

Dear Superintendent and School Administrator,

In recent days, there has been an increase in concern about the coronavirus (COVID-19) and its potential impact on communities across the country and the Commonwealth. As you know, every school district in Kentucky has closed all in-person instruction, in large part due to the recommendation from Governor Andy Beshear. While this is uncharted territory, I am so very proud of our school district partners and the incredible work they are doing to ensure our students are engaged, actively learning, and being fed. Certainly, our schools are the epicenter of our communities and the work taking place from our teachers, administrators and classified staff speaks to the inherent goodness of the people who have dedicated their lives to serving children. Like you, our priority is the safety and welfare of our students.

Understanding the complexity of this situation, KECSAC continues to be in communication with our state agency partners, including the Kentucky Departments of Education and Juvenile Justice, and we expect that many of you may have questions about the impact this would have on our programs across Kentucky. Here is some updated guidance about what your district should do during this closure.

**What if your district moves to Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) days? What should KECSAC programs do?**

At this point every school district in Kentucky [has](#) halted face-to-face instruction for students. Many, but not all, have moved to NTI days for instruction. While the decision to continue providing instruction at KECSAC affiliated facilities is a local decision, made in consultation with your partners at the local DJJ facility or your private child care agency, it is our recommendation that districts implement the same safety precautions for state agency children as they have for other students in the district. This recommendation is made to protect not only our teachers and staff, but also our students, many of whom have compromised immune systems (especially those in hospital/partial hospital/drug treatment programs).

**If our board or district leadership allows teachers to report to our KECSAC program to continue service, is that OK?**

It is our recommendation that the KECSAC program should operate the same as other education programs in your district, all of which have ceased face-to-face instruction. This is obviously out of an abundance of caution to protect both the teachers and the students.

With that in mind, if the local board of education recommends continuation of face-to-face instruction in the KECSAC affiliated program, they should work in partnership with the DJJ or private child care agency, who may have their own safety precautions and procedures.

**What if our program isn't residential? What if we have a day treatment program?**

At this time, we are recommending all face-to-face instruction cease, as is the case for every other education program in Kentucky.

**What if our district has not been approved for NTI days?**

The Kentucky Department of Education is currently making available an application and waiver opportunity for certain sections of the Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) Program administrative

regulation to allow school districts not currently approved for the program to apply for participation for the balance of the 2019-2020 school year. Instructions on how to complete this can be found [HERE](#).

### **Can we continue offering our online courses for our residential programs?**

Many of our programs offer online curriculum through a district approved provider. We encourage districts to work with your partner agencies to continue offering online courses, where appropriate and possible. This would require remote monitoring from our teachers and administrators to ensure the program is being implemented with fidelity during this time. In addition, because staff of the partnering agency would be responsible for in-person supervision, district leadership should work with them to coordinate services. We recognize this may not be possible in every program, but we encourage you to be innovative and resourceful during this difficult and unprecedented time.

### **How should we organize our students daily schedule?**

District personnel should partner with your residential program staff to coordinate school schedules during this time. This should include the development of a class schedule for students and should include extended learning opportunities. It is critical that students continue following an approved, and guided schedule, staying as close as possible to the actual school day. We, again, recognize this may be difficult, but we encourage programs to work collaboratively between school district personnel and the staff and leadership at your partnering agency. In the end, we want our students to continue receiving a high quality education and those of you on the front-lines can make that happen.

### **What about our extended days?**

At this time, the discussion around school closures is primarily impacting the traditional school calendar. In fact, should your district implement NTI days, as is being recommended, then the school calendar will continue as approved. With most of the extended calendar days still nearly two months away, we are withholding guidance about those days specifically and encourage districts to continue providing instruction for the regular school calendar. Should the executive order or other guidance continue the prohibition on providing direct instruction beyond the end of the traditional school calendar, KECSAC will provide additional guidance about the extended days. This may include, at that time, the allowance for NTI days to be used for the extended calendar, or to allow banked hours for completion (i.e. providing a 6 hour day that would be counted as 1.5 days of instruction towards the required 210 day calendar). Again, at this time, we are hopeful the restriction will be lifted by then.

Again, I would note that this is uncharted territory and we will continue working to address your concerns as we move through this school year. We will work with our Governor, the Kentucky Department of Education, and our other state agency partners to ensure our students and staff are protected and not penalized for following any executive order that directs instruction for our students. As always, we will work with you to mitigate any concerns or ramifications as we move forward.

### **What if some of our extended days are during spring break and that happens during the executive order period?**

If you are offering extended days during your district's already scheduled spring break and that break happens during the executive order or board approved timeframe, KECSAC will approve the use of NTI

days for instructional delivery for those limited extended days, if that mode of delivery is approved by your district.

### **What about our Program Improvement Site visit?**

KECSAC has halted all program improvement site visits during the time period of the COVID-19 response. If the restrictions at the local school district is lifted prior to the end of the academic year, we will work with local districts to reschedule visits.

### **What about the ADM report that is supposed to be collected Monday, March 16?**

The ADM report is due to be collected on Monday, March 16. This report is a membership report and includes all students who are enrolled in the program on the day of the count. If the district moves to NTI days or cancels school on Monday, March 16, the report should still be collected, as it will still include every student who is enrolled in the program. This report is due to our office no later than March 25, 2020. KECSAC also has an appeals process for the ADM count, should you feel the enrollment on that day does not adequately represent your average enrollment. The process for appealing your ADM count will be sent to the school administrator in early April.

### **What should we do with new students who arrive in our district?**

You should immediately enroll new students into your district when they enter our programs. Once enrolled you should immediately determine what courses they need and you should ensure they are enrolled in the proper classes. Records should be immediately requested and all paperwork should be processed as you normally would under any other circumstance. With schools moving away from in-person instruction during this time, we must be diligent in ensuring our students continue receiving high quality educational services.

### **What health precautions should we take immediately?**

We encourage you to continue to follow existing guidelines to protect your own health. The Centers for Disease Control recommends:

- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds; use alcohol-based sanitizer if no water is available
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with those who are sick
- Stay home if sick
- Cover cough or sneeze with tissue, throw tissue in trash, wash hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

### **Where can I get more information?**

We have recently updated our [website \(www.kecsac.eku.edu\)](http://www.kecsac.eku.edu) to include updates related to COVID-19, including links to the official Commonwealth COVID-19 response website, and many other valuable resources.

Thank you again for all your work on behalf of our Commonwealth's most vulnerable student population. Our central office staff continues to be amazed by your commitment, your fortitude and your drive to continually raise expectations for our students. If you have additional questions or need any clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out to us...we are here to partner with you in ensuring our students receive a high quality educational experience!

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