

The Collaborative



Volume XVII Issue I

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Best Practice Sites

• Educating state agency children can be among the most challenging educational work in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, but it can also be the most rewarding. Recently, four KECSAC programs were cited as Best Practice Sites in Alternative Education in Kentucky. When reflecting on being selected as a Best Practice Site, Denise Adams, Principal at the Providence School and All God's Children, said: "our goal was never to win awards or be recognized, but rather our goal was to work hard to create a school that exemplifies personalized education

for at-risk students. We're grateful that the outcome, or by-product, of personalizing education for students is student achievement and recognition for our school community."



As part of the Kentucky Department of Education's Action Plan for Alternative Education, six alternative education programs were selected as Best Practice Sites in an effort by KDE to recognize high quality educational services in alternative education programs. Four of the six sites selected were KECSAC programs and all three programs that were selected as Best Practice Sites in all

Teaching in Action

The first installment of the KECSAC Teaching in Action Series was held on September 30, 2009 at Ramey-Estep High School in Rush, KY. REHS was named one of the Alternative Education Best Practice Sites in 2009 in all three categories. The Teaching in Action Series offers on-site professional development opportunities where programs are able to share their proven strategies with a small group of colleagues. REHS Principal Ann Brewster welcomed eight teachers and administrators from all over the state to her facility. Participants were treated to a tour of the remarkable facility led by the students themselves. The young ladies did an excellent job of describing the classrooms, laboratories and student art work displayed in the halls. One of the highlights was a visit to the herpetology lab, where proud students showed off the snakes, turtles and

reptiles they care for. Following the tour was lunch with the treatment team of the facility and plenty of time for classroom observation. Participants were able to interact with teachers, students and administration throughout the day in order to gain insight into practices they can incorporate into their own programs. KECSAC staff is incredibly grateful to REHS for hosting this very successful professional development event and looks forward to similar trainings at other outstanding programs.



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on page 3.

Director's Corner



KECSAC's Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan.

A few days ago I woke up and realized that winter is upon us. It was cold in my house, but years of living in poverty as a child taught me to hold off as long as possible before actually turning on the heat—especially gas heat. Instead, I piled extra blankets on my bed, brought out the electric space heater and convinced my cat to snuggle close at night to keep me warm. I tried to bring all the resources I had at my disposal together to make the situation a little less uncomfortable while keeping my costs low.

It's not so different from how our child serving state agencies have been working for years. We all have seen warmer days, but with an economy that challenges us to make the best use of what we have, we adjust our needs, we consolidate our resources and we collaborate with our colleagues to help keep us warm. Just recently the Kentucky Department of

Education named four of our KECSAC programs as best practice sites for alternative education in Kentucky. Each program selected is so different from the others; we have a day treatment, a large residential treatment center, a group home and a mixed use program serving state agency children within a larger alternative program. I believe these programs represent the best our state has to offer in alternative education, yet I realize we have many other deserving programs as well. When visiting the programs or talking with the staff that make a difference for the children being served within their program, several themes emerge. They all are dedicated to providing the best service possible to our children and they have the leadership, both at the program and in the district, to support it. In addition, I believe they share another characteristic: they all go above and beyond to rally resources, to collaborate with their districts and to share resources when possible. I think they all learned a lesson similar to mine about making the most of the funds you have. They demonstrate it daily in the decisions they make to implement new programs, to expand services to our children and to make a difference in the lives of the many kids who enter their classrooms. In the preceding weeks, KECSAC was hosted by one of the best practice sites as part of our professional

development program, Teaching in Action. Administrators and teachers from across the Commonwealth attended the on-site training. For years I have heard some of our programs say they just couldn't compete with the resources of this particular program; however, on that day they learned that they could. It wasn't about money; it was about leadership, commitment, collaboration and dedication to making it work for every single child in the program. In hearing from those in attendance, I know they walked away with a new found appreciation for what is possible and a newly rekindled drive to go above and beyond as they raise the level of expectations for themselves and our children.

I continue to be humbled by the dedication of our teachers, administrators and other state partners who have huddled together to keep our kids wrapped in warmth. I know the children we serve are getting a better education today than just a few years ago and I know it is because of the great work taking place in our partnering school districts across Kentucky. It is a great honor to work on your behalf as we continue to advocate for the more than 19,000 state agency children served in our programs.



KECSAC Policy Update

This Fall, KECSAC staff developed a written policy manual to clearly document guidelines and decision making processes within the Collaborative. Written policies will standardize procedures, thus ensuring consistency, transparency and accountability while providing guidance to KECSAC staff, state agency partners, school districts and state agency children programs.

The KECSAC policy manual will clearly define a variety of topics, including the legal definition of state agency children, the memorandum of agreement, how programs are funded and other important topics.

All policies are based on KECSAC's governing statutes and regulations as well as the memorandum of agreement with local school districts. After approval by the IAG, the policies will be distributed to all KECSAC districts and programs.

Programs Across Kentucky



three categories of Academic Performance; Learning Environment; and Efficiency are KECSAC programs. The programs were self-nominated in the categories of Academic Performance; Learning Environment; and Efficiency. The six programs named as Best Practice Sites for 2009 are:

- Graduation Success Academy (Bath County) -- Best Practice Site in the Efficiency category
- Ramey Estep High School (Boyd County) --Best Practice Site in all three categories
- Calloway County Day Treatment -- Best Practice Site in all three categories
- Beacon Central High School (Davies County) -- Best Practice Site in the Learning Environment category
- Brooklawn School (Jefferson County) -- Best Practice Site in the Efficiency category
- The Providence School (Jessamine County) -- Best Practice Site in all three categories

School districts nominated their programs for recognition based on criteria developed by the KDE Alternative Education Advisory Committee. Applications were screened, and finalists received site visits from a KDE review committee. Each program selected as a Best Practice Site will receive \$1,000 for instructional support and will be formally recognized at a future meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education.

BARREN COUNTY Barren County Day Treatment

Principal Dan Belding of the Barren County Day Treatment invited two guest lecturers to speak to the students at BCDT regarding the physical and social ravages methamphetamine abuse can have on your body and your life.

Dr. Chris Steward detailed the physiological consequences of meth use and Doug Chapman, a man currently serving a 25 year to life sentence in the Barren County Correction Center because of his involvement with meth,

Susan Bucy at Calloway County Day Treatment credits the students and the network of local support for their success. She remarked: "Calloway County Day Treatment Center staff members are inspired by our students who work hard to overcome obstacles in their lives to be successful, the parents who will not give up on helping their children and the outside community members who visit and provide mentoring and other support. Without everyone's involvement, we would not be successful. Our students benefit from the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program. Presentations from military recruiters, vocational school leaders, and other post-secondary opportunities provide our students with all kinds of options. We benefit from Murray State University, whose Public Safety Department periodically visits our building. The wide variety of support from the community that we receive inspires us to continue the work we do every day."

At Brooklawn, Patricia Joyce cites the strong district support of Jefferson County as leading to success. She said, "Our strong organization of academics and resources provided by Jefferson County allow us to present a varied curriculum that meets the needs of our students. Through creative personnel roles we are able to offer computer graphics, physical education, one on

spoke about the life-ruining effects of the drug and its specific drug culture. Mr. Chapman has undergone more than \$2 million in plastic surgery to repair burn wounds from exposure to toxic anhydrous ammonia, a substance used in the creation of meth. The students became wide-eyed and shuffled in their seats as Chapman removed his skullcap to reveal his missing ear and patchy hair, as well as numerous scars and grafted skin on his face and neck.

Mr. Belding tries to bring a variety of guest lecturers to BCDT in order to help students make better decisions throughout their lives.

one tutoring, small group tutoring, individual music lessons, and art classes in addition to the required curriculum. Dedication of our staff is also a strength. They go above and beyond to create successful opportunities for students. They work with students to make them feel more confident and successful." Ramey-Estep High School's Principal Ann Brewster cites her students as her source of inspiration and thus Ramey's success. She reflected, "Working with some of Kentucky's brightest and most talented youth is an honor and privilege. Fundamentally, it is the students who inspire us each day. To be able to witness the hope and excitement of our students in their process of achieving something they never dreamed possible is the richest reward of all."

The KECSAC programs selected as Best Practice Sites will be asked to host installments of the Teaching in Action series. Ramey-Estep High School hosted the first workshop on September 30, 2009. The series focuses on how these Best Practice Sites integrate excellence in education, treatment, and leadership for teachers and administrators across the Commonwealth. Another Teaching in Action workshop will be in the Spring at one of the other KECSAC Best Practice Sites. To reserve a spot, contact Katie Helton (katie.helton@eku.edu or (859) 622-8538).

PERRY COUNTY Buckhorn Children's Center

As a culminating performance event for Buckhorn Children Center's school-wide thematic unit about Appalachian culture and history, the students presented their research in the gym. Buckhorn program staff, treatment staff and teachers all enjoyed the student presentations and authentic "vittles" prepared by the students. Ms. Stephanie Miller organized the event in collaboration with teachers and staff. She and her daughter sang "Never Leave Harlan Alive" beautifully while her students' Power Point presentation played.

SACSAA Awards



Teresa Landenwich
School Administrator of the Year
Bellewood
Jefferson County

In Her Own Words

“Very simply: every student can be successful. I have yet to meet a child who doesn’t have some positive behaviors or skills to build upon. When you establish a relationship with a student, good changes take place. And when you surround yourself with great people who share your beliefs, great changes take place. When the students know you care and you really listen to them – that’s the part of my job I love the most. It’s all about the students.”



Jennifer Ann Lowe
Support Staff of the Year
Warren Regional JDC
Bowling Green

In Her Own Words

“Often times, our disadvantaged students fall to the wayside, only to be seen again when disorder and failure come about. My hope is that by doing my job, with one student at a time, I will be able to meet their individual needs. I want my students to know they have unconditional positive regard. I want to empower them so they can embrace their future with hope, confidence, and realism.”



Harold Willoughby
Teacher of the Year
Safe Harbor Academy
Woodford County

In His Own Words

“Safe Harbor is a very challenging school to work in because we have kids from so many diverse backgrounds. Finding instructional materials to appeal to everyone is a full time job because I teach kids from 6th through 12th grade but it is rewarding because when I see a child succeed I feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment and I know that I have done something to better their futures”.

BOYD COUNTY

Ramey-Estep High School

Charles M. Stephens, the Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator at Ramey-Estep High School in Boyd County, reports that they have just started a new Youth Apiary Educational program that integrates bee care and science education. The students learn about the life-cycle of bees, hive culture and care, as well as honey cultivation. Sounds sweet!



ROWAN COUNTY

Morehead Youth Development Center

Throughout August, Morehead Youth Development Center students participated in the Financial Fitness for Life curriculum developed by the National Council on Economic Education. Office Technology instructor, Valerie Kazee, and Social Studies teacher, Cheryl Jones were very interested in the economic and financial literacy concepts presented last spring and summer by the Kentucky Council on Economic Education and began collaborating to teach the life

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State Agency Child Definition

KECSAC was created over 18 years ago with a primary mission of assisting local educational agencies to provide quality educational services to children committed to or in the custody of the state and placed by one of the child serving state agencies in a program operated, contracted or financed by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department of Juvenile Justice or Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. Over the years, KECSAC has strived to fulfill our mission of meeting the educational needs of state agency children (SAC).

Recently, KECSAC has begun to refocus on what it means to be a state agency child. Two events happened over the past year that made the KECSAC staff focus on the definition of SAC and how state agency children's funds were being distributed. First, a KECSAC funded program refused to provide the necessary information about the students in the program because, according to their attorney, children in the program were not committed or in the custody of the state and therefore did not meet the definition of a state agency child. The second event was a change of KECSAC administration.

When the program brought this information to light, the new KECSAC administration began to study our governing statutes and regulations and look at the youth being served in state agency children programs and funded by KECSAC. Attorneys from the Kentucky Department of Education and Department of Juvenile Justice were asked to review our statutes and provide a legal opinion on what it means to be a state agency child. Both attorneys agreed that a state agency child must be both committed to or in the custody of the Cabinet or DJJ AND placed or financed by the Cabinet or DJJ in an operated or contracted

facility. A child placed or financed by the Cabinet in a private facility pursuant to a child care agreement with the Cabinet is also considered a state agency child. Once this information became clear, KECSAC staff realized we have a legal and fiscal responsibility to ensure SACF are used to meet the educational needs of the specific group of children we are tasked with serving. While we understand that there are many at-risk youth in our schools that need specialized educational services, our funds must be used to assist local school districts with meeting the specific needs of state agency children.

Legislators who crafted the legislation that created KECSAC in 1992 provided a clear definition of which children were to be served. Our governing statutes and regulations focus on a specific group of children and provide a formula to ensure funding is provided equitably to all districts contracted with KECSAC to provide educational services to state agency children. 505 KAR 1:080 specifies that state agency children's funds shall be divided by the number of state agency children and the resulting per pupil amount shall be allocated for each state agency child educated in a program contracted with the local school district. Providing funding for students who are not state agency children reduced the amount available for students who are state agency children.

Starting with the daily membership count in October 2009, the district must verify that a student in the program fits into one of the following categories to receive funding for that student:

- **Committed to or in custody of the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) and placed or financed in a facility operated or contracted by the Cabinet.**
- **Placed or financed in a private facility pursuant to a child care agreement with the Cabinet. (This category may include funding by state Medicaid or other resources within the Cabinet. A child care agreement with the**

Cabinet may include a DCBS child care agreement or a Behavioral Health service provider contract.)

- **Committed to or in custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and placed in a DJJ operated or contracted facility or program.**
 - Official court order to attend program
 - Probated

Most school districts receiving state agency children's funds will see little or no change in the way SAC funds are distributed because every student served in the program meets the legal definition of a state agency child. This means that every child in the program is committed to or in the custody of a state agency and placed by that state agency in a program operated, financed or contracted with either the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

However, districts with programs that service children who do not meet the legal definition as provided by KRS 158.135, such as students referred to the program by the local school district without an official court order, out of state residents, or children who have been placed in the program by a guardian who is paying for the services directly or through private insurance, will see a decline in the district's SAC funds allocation because KECSAC will only provide funding for those students who meet the legal definition.

Our mission continues to be ensuring that our state's most vulnerable population receives a quality education that is equitable to the education provided to all Kentucky public school children. We believe clarifying the definition of state agency children will allow us to better accomplish our mission.

KECSAC organized the 8th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference July 21-23, 2009 at the Perkins Conference

Dr. Adolph Brown, dressed like a stereotypical gang-affiliated youth, talks about the dangers of stereotyping and carrying our biases into the classroom when dealing with at-risk youth.



Center on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University. The conference was designed to provide KECSAC educators, administrators and support staff the skills and resources to successfully meet the various challenges they face daily with Kentucky's at-risk student population.

Dr. Adolph Brown opened the general session as the first keynote speaker. Doc Brown overcame the perils of urban poverty and youth violence with the help of dedicated teachers and an education oriented mother who encouraged him to study hard and work toward a better future. His keynote address emphasized the need for educators to question their assumptions about their students and to challenge each student based on their strengths and interests. The keynote speaker on the second day, Brian Mendler, balanced an inspirational message with practical

classroom behavior management techniques. Kim Geddie, the keynote speaker on the final day of the conference presented a practical approach to differentiated instruction for the evolving classroom. Finally, Eddie Slowikowski closed the conference with a rousing and inspirational speech for educators emphasizing individual commitment to excellence.

In addition to the inspiring keynote addresses, there were forty-eight breakout sessions covering a wide variety of topics, including "Get the Budget Monkey Off Your Back! Team Building to Tailgating...On a Shoestring," "The Philosophy and Practice of Differentiated Instruction" and "Writing for Hope and Community Connections."

One of the most innovative presentations was: "Another Chance at Life and Learning: The DJJ Greyhound Program." Mary Salsman-Buckley brought three of the Greyhound dogs trained by students at Morehead Youth Development Center as part of



KECSAC Director Dr. Ronnie Nolan poses with the DJJ personnel who oversee the Greyhound Rehabilitation program at Morehead Youth Development Center.

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skills lessons to MYDC students. Mrs. Kazez and Mrs. Jones worked together to teach 20 different financial concepts from economics, income, spending and investing, credit, and basic banking. The students were introduced to decision making and economic reasoning including opportunity costs, scarcity and trade off during the first few lessons with an eye opening video clip titled "High Priced Fashion" by John Stossel. Mrs. Brown, Workplace Principles instructor, collaborated by teaching lessons on the job application process, character

and work ethics, and small business opportunities. Students then learned how to calculate payroll deductions in order to figure their take home pay. The students spent some time learning how to shop for credit, auto loans, and mortgages, calculating interest, and being aware of potential scams and schemes. Mrs. Kazez and Mrs. Jones finished with lessons on managing money, check writing, keeping a check register, and insurance needs.

Students were asked to take pre and post

At-Risk Conference

their unique treatment program. The program helps students discover their potential as caregivers and trainers of rescue animals from the dog racing industry.

Dr. Ronnie Nolan was able to offer a 3-credit hour graduate class that accompanied the conference. The course examined successful teaching strategies, training for school teachers and staff, successful at-risk curriculum and instructional design, school climate issues, building student relationships, special education issues, and a variety of educational resources.

With budget crunches across the commonwealth and professional development funds dwindling, the Kentucky Department of Education was able to provide KECSAC with a grant that allowed all two-hundred nineteen participants to attend for free (waiving the standard \$150 fee). This was one of our most successful At-Risk Conferences to date, providing KECSAC educators with useful strategies to take back to their classrooms and the inspiration and fire to do so with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment.

tests in basic business principles, as well as demographics including math skills, as a measurement tool for learning. Awards were given to students in each group for the Most Improved Score and the Highest Class Average. To reinforce some of the concepts presented, in appreciation for their hard work and effort, the students watched the video "Confessions of a Shopaholic". As an extra treat, during "intermission," Mrs. Kazez and Mrs. Jones surprised the girls with the opportunity to make their own ice cream sundaes.

Professional Development

November 11

Critical Issues Series:
Bringing the Classroom to Life
Perkins Conference Center, ECU

February 10-11

Co-sponsoring ECU College of Education
Diversity Conference
Perkins Conference Center, ECU

KECSAC Deadlines

December 2009

1st ADM Report, due 15th
1st Census data collection
15th Census form due in to the
KECSAC Central Office.

January 2010

25th Second Quarter reimbursement
MUNIS report due in to the
KECSAC Central Office.

Autism Training

The Kentucky Autism Training Center is hosting fall regional professional development workshops. The first days of each event will address challenging behaviors of learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and assessment and intervention techniques for practitioners. Day two will focus on components of effective instruction for learners with ASD. Dates, presenters and locations are:

Nov. 9-10, Dr. Rich Mancil and Rob Pennington at Lake Barkley State Resort Park, Cadiz

www.louisville.edu/kyautismtraining

Avenues to Achievement

The Kentucky Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (KASFAA) will host the 2009 Effective Instructional Leadership Training Program entitled "Avenues to Achievement" from Nov. 2-18. This includes 10 free, one-day programs at various locations throughout the state. This will enhance knowledge of college financial aid programs, provide updates from ACT and inform about important services for students. Participants receive a certificate of attendance for six credit hours applicable toward Instructional Leadership Training requirements. Visit the Web site for information about dates, locations and online registration.

www.kasfaa.com/hscouns.asp

Equine Youth Festival

To help promote the upcoming 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games (WEG) and create an awareness of the horse industry and its many career opportunities, schools are invited to attend an Equine Youth Festival on March 19, 2010. This will expose students to the many careers available in the horse industry, which is one of Kentucky's signature industries. Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff also has been working on developing curriculum related to the events of the WEG and the horse in general. More information about quick lessons will be available in the coming months. For more details, contact Pat Trotter at pat.trotter@education.ky.gov or at (502) 564-2116.



KECSAC
104 Case Annex
Eastern Kentucky University
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, Kentucky 40475
452018

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

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Call for Proposals

KECSAC is accepting proposals to present break-out sessions at the 9th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference July 20-22, 2010 in Richmond, KY. We look forward to providing participants with hands-on training conducted by those of you who are doing the important work of educating students in alternative settings. The conference will cover a variety of topics, so proposals on any relevant topic are welcome. If you have found a great way to motivate your students, discovered successful techniques for managing difficult behaviors or developed exciting strategies for teaching a particular subject, we want to give you the opportunity to share those experiences with other educators.

The deadline for submission is April 1, 2010. Please submit proposals to the KECSAC office via mail, email at Katie.Helton@eku.edu. Please include your name, as well as any co-presenters, your title, your program, the name of the workshop and a brief abstract.

Thank you for the work that you do and for helping up make this year's conference a wonderful experience for your fellow educators!