

# The Collaborative



Volume XVI Issue III

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## KECSAC Kids Share Their Experiences with State Board of Education Members

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• Collaboration is not just a buzz word in KECSAC's (The Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children) name—it is integral to the driving philosophy that shapes how KECSAC operates, develops policy, and integrates vision with action. KECSAC is 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.



A Ramey-Estep student shows Kentucky Board of Education member Kaye Baird the amphibians and reptiles living in the Herpetology Lab at the Program.

KECSAC continually strives to strengthen relationships with our state partners and the Kentucky Board of Education to advance the welfare and educational needs of state agency children. Recently, several Kentucky Board of Education members visited KECSAC programs across the commonwealth, observing the day-to-day operations, learning how treatment and education are integrated, how the grounds and buildings play a key role in a program's atmosphere, talking with students,

Continued on page 3.

## KERA Reform

The Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) reform legislation passed both the Kentucky House and Senate Friday, March 13, 2009. Open-response questions will be removed from the state's end-of-year student assessments in favor of a national norm-referenced test supplemented by additional multiple-choice tests that will cover the state's core content. The focus on multiple-choice exams is designed to allow quicker feedback and allow changes to a student's education plan the next school year.

Writing portfolios will no longer be used as part of the assessment program, beginning immediately, although they will be retained as a teaching tool in grades 5-12. End-of-

year tests in the arts and vocational skills would be eliminated beginning with next school year, although schools as a whole will be evaluated on their offerings in those areas, with an emphasis on performance-oriented courses.

The exam window for end-of-year tests will be cut in half to five days starting in the 2011-2012 school year. As the state makes a transition to national norm-referenced tests, students will be required to complete Kentucky Core Content exams in math, reading, science, and social studies used for school and district accountability. They will also take survey norm-referenced exams to measure their individual readiness.



# Director's Corner



KECSAC's Acting Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan.

I started my first job when I turned 15 years old. I was the hardware and automotive guy down at Rose's, a local department store in my hometown. I didn't have a clue about cars or lawnmowers or anything mechanical, but I must have looked like I did because they hired me. It was my first introduction into the world of work and I spent almost every single hour outside school at that store. I worked every day after school and every weekend, seldom missing a day. I loved the work and felt like I had a real purpose in life, but I also really enjoyed the money I was earning.

As many of you have heard me say over the years, I grew up in a poor but proud family. We struggled my entire childhood to make ends meet. But then I got this job, a job I worked until I was 20, and it helped me provide some financial support for my family at a time we desperately needed it.

My mother probably wouldn't want me sharing this with you, because we are a family who truly believes in earning our own way and taking care of our own issues without involving other folks. However, I share this only to illustrate the formative years of my life and why I enjoy the work we do today. When I applied to college and filled out the mountain of financial aid forms, I learned, for the first time, my family's real financial situation. At 16 years old, I was earning an income almost on level with my entire family. It made the dire economic picture my family was living perfectly clear to me. I understood, again for the first time, the depths of our poverty. I also learned quickly the value of every dollar we earned. I knew the bottom line of every penny earned and every penny spent.

While school districts and programs across the Commonwealth are facing the biggest economic challenges of our lifetime it is becoming increasingly important to know the bottom line. To really understand the value of every dollar earned and every dollar spent. In state agency programs we have always faced the challenges of limited resources and increased expenses. However, we have also continued to offer quality educational services to our state's most at-risk students. We must continue to meet these challenges head on while continually working to better our economic situation and take full advantage of the many resources we have at our disposal.

Dr. Dorie Combs, a member of the Kentucky Board of Education, recently spoke about this issue. She noted, "I greatly fear that even a few short years of budget cuts will have the greatest impact on our students who have the greatest needs." Because of our growing need and the impending budget limits, KECSAC staff has continued to educate our stakeholders on the importance of our students. We work every day to share the good things happening in our programs, and there are many, while also expressing to key policy makers the dire straights we face in educating state agency children.

In times like these, the values I learned so many years ago while working at Rose's department store have become even clearer. We have to keep our eye on the bottom line. We have to work hard for every dollar and be prepared to use our limited resources in a way that does the most good for our extended family: those state agency children who depend on us to provide a foundation for their future. I take this responsibility seriously and know that I share this with the countless teachers, administrators and staff who are working to make tomorrow a better day for our students, their families and our larger global community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronnie Nolan".

## Best Practice Sites for A5 and A6 Programs

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 (A5 and A6 schools) for selection as Best Practice Sites. Each alternative education program selected as a Best Practice Sites will receive \$1,000 for instructional support, and be recognized at an upcoming meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE). For more information contact Nijel Clayton at [nijel.clayton@ky.gov](mailto:nijel.clayton@ky.gov)

## Programs Across Kentucky



teachers, and administrators, and even sharing a meal with students and staff in the programs' cafeterias.

Reflecting on her visit to the Madison Day Treatment, Dr. Dorie Combs, Kentucky Board of Education member and chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department in the College of Education at Eastern Kentucky University, remarked: "While I had prior experience observing students in a variety of alternative school settings, I was especially impressed by the positive attitudes and professionalism of the faculty. These teachers enjoy their work with the young adults attending the program, and a supportive, engaging culture and positive relationships were evident throughout the program."

Joe Brothers of Elizabethtown, a Kentucky Board of Education member and plant manager for the Gates Corporation's Elizabethtown plant, visited several programs in Hardin County. He was struck by "the quality of the facilities and the warm environment that the staff created through their diligent, caring work within the facilities."

Mindful that the



*From left to right: Bill Criss, Ramey-Estep Teacher; Becky Stacey, Ramey-Estep Teacher; Pam Ferguson, Ramey-Estep Transition Coordinator; Ann Brewster, Ramey-Estep Principal; Kaye Baird, Kentucky State Board of Education Member; and Dr. Ronnie Nolan, Acting Director of KECSAC.*

state's budget is facing unprecedented shortfalls and constraints, Dr. Combs remarked that "we are past the point of being able to absorb these cuts in ways that do not directly affect programs. Budget cuts mean cuts to instructional supplies, fewer textbooks, postponed technology upgrades and repairs, and even fewer personnel per student. I greatly fear that even a few short years of budget cuts will have the greatest impact on our students who have the greatest needs."

While considering the budget crunch, Joe Brothers expressed the hope that "the State Board can assure that the programs are properly staffed and funded, have the resources needed to accomplish the mission of educating the students and be an encouragement to the KECSAC programs."

Keeping clear channels of communication with Kentucky Board of Education members and other state partners is an important part of the collaborative effort KECSAC makes on behalf of state agency children. After her visit to a KECSAC program, Dr. Combs exclaimed, "we all share responsibility for KECSAC children. These children confront problems that few of us can even imagine, but we cannot accept mediocrity.

We cannot allow ourselves to fall into benign neglect or pity. And while we shouldn't create undue stress, we must believe that all students can learn at high levels. For state agency children, their time in the school may be the best aspect of their lives."

Dr. Combs' sentiments and those shared by other Kentucky Board of Education members who have gone out of their way to acquaint themselves with the circumstances and needs of state agency children, such as Joe Brothers, Kaye Baird, and C.B. Akins demonstrate the kind of commitment necessary to meaningfully impact the lives of some of Kentucky's most vulnerable youth.

### BARREN COUNTY

#### Barren County Day Treatment



Local businesses offer support for schools in various ways. Some give money. Some

donate supplies. Others give of their time and still others give opportunity. Glen Pritchard does the latter, which is arguably the most difficult and most important contribution one can make. This owner/operator of College Street Station, a vehicle repair shop in Glasgow, has been giving students opportunities to job shadow him at his shop. These shadowing opportunities are extremely valuable because few other employers would give them to students in alternative education programs.

### BREATHITT COUNTY

#### Breathitt Regional JDC

Deana Robinson, the Transition Counselor at Breathitt Regional Juvenile Detention Center, wrote and received a \$3,250 PRIDE Grant proposal to purchase a greenhouse for student learning. The greenhouse is under construction on the grounds and the students are looking forward to planting flower bulbs and vegetable seeds in Spring. The teachers have plans to utilize the greenhouse for cross-curriculum learning. Students are

# I Choose to Be Happy

Article reprinted with permission from The Kentucky Teacher by Susan Riddell and photographer Amy Wallot.

Missy Jenkins Smith is a Day Treatment Center counselor for Calloway County schools. She has been married for several years to her college sweetheart and has a young son. By all accounts, she has a great life, despite the fact she spends most of her days in a wheelchair.

After becoming one of the victims in the Heath High School (McCracken County) shooting more than 11 years ago, Smith also has become the face of the shooting.

As the most severely-injured surviving student, she has taken on this role with her head held high and voice actively talking to others about her experiences.

She became a celebrity nationwide, appearing on numerous talk shows and specials including "The Oprah

high school shooting, she is regularly called by reporters wanting her reaction. She has participated in public-service announcements and several other noteworthy avenues to share her story. While so many hide from the microphone or the camera after going through a tragedy, Smith uses public appearances to help her heal, to force herself to deal with her emotions. Mainly, however, she tries to get the message across to others that violence is never the answer.

Missy Jenkins Smith writes about her experiences leading up to and following that ominous day, Dec. 1, 1997, in her book, ***I Choose to be Happy: A School Shooting Survivor's Triumph Over Tragedy.***



Missy Jenkins autographing her book at the Kentucky Book Fair in Frankfort, Nov. 15, 2008. Photographer: Amy Wallot/Kentucky Department of Education.

***"Nobody on earth expected me to forgive him for what he did – not even Michael. I had every right to be angry with him for the rest of my life. He robbed me of my ability to walk, murdered my friends, nearly killed my sister, and scarred so many people emotionally. He planned the crime and chose to commit the crime. He needed to face the consequences. Punishment was justified. But it didn't mean I couldn't forgive him."***

Winfrey Show" and "Dateline." Whenever there has been another

This book serves as a strong reminder about how one act can touch the lives

of so many and how it can force a nation to evaluate how schools have protected those who walk their halls. Smith's actions following the shooting have served as a glimpse of hope and a wealth of knowledge about how schools can best protect teachers and students. This book could easily be added to preferred reading lists for all high school students. It's a learning tool like most books in school.

What makes this book ideal for high school students is that Smith writes in the voice of a student. She puts the reader in that hallway that morning, with raw, vivid details about who was

Continued on page 5.

involved in the construction process and will make active decisions as to what kind of seeds they will purchase for planting. Their efforts are truly collaborative, with everyone from the students to the teachers to the maintenance staff excited by the prospects for the greenhouse.

## FAYETTE COUNTY

### Bluegrass Youth Development Center

On Monday, February 9, 2009, a small group of students from Bluegrass Youth Development Center took a tour of National College in Lexington. They really rolled out the red carpet and discussed admission requirements, various types

of classes, and gave some details of their Communications Program. In the the image pictured, students got to try their hand at giving news broadcasts and how to operate TV cameras.



On Tuesday, February 10, 2009, Bluegrass Youth Development Center held its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual version of American idol called Bluegrass Idol. Ten finalists (below) were chosen by a panel of judges to compete in the final show on Tuesday, March 3, 2009.



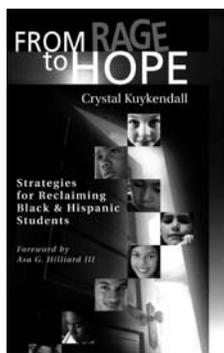
## KECSAC Reading Corner



### **From Rage to Hope: Strategies for Reclaiming Black and Hispanic Students**

is a comprehensive examination of the achievement gap, apathy, and rage experienced by many Black and Hispanic youth in America today. The author, Crystal A. Kuykendall, Ph.D., Esq., is an educator, advocate, speaker, and litigator. She grounds the book in the history and cultural backgrounds of these students and she offers strategies to rekindle students' motivation and achievement, how to deal with discipline problems in the classroom, and strategies for getting and keeping parents involved.

In addition to strategies for educators, she presents advice for other "Merchants of Hope" who seek to aid these students



in their educational and character development, such as how an understanding of teacher expectations are formed and how they often contribute to student failure, how to strengthen the social and academic self-images of Black and Hispanic youth, how to address institutional barriers and school-related obstacles to long-term success, and how to assess the performance and ability of diverse students more accurately.

For purchase information please contact:

Solution Tree  
555 North Morton St.  
Bloomington, IN 47404  
800.733.6786  
[www.solution-tree.com](http://www.solution-tree.com)

## Excerpt

*There is a growing rage among too many of our youth that has caused many of us to live in fear and apprehension. Yet this rage can be diminished. We, as a nation, have a chance. We, as educators, have a chance to recapture the ultimate joy our profession can, and must, provide. We can make life more meaningful by motivations all students to experience school success as never before... The barriers to school success that confront so many Black and Hispanic students can be eliminated. How exciting it must be for school officials to realize they have such great opportunities to enrich the lives of these children who lack hope. However, the education of these children should concern all of us... while teachers may be pivotal players in society's quest to create a well-educated labor force, along with a more secure and prosperous citizenry, it takes all of us--parents, policemen, policymakers, politicians, blue collar workers, business people, concerned citizens, and Americans of all hues, from all walks of life--to raise our children.*

I Choose  
continued  
from page 4.

standing where and what happened to those who couldn't escape the bullets.

With her unique voice of experience, students can learn from her story and understand that actions have consequences.

Middle school students could benefit from this book, too. Her message is simple in that it's easy to see the ramifications of bullying, even in the mildest of forms, even when the student getting picked on seems to take it in stride. Her message is also strong, however, in terms of overcoming obstacles and getting help for students if they feel like their only outlet is violence.

The best example of this in her book is a powerful 17-page transcript of an interview conducted just two hours after the shooting with shooter Michael Carneal, his attorney and a McCracken County police detective. Her book also has the capability of showing a student

the future should someone decide to resort to violence. The book goes into great detail during Carneal's sentencing with excerpts from victims, their family members, family members of those fatally wounded and the judge as he rendered the sentence: 20 years in prison for burglary, 20 years in prison each on five counts of attempted murder and three concurrent life sentences without the possibility of parole for 25 years for the murdered victims.

Missy Jenkins Smith doesn't hold back in her personal tale. After guiding you through the shooting, she discusses her lengthy stay in the hospital followed by her rehabilitation stint in Lexington's Cardinal Hill Hospital. That's when she faced the daunting task of learning to go about her life in a wheelchair.

She discusses the good times and bad when she returned to Paducah, her first day back at Heath High School, dating and staying active in school, not to mention how she viewed things that

once seemed so insignificant.

Smith doesn't cut Carneal any slack, either. She forgives him, but holds him accountable for his actions that fateful day. That's a fine line most people can never properly navigate. "Forgiveness does not exonerate a person from responsibility or punishment for what he or she did," she writes. "It's an acknowledgement that he or she did something wrong, that we realize we all make errors in judgment. Michael's errors were ruthless," she continues. "Nobody on earth expected me to forgive him for what he did – not even Michael. I had every right to be angry with him for the rest of my life. He robbed me of my ability to walk, murdered my friends, nearly killed my sister, and scarred so many people emotionally. He planned the crime and chose to commit the crime. He needed to face the consequences. Punishment was justified. But it didn't mean I couldn't forgive him."

# Lincolndale Rises

By Donna Buckley

One of the most critical skills our students can develop is the ability to work in teams to solve larger scale problems. Recently Mr. Pursell, Science teacher at the Lincoln Village Regional Juvenile Detention Center, gave his students an opportunity to develop that skill as they designed a village from bare ground to finished community. For the "bare ground" the students were given a 13' x 16' area covered in brown wrapping paper. A river was added to one margin and an interstate highway to the other margin. The rest they developed. The plan had to include a 2,200 acre Nitrogen processing plant and housing for 725 people; beyond that the students were free to develop the village as they saw fit. To add to the challenge, Pods 500 and 600, student groups at Lincoln Village Regional Juvenile Detention Center, were in competition with each other to see who could develop the best plan.

The first challenge was to decide where to do the project since the brown paper needed to be taped to the floor. Mr. Pursell was going to

use the gym, but the students needed a space that could be utilized for the duration of their project. The students in 500 Pod solved the problem by suggesting we utilize the floors in student housing, which were not in use at the time. Each project was secure in between work sessions, and there was plenty of space to spread out and work in small groups.

After locating the Nitrogen processing plant, the students next had to decide how they were going to utilize the remaining space and what sort of utilities they were going to have. The pods were broken into smaller committees to develop a portion of the groups' plan. The utilities committee had a variety of information available covering power sources from solar to nuclear power. Both pods chose to use a blend of natural gas and coal-fired power plants.

The work progressed in stages similar to the utilities decision with information provided from the internet and from their textbooks. Both pods included a large recreational area near the river, as well as a variety of commercial developments. Each building was represented by colored squares of paper and a drawing of what the facility should look like. For the housing pictures one pod found a HOMES magazine and used

the photos of houses in the magazine as a pattern for their drawings. When the work was completed, each building was identified by name and a drawing; they each had the proper utilities attached, and each type of building was located in a single general area.

Mr. Pursell asked Mrs. Grady, Mr. Gardner, and Mrs. Buckley to judge the projects independently. The pods had gotten very competitive thinking that the pod with the best score would get a pizza lunch provided by Mr. Pursell. In reality both plans were winners although they were quite different. Both pods were treated to pizza in recognition of their hard work. The quality of the work done is exemplified by the following quotes from the judges:

*"Clean and concise; a good, practical layout."*

*"The number one quality was the team work and effort for both sides!"*

*"I am impressed with the way that the students organized themselves with very little outside assistance. A job well done by both teams."*

The students also got a peek at how some communities are being totally planned on paper before the first shovel of dirt is turned. This concept is growing nationwide, but especially on the West Coast. Science does not always come from a book at Lincoln Village!

## FAYETTE COUNTY Fayette County Juvenile Detention Center

In the September issue of the magazine *Junior Scholastic*, a Fayette County JDC student's letter to the editor was published. He said: "Gangs: Keep Out!" "I was involved in gangs. I ended up in a juvenile detention center on a murder charge. Gangs have been around for a long time. From the beginning, all they have done is destroy communities and youths like me. I am only 15, and I have already experienced a lot of the chaos that gangs cause. They bring and leave nothing but pain and disaster. They supposedly offer great respect and a way out of a life of misery. But as a former

member, I would like to help young people like me and encourage them to stay away from gangs. When you need help and encouragement to get you through tough times, gang members are nowhere to be found."

## WOODFORD COUNTY Safe Harbor Academy

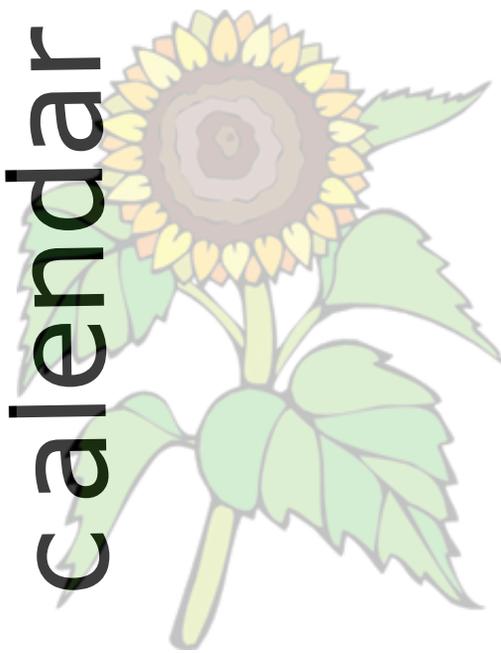
Safe Harbor Academy is offering a forensic science class in which the students are doing a lot of hands on (and very cool) activities. A forensic scientist spoke to the class about what his job entails, the students learned how finger print identification works, and the students were able to participate in a hair analysis lab. In addition, the students have been

solving mock crimes in groups using the techniques they are learning.

Does your program or district have news to share? Please submit vignettes, tid-bits, or articles for the Across Kentucky section of The Collaborative to:

heather.carpenter@eku.edu or  
call 859-622-5780.

# calendar



## KECSAC Deadlines

### April 2009

15<sup>th</sup> ADM Count, due 24<sup>th</sup>  
24<sup>th</sup> Third Quarter reimbursement  
MUNIS report due in to the KECSAC  
Central Office.

### May 2009

2009-2010 MOA mailed to school  
districts' superintendents.  
15<sup>th</sup> ADM Count, due 22<sup>nd</sup>

## Bulletin Board

### **Shifting Education and the Economy into High Gear**

The 2009 Education Commission of the States (ECS) National Forum on Education Policy, titled "Shifting Education and the Economy into High Gear," will be July 8-10 in Nashville, Tenn. How education can be an engine to ignite the economy will be explored. The 2009 National Forum will feature more than 20 sessions — highlighted by powerful dialogues and deep discussions on a broad spectrum of education challenges. ECS is the only nationwide, nonpartisan interstate compact devoted to education at all levels. At the 2009 National Forum, participants can

network with chief state school officers and state higher education executive officers, local and state school board members, teachers, principals, and state and national education stakeholders. E-mail [nationalforum@ecs.org](mailto:nationalforum@ecs.org) for more information.

### **Louie B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame**

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 class of inductees into the Louie B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame. The deadline is July 15. For more information, contact Cathie Bryant, [cathie.bryant@wku.edu](mailto:cathie.bryant@wku.edu), or (270) 745-4664. [http://edtech.wku.edu/deans\\_office/GovLBN\\_KY-THF.htm](http://edtech.wku.edu/deans_office/GovLBN_KY-THF.htm)

### **Patient Advocate Scholarships**

The Patient Advocate Foundation is offering ten \$3,000 scholarships for the 2009-10 school year. These scholarships are for young people under 25 who deal with a life threatening or debilitating disease and want to further their education. The American Cancer Society also offers yearly scholarships for cancer survivors. Call (800) 227-2345 or go to [www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS\\_5\\_1x\\_College\\_Scholarships\\_for\\_Cancer\\_Survivors.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_5_1x_College_Scholarships_for_Cancer_Survivors.asp) find out who is eligible. [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)

## Professional Development

July 21-23, 2009

**Alternative Strategies  
for Educating Students  
At-Risk Conference**

*Perkins Conference Center  
Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond*

Join us for a three day professional development conference offering 18 approved EILA hours, noted national keynote speakers and the opportunity to network with educators from alternative setting programs around the Commonwealth

Registration is available at [www.kecsac.eku.edu](http://www.kecsac.eku.edu)  
or by contacting KECSAC at 859-622-6552,  
by email at [katie.helton@eku.edu](mailto:katie.helton@eku.edu)

or by mail at:  
104 Case Annex

Eastern Kentucky University  
521 Lancaster Avenue  
Richmond, KY 40475



KECSAC  
104 Case Annex  
Eastern Kentucky University  
521 Lancaster Avenue  
Richmond, Kentucky 40475

Comments: Contact the editor at  
(859) 622-5780 or email  
heather.carpenter@eku.edu

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Volume XVI Issue III

# The Collaborative

## KECSAC Presents the 8th Annual

### “Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk”

A Conference for Educators in Alternative Settings

July 21-23, 2009  
Perkins Conference Center  
Eastern Kentucky University

For this year only, thanks to the generosity of KECSAC’s State Agency Partners, the conference fee of \$150 will be waived for all participants. KECSAC recognizes that districts are facing fiscal challenges this year, and to make quality professional development available to as many educators as possible, we are happy to offer this conference FREE OF CHARGE!

Space is limited, so sign up now to reserve your spot online ([www.kecsac.eku.edu](http://www.kecsac.eku.edu)) or if you have any questions, email [katie.helton@eku.edu](mailto:katie.helton@eku.edu)