generous sponsors and planning committee members who helped to make this conference a success. We look forward to working with all those agencies again to make the next conference even better!
Congratulations to our 2015 SACSSAA Award Winners

Our Annual SACSSAA Awards were presented to the deserving 2015 winners during our 14th Annual Educating Students At-Risk Conference. From left to right: Commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice Bob Hayter presented the awards; Kristin Humphrey, a science instructor at Bullitt Alternative Center in the Bullitt County School District was awarded Teacher of the Year; Reverend Damon Horton was one of the Community Members of the Year for his services to Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center in Fayette County; Susanne Jones, an instructional aide at Morehead Youth Development Center in the Rowan County School District was recognized as Staff Person of the Year; Michael Little was another Community Member of the Year for his services to Ramey-Estep High School in Boyd County; Sonny McManus of Mayfield Youth Development Center in the Graves County School District was awarded School Administrator of the Year (accepted by Justin Hubbard); and KECSAC Director Dr. Ronnie Nolan recognized these outstanding educators, staff and community members!

New KECSAC Educators Participate in Training and Orientation

Each new school year brings the challenges of new students and requirements for all teachers. But for teachers and administrators new to a state agency children’s program, there is even more to learn and become accustomed to. That is the objective of KECSAC New Educators’ Training – to orient our new colleagues to working in a program that educates students in the care of the state and involve one or more custodial state agencies. Those new team members joined one another on August 28 to kick off their new adventure, get some of their questions answered, and gather resources to use in the coming year. We asked some of our new colleagues what they were looking forward to about working with state agency children, and the upcoming year and this is what they had to say...

Scott Morton - Special Ed. Teacher
The Academy
“I am looking forward to receiving resources that will help me become prepared to teach our students.”

Bo Burkett - Math Teacher
Bullitt Alternative Center
“I look forward to being a powerful role model for my students and challenging them to raise the bar for their own lives.”

Christie Stamper - Principal
Buckhorn Children’s Center
“I am looking forward to helping my students become life-long learners, so they can become successful adults after they leave my school.”
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

KECSAC Welcomes Sonny McManus as New Program Improvement Specialist

Sonny McManus is a life-long resident of Graves County, Kentucky. He attended Wingo High School, Freed-Hardeman College, and Murray State University. He earned his B.S. with a double major in math and speech, M.A. in secondary education, and Rank I in administration, all from Murray State University. Mr. McManus recently retired from the Graves County School District after 27 years of service where he served as a math teacher for 17 years and KECSAC school administrator for the past 10 years.

Sonny is married to Jane Foy McManus who also recently retired from the Mayfield Independent School District after 29 years of service in the finance office. They have two grown daughters and one granddaughter. Sonny likes to walk, ride bicycles, and play his guitar. He is also active in his local church missions where he serves as education director. Sonny says he is very excited about his new position as Program Improvement Specialist and returning to KECSAC, and we are pleased to have him join the team!

KECSAC Program Improvement Process Updates

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 85 funded KECSAC programs, operating in 51 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. At the time of this quarterly report 12 visits had been conducted for the year.

This quarter saw a change in staffing of the program improvement specialists since at the end of the 2014/2015 school our long-time monitor Lue Cole, decided to step down from her position. After listing the position and conducting interviews this summer, KECSAC hired former state agency school administrator Sonny McManus as our new specialist.

During the 2014/2015 year a work group of KECSAC staff and school administrators was created and collaborated throughout the year to revise our Program Improvement Monitoring Tool and SIDE document in order to align our monitoring standards to AdvancED standards, which KDE uses for their school monitoring. In addition to the AdvancED standards, the monitoring tool also includes standards that relate to alternative settings and KECSAC requirements as well. The new tool is being implemented this year.

State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children

Dr. Ronnie Nolan, director of the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children, currently serves as secretary of the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children. The Panel met during the first quarter, on September 17-18 at the Natural Bridge State Resort Park. During the Panel meeting members discussed parent involvement data collected by the Human Development Institute at UK, in addition to data on the homeless student population in Kentucky. Members of the Panel also conducted an open public forum at the Wolfe County Public Library.

SAPEC provides policy guidance to the Kentucky Department of Education with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in Kentucky as defined by special education regulations and applicable state and federal law.
KECSAC IAG Meets During First Quarter and SACSAA Holds Fall Meeting

During the first quarter of the 2015/2016 school year, KECSAC’s Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) met once on August 11 at the Children’s Home of Northern Kentucky in Covington, KY and the State Agency Children School Administrator’s Association (SACSAA) met for their annual Statewide Fall Meeting on September 11 at the Elizabethtown Tourism and Convention Bureau in Elizabethtown, KY.

During the August IAG meeting most of the conversation centered on KECSAC updates concerning initiatives and topics related to their programs and educators, end of fiscal year budget updates, and new KECSAC reporting features in Infinite Campus. IAG members and partnering agencies shared updates related to state agency children and also shared information about upcoming conferences and trainings pertinent to partners and educators.

The Fall SACSAA meeting opened by recognizing all the new School Administrators in KECSAC programs for the 2015/2016 school year. The discussion then focused on the impact Senate Bill 200 has had on some programs and how we might address that, as well as a discussion about the new Program Improvement Process and what programs can expect with those changes in the coming year. Windy Newton from KDE offered training on Infinite Campus updates to all members and they were also able to participate in a networking session to discuss issues with other school administrators from similar programs.
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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