Third Quarter Report
2015/2016
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

Dan Belding, SACSAA President-Elect, College Street Campus
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
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,

This quarterly report is being filed on the last day of the legislative session. If you are anything like me, you have been following a lot of the conversations that have taken place over the last three months in Frankfort, and while very little legislation actually passed both chambers in the end, the session was one of the busiest in recent memory for KECSAC.

Members of the legislature arrived in Frankfort in early January and began work on the new biennial budget, a tough process when every agency needs additional funds and the pension crisis in Kentucky has developed into the biggest issue facing our Commonwealth. While the Kentucky economy is growing steadily, our needs still outweigh our resources and this puts every legislator in a precarious position as they work to stabilize the pension systems for teachers and state employees while also trying to find ways to invest in our future. Governor Matthew Bevin presented his proposed budget on January 26 and the House quickly began discussions about which parts of that budget they would approve and move on to the Senate. It has been said that the Governor’s budget was one of the most austere in Kentucky history, proposing significant budget reductions for almost every state agency while calling for increased investments in the pension system.

While KECSAC has been advocating for a budget increase for several years to meet the growing demands of our children and youth, the proposed budget initially called for a 9% reduction. However, legislators in the House, led by Representative Kelly Flood of Fayette County who serves as the elementary and secondary budget chair, along with Floor Leader Rocky Adkins of Boyd and Rowan Counties, worked with their caucus to hold harmless state agency children in the House budget bill. The Senate disagreed with many of the provisions in the House budget and, together with the House, entered a conference committee meeting to compromise on how the state should move forward. As of this writing, both the House and the Senate members of the conference committee have agreed to hold KECSAC harmless from budget cuts for the current fiscal year and the upcoming biennium. This is, in my opinion, nothing short of a miracle and speaks to both Chambers commitment to investing in education in Kentucky.

In addition to the lengthy legislative session, KECSAC has continued our focus on making 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 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 third quarterly report. Enclosed you will find 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.
Each year since KECSAC began in 1992, as part of the Department of Education’s Child Count, KECSAC staff have gathered and reported demographic information about the students served in KECSAC-funded programs. The information received from the December 1 census provides a one-day descriptive snapshot of the students educated in KECSAC-funded programs, including but not limited to: age, grade level, race, gender, identified disability, the number of students in the program on that particular day, and the total number of children served during the previous 12-month period. The census also gathers information about where the youth come from when entering a state agency program, as well as where they transition to when leaving the program.

On December 1, 2015, 2,108 students received all or part of their educational services from one of 85 funded programs located in 51 school districts throughout the state contracted with KECSAC through a Memorandum of Agreement. KECSAC also asked administrators to report how many different youth they served in their program during the 12-month period between December 2, 2014 and December 1, 2015. Administrators report that 12,592 different youth received educational services during that period.

Service to state agency children is provided by one of Kentucky’s three state agencies that provide direct care to children, the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHID).

As shown below, 64.6 percent of all state agency youth receive educational services while living in one of 39 programs contracted with DCBS. These students may live in group homes, psychiatric residential treatment facilities, hospital settings, treatment centers, or temporary shelters. DCBS contracts with private providers to administer the necessary care and treatment for these students. Programs operated by or contracted with DJJ provided educational services to 33.7 percent of all state agency children in one of 44 operated or contracted programs. DJJ operates 17 residential facilities, five day-treatment programs and two group homes. Youth in DJJ-operated residential programs have been adjudicated by the courts and committed or probated to the custody of DJJ for a specific period of time. Nineteen percent of the DJJ population are in residential programs. DJJ also contracts with 20 local school districts to provide 20 day-treatment programs. Youth in contracted day-treatment programs are court ordered to attend the program as an attempt to stabilize the youth before placement in a more restrictive environment, such as a residential program, or as a requirement of probation. As shown, 14.6 percent of the DJJ population attend day-treatment programs. In 2015, less than two percent of all youth in KECSAC-funded programs receive services from a mental health day treatment (MHDT) program.

The KECSAC census, conducted as part of the IDEA Child Find project, identifies state agency children who have been diagnosed with an IDEA educational disability. On December 1, 41 percent (n=873) of all youth receiving educational services in a program funded by KECSAC had been identified with an educational disability that adversely affects their educational progress. As illustrated on the next page, 38 percent of all children identified with an educational disability and receiving educational services in a KECSAC-funded state agency program on December 1 have been diagnosed with an emotional-behavioral disorder (EBD). Nearly 25 percent of SAC diagnosed with an educational disability have a disability in the Other Health Impairment category. Disabilities in this category include chronic or acute health problems such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, leukemia, and Tourette syndrome. From year to year, the types of disabilities diagnosed most often in the state agency children population changes. Although the types of educational disabilities change, one thing stays constant. Students in the care and custody of the state and placed in a SAC program continue to have extensive educational needs because of the severity of the educational disabilities they exhibit.
The census taken each year provides valuable information about the race and ethnicity of the youth in state care. According to the December 1 census, 71 percent of SAC are classified as White while 22 percent are classified as Black/African American. In comparison, 79 percent of all students in Kentucky public schools are classified as White and 10.5 percent are classified as Black/African-American. With more than twice the percentage of Black students in state agency programs than in regular Kentucky public schools, a disproportional number of Black/African-American youth are being educated in state agency programs. Youth classified as Two or More races represent 3 percent, and youth identified as Hispanic/Latino account for 4 percent of all SAC. Just 0.5 percent of all SAC in a KECSAC-funded program on December 1 was identified as Native American or Alaskan Native; Asian; or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

KECSAC-funded state agency educational programs provide services to students between the ages of 5 and 21. On December 1, 2015, the average age of a youth in KECSAC-funded programs was 14.6 years old. The largest age group of SAC is 16-year-olds; however this census shows the count of 16 and 17-year-olds to be virtually the same with just one-tenth of a percent, or 3 students, difference between the two age groups.

The largest numbers of SAC were in 9th and 10th grade, representing 44.6 percent of the entire SAC population in a KECSAC-funded program. Youth in grades 11 and 12 represent 23.4 percent of the SAC population while 20.9 percent are in grades 6 through 8. Students in grades 1 through 5 represent 9 percent of the population. Students in Kindergarten, Grade 14, and Graduate/GED/Vocational represent just 1.8 percent of the SAC receiving educational services in a KECSAC-funded program.

The gender division of youth in KECSAC-funded programs changes very little from year to year. According to information submitted on December 1, males represented 67 percent (n=1421) and females represented 33 percent (n=687) of the total population.

Local school districts employ the equivalent of 338 full-time certified teachers who provide educational services to youth in KECSAC funded programs across the state. These teachers generally teach in classrooms located at the treatment program (not in a district building) and may teach several grade levels in one classroom. Of these teachers, 56 percent are certified in special education. Just three teachers in KECSAC-funded programs were emergency certified. School districts also provide 152 full-time equivalent teaching assistants and 103 full-time equivalent educational support staff to meet the intense educational needs of state agency children.

The length of time a youth continues to receive education services from a state agency education program varies based on the type of program as well as the behavioral, emotional, and educational needs of the youth. For youth in a DJJ operated facility, a judge determines the length of stay, while youth in a DCBS group home may stay until the treatment program is complete, or until a permanent or foster home is available. Youth receiving education services at a mental health day treatment program may stay for a specific treatment period or until a mental health professional approves the transition back to a regular classroom. The average length of stay for a youth in a KECSAC-funded program is 146 days in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidence Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Incidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deaf-Blindness</td>
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<td>0.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Disabilities</td>
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<td>4.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional/Behavior</td>
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<td>38.0%</td>
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<td>Functional Mental Disability</td>
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<td>6.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate Incidence</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mild Mental Disability</td>
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<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthopedic</td>
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<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
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<td>High Incidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental Delay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech or Language</td>
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<td>0.8%</td>
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Legislative Session Updates

The Kentucky General Assembly kicked into high gear in the closing days of the legislative session. By directive from the Kentucky Constitution, the General Assembly can only meet for 60 legislative days during a biennial budget year and they used every single day to reach a compromise on the biennial budget. While few bills made their way to the Governor’s desk, the overall top priority for this session was establishing a biennial budget. With a pension crisis staring our leaders in the face, the Governor proposed a fairly austere budget, with budget cuts proposed for nearly all levels of state government, including KECSAC. House and Senate members disagreed about the impending cuts and eventually the budget was moved into conference committee in hopes of reaching a compromise that both chambers could agree on. In the end, the conference committee reached an agreement that spared K-12 education from budget cuts in the upcoming biennium. As a result, KECSAC funding is expected to remain at the 2014 levels. The final budget bill, which will be voted on during the final legislative day on Friday, April 15, also included a 4.5% budget reduction to most other state agencies, higher education programs and many of our state agency partners. It also redirected more than $1 billion to the teachers and state employees’ pension system.

Other education related bills generated a lot of discussion around the Commonwealth. Once again Charter School legislation was proposed in the Senate, but was not heard in committee on the House side. In addition, Senator Girdler of Somerset sponsored legislation related to the school calendar which proposed a later start date for schools, but it failed to get a hearing in the House. After all was said and done, the real focus in regards to education issues centered on the biennial budget, which also maintained current SEEK funding levels.

Our attention now turns to the upcoming 2017 session and the 2016 interim joint legislative session, where standing committees can call for testimony to study any potential bills. The upcoming session promises to be an exciting one, with a great deal of work to be accomplished.

State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children

The State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) held their third meeting of the fiscal year in Frankfort, KY on February 18 and 19, 2016. Members of the Panel participated in a Senate Education committee hearing and learned about the legislative process which impacts services for children with exceptionalities.

During the meeting, members also held a public hearing, developed comprehensive action plans for the upcoming year, and attended an orientation overview which outlined membership expectations. The next SAPEC meeting is scheduled for June 9-10, 2016 at Dale Hollow State Resort Park.

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 visit at the same program. (At the time of this quarterly report 76 visits had been conducted by Specialists for the 2015/2016 school year.) During visits, the Specialists use the KECSAC Program Improvement Monitoring Tool and SIDE document, which are aligned to AdvancED standards, to audit the educational services provided at programs. They will also 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. If you have questions about the Program Improvement Process feel free to contact Dr. Ronnie Nolan or Cindy Held at (859) 622-6552.
KDE Begins Alternative Programs of Distinction Evaluation Process

During the third quarter, the Kentucky Department of Education began the nomination and evaluation process for the annual Alternative Programs of Distinction Award. Of the many nominations they received, 16 programs were chosen as finalists. Those programs are: The Alternative Center for Education in Boone County; Safe Harbor Academy in Woodford County; the Bullitt Alternative Center in Bullitt County; Western Day Treatment in Jefferson County; Morehead Youth Development Center in Rowan County; Ramey-Estep High School in Boyd County; The Learning Center in Fayette County; The Providence School in Jessamine County; Clear Creek Academy in Clinton County; McDaniel Learning Center in Laurel County; Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Education Services in Dayton, Ind.; the Transformation Learning Center in Covington, Ind.; College Street Campus in Barren County; McCracken Regional School in McCracken County; and the Calloway County Day Treatment in Calloway County. Over the next couple of months, representatives from KDE and KECSAC will visit and evaluate these alternative programs on best practices and achievements, and winners of the recognition will be awarded at the June 8 meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education.

Adria Johnson Named Department for Community Based Services Commissioner

Gov. Matt Bevin and Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson announced the appointment of Adria Johnson Commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) in January of this year.

Johnson joined the Cabinet in December 2012 as DCBS deputy commissioner. For almost three years, she has led several efforts aimed at bringing about needed reform to improve the lives of some of the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable citizens.

“It is an honor to continue to serve the vulnerable children, adults and families of the Commonwealth as Commissioner of the Department for Community Based Services,” Johnson said. “I thank Gov. Bevin and Secretary Glisson for this opportunity to serve and to make a difference in the safety, stability and well-being of the citizens who depend on this agency every day.”

DCBS is the Cabinet’s largest agency and provides family support; child care; child and adult protection; eligibility determinations for Medicaid and food benefits. The agency also administers the state foster care and adoption systems, including the recruitment and training of parents to care for the state’s children who are waiting for a permanent home.

Johnson’s professional experience includes positions in both government and corporate finance. Before joining CHFS, Johnson held key roles in Louisville Metro Government, ranging from Capital Planning Analyst in the Office of Management and Budget, to Acting Director of the Department of Community Services and Revitalization. Johnson’s experience also includes various private sector roles at Humana, LG&E, and Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corp. A Louisville native and resident, Johnson received a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from Ball State University and completed several postgraduate courses from the University of Louisville. Johnson is also a published author. Her book of poetry, A Peek at My Soul, was published in 2004.

Early Graduation Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

KECSAC, in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice and the Kentucky Department of Education, has been engaged in ongoing policy discussions related to early graduation for state agency children. These discussions were prompted by a partnering local school district who requested clarification on requirements for students to participate in early graduation as well as requirements for students who may have less than four years of enrollment in high school. Additional issues related to this topic included student complaints to the Kentucky Department of Protection and Advocacy regarding the students’ ability to graduate while enrolled in a state agency children’s programs. After months of ongoing discussions, KDE provided clarification and guidance on early graduation requirements for state agency children. Specifically, the
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

question answered was, “Must a student meet the early graduation requirements set forth in KRS 158.142 and 704 KAR 3:305, Section 9 if that student attends high school more than three academic years, but less than four academic years?” In short, KDE responded that “a student is not required to meet the early graduation requirements if that student attends high school more than three academic years, but less than four academic years.” In this case, the student would not be considered an “early graduate” but simply a “graduate.” Because of these discussions and the subsequent interpretation of the statute and regulation by KDE, we are satisfied that our partnering school districts will continue creating opportunities for our students to graduate.

KECSAC Partners with KET for the Annual At-Risk Conference

KECSAC is pleased to partner with Kentucky Educational Television to highlight America’s dropout crisis during this year’s 15th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference on July 26–27. KET produced Dropping Back In, a series focusing on this critical issue and featuring some outstanding success stories from Kentucky and all across the nation. Through a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education, KECSAC was able to meet with KET staff and formulate a plan to bring these stories directly to the conference. A screening of part of the series will be featured and a panel discussion will be moderated by KET’s own Renee Shaw. The panel will include Kellie Blair Hardt, one of the inspirational individuals from Dropping Back In, as well as those involved with the production of the series and KECSAC educators and former students. This interactive panel discussion will bring the dropout problem to life for conference attendees and encourage these talented educators to continue in their efforts to keep Kentucky’s most vulnerable population of students in the classroom.

KECSAC IAG Meets Twice During Third Quarter

During the third quarter of the 2015/2016 school year, KECSAC’s Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) met twice. One meeting took place at KECSAC’s office located in the Martin House on Eastern Kentucky University’s campus in Richmond, KY on February 16. Due to inclement weather that day the meeting began an hour later but was still able to take place. The second meeting took place at Lexington Day Treatment in Lexington, KY on April 12.

During the February meeting, much of the discussion focused on state budget developments and the 4.5% executive budget cuts proposed by Gov. Matt Bevin for the current year. KECSAC shared how that decrease would be handled were it to be enforced, and also shared how the administrative budget would absorb some of those cuts as well. The KECSAC Grant Proposal, which was up for renewal this year, was also discussed. Instead of a two-year proposal as in the past, Eastern Kentucky University agreed to a one-year grant renewal since state grant indirect charges would be changing in coming years. The meeting in April also focused on state budget developments since the legislative session had still not agreed on a final state budget. After lengthy discussions concerning the budget and partner updates, several students from Lexington Day Treatment presented current projects they were working on including mentoring to younger students, a video about self esteem they produced for a contest, and a children’s book several students wrote and illustrated. A tour of the facility followed the student presentations.
Policies and Ongoing Initiatives

SACSAA Meets for Annual Spring Meeting via Video Conference During Third Quarter

The State Agency Children School Administrator’s Association (SACSAA) met at eight different video conferencing locations across the state on March 4 for their annual Spring meeting. The discussions at this meeting focused on many legislative and KECSAC updates and also focused on voting for a new President-Elect of the Association, since the former administrator to hold the position, Jill Tabor of Jefferson County, took a job outside of a state agency program. Two candidates were nominated for the position, and after votes were tallied, Dan Belding of the College Street Campus in Barren County was named to the position. The President-Elect typically serves a two-year term and then assumes the President position for two years, but since outgoing SACSAA President Sue Buley of Adair Youth Development Center in Adair County, will be leaving office this Fall, Mr. Belding will assume the President position at that time.

Quarterly Budget Updates

Mr. Dan Belding was voted as the new SACSAA President-Elect at the March 4 Spring SACSAA meeting.
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“Working Together to Educate All of Kentucky’s Children”

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Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice
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