

# The Collaborative



Volume XVIV Issue I Fall 2011

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## Northern Kentucky KECSAC Programs Model Collaboration

Twice a year, the school administrators in Beechwood, Kenton and Campbell counties get together to work collaboratively to improve their programs, share information and resources to network and strengthen inter-district relationships. They meet at one of the programs, rotating between the sites, to tour the facility and to find out what strategies, staff allocations and resources are working. They also share concerns and brainstorm collectively to



find solutions to common problems experienced in state agency programs. The collaboration began with a discussion at a SACSAA meeting about

Interagency Agreements. They found that there were several concerns and issues that they had in common, which led to a discussion around monitoring reports and program improvement in general.

Marinell Kephart, the school administrator at Diocesan Catholic

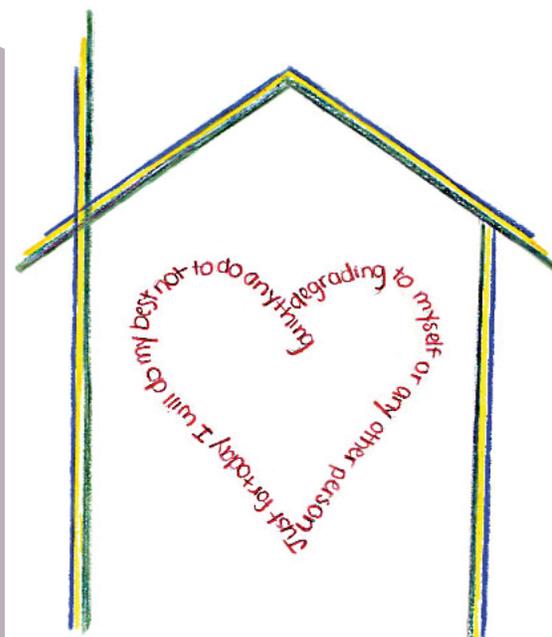
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## "Where the Heart Is" Building Enhanced Services for Transition

Transition can be complicated for all of us. But for state agency children with little or no support groups in place, it can be a truly frightening experience. Transitioning state agency children need additional support structures in place to allow them to thrive in their new school environments. A friendly face or just someone to share life's peaks and valleys could make all the difference for these at-risk students. Research has shown that students who leave state agency programs and go on to be successful usually have someone with

whom they can connect, confide and count-on.

When asked what their biggest fear is, most transitioning youth say that it is moving into a different school environment. To help alleviate this fear, the KECSAC community has developed a transition program called "Where the Heart Is." The concept for this program is simple. A network of caring educators with the common goal of creating a sense of welcome and belonging for our students and a logo that will help youth



Where the Heart Is logo

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Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan

A few weeks ago I traveled down a winding country road to one of our 100 state agency children programs. I admit I hadn't traveled that deep in to the mountains of Eastern Kentucky in quite a while and I was struck by the beauty of the land and the warmth of the people. During my visit I had a chance to talk with a group of students about their experience in the program and the life that had led them to it. That's where I met Ken (name changed to protect his identity). Ken was an especially intelligent young guy, fifteen years old but much wiser than his years. He chatted at length about the state of the education system in our country and went into great detail about his concerns related to the quality of teaching, the future of technology and about how the economy was changing so rapidly that

he was certain the education he was receiving today would not be the same that generations after him would receive. He was rambunctious, feisty even, but you could certainly tell that he was gifted academically. After all, how many fifteen year olds do you know who can speak, with great detail and articulation about the state of education and the impact it will have not just on his generation but on others?

It was during this discussion that I saw something that many of us don't get to see that often. Or perhaps I saw something that we refuse to see because we just can't imagine it. I saw a child, a child in state care nonetheless, who was talented, intelligent, articulate, thoughtful and confident. He could have been any child in a regular advanced placement class. Yet, here he was in a state agency program. A victim of a family structure that didn't support him in the way he needed and deserved. I imagine now that we have many students just like Ken in our programs across the Commonwealth. And I imagine they are facing many of the same challenges: an unstable home environment, involvement with law enforcement, truancy, mental and physical abuse at

the hands of those who are supposed to be caring for them and a multitude of other issues.

After my conversation with Ken, I met with his teachers who talked about his talent, about how they have to push him to work at higher levels academically, about his inquisitive mind and how they challenge him to help him develop his thoughts and world view. These teachers knew about high expectations and they had them. They also knew, from years of experience, that they had to take a chance with Ken so he could change the path that led him to their program. Our teachers, teachers just like these, are working with our most at-risk students every day. They are providing challenging courses, encouragement and support and they are making a world of difference. I am eager to see the new path that has been created for Ken and, quite honestly, I wouldn't be surprised to see him working in educational policy in the future where he won't just be talking about the state of education in our country, he'll be making it.

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

## KECSAC Updates: Phase II of Listen to the Children

Children in the custody or supervision of the state, or state agency children, are one of the most vulnerable populations of youth in the state. Often neglected or abused by their caregivers, usually behind in school, and frequently dismissed by community members as "bad kids," these youth often feel like no one listens to their needs or

thoughts. Since January 2010, in an effort to really listen, KECSAC has interviewed 98 state agency children in 11 different programs and 10 different school districts across Kentucky. In group homes, day treatment programs, residential treatment programs and youth development centers, these youth were asked to share their thoughts on their education, treatment and goals for their future as well as ways to make the program and Kentucky's education system better.

In Phase II of this research project, the audio taped interviews will be transcribed and the process of data analysis will begin. Using qualitative analytical methods, such as coding and identifying themes or patterns, this research project will provide valuable information about state agency children, their adversities, their goals, and their education.

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Children's Home in the Beechwood Independent School District, reflects "We have learned that our own local network is our most valuable resource for information when any of us has a question or concern. Having a face-to-face meeting and making these connections is extremely helpful when addressing the challenges of the students we serve."

She also notes that "we have strengthened our knowledge base concerning the many aspects of alternative programs. A few of our members have also visited programs around the



state that are outside of our region, and reported back to the group. This has also proved to be very enlightening about the vast difference in resources between KECSAC programs."

The northern Kentucky collaborative group benefits from close proximity to each other, making travel easier, but there are several clusters of county and

independent school districts across the commonwealth that might want to consider forming their own collaborative working group. Meeting in person cements relationships and encourages strategy and resource sharing. If you would like help organizing your own regional collaborative working group, please feel free to contact Heather Carpenter ([heather.carpenter@eku.edu](mailto:heather.carpenter@eku.edu) or 859.622.5780) who would be happy to match interested parties in regions across the commonwealth.

## Sonny McManus Voted President-Elect at the Fall SACSAA Meeting

Congratulations to Earl (Sonny) McManus, Jr who was elected SACSAA President-Elect at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fall meeting of the State Agency Children School Administrators Association (SACSAA) in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. This was a special election replacing Farryll Brown, who recently left her position as KECSAC Coordinator to become the Jefferson County Special Education Director. Mr. McManus will serve as President Elect until the March 2, 2012 SACSAA meeting where he will take the reigns as SACSAA President from Garet Wells. Also, at the March 2, 2012 meeting, the SACSAA membership will elect the new SACSAA President-Elect for 2012-2014.

The Fall SACSAA meeting covered a wide range of issues including Best

Practice Site application and selection process, the restructuring of KDE, the New Educators research project, "Listen to the Children" Phase II, Census and ADM Updates, KECSAC's budget initiative and alternative education regulations and proposed legislation. In addition to the general business meeting there were two guest speakers: Jennifer Stafford of KDE and District Judge Earl-Ray Neal.

Ms. Stafford gave a detailed presentation regarding the End of Course Assessments that will be rolling out this school year as part of Senate Bill 1. She reviewed which subjects will be assessed, the testing schedule, the vendor agreements, the assessment format, the scoring guide and how the End of Course Assessments will contribute toward greater accountability. District Judge Earl-Ray



*Earl (Sonny) McManus, Jr who was elected SACSAA President-Elect at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fall meeting of SACSAA.*

Neal presented, "How to Effectively Work with Your Local Judge." He shared his own experiences and philosophy for dealing with juvenile offenders and for providing best for their educational as well as treatment needs. His candor and humor entertained as well as informed the SACSAA membership and more than one school administrator was overheard making plans to get to know their local District Court Judge better as a result of Judge Neal's presentation.

# First Lady Jane Beshear Visits The Providence School

By Jonathan Kleppinger of the Jessamine Journal

The first lady of Kentucky made good on a promise on September 21, 2011, visiting a Jessamine County school she called a “model program.” Jane Beshear asked to visit The Providence School just weeks after meeting Providence School principal Denise Adams at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference awards luncheon on July 19, 2011 where Denise Adams received an administrator-of-the-year award.



*First Lady Jane Beshear talks to The Providence School Principal, Denise Adams. They first met at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference awards luncheon on July 19, 2011 where Denise Adams received an administrator-of-the-year award. (Photo by Jonathan Kleppinger)*

Beshear arrived at the alternative middle and high school in Wilmore just before 1:30 p.m. and was greeted by a line of students at the door. She spoke to those gathered in the lobby before embarking on a tour of the facility. “I think these young people who met me out front are proof that these programs do work, and if we give these children — excuse me,

young people — what they need, then they can be anything that they want to be,” she said. The Providence School is a combined A5 and A6 school where both district referred and state agency children are taught in a smaller and more individually attentive environment.

Beshear spent several minutes with students working on bracelets in Liz Spurlock’s discovery class, even leaving

with a friendship bracelet of her own. She sat in on a “brown-bag” discussion in Mary Lou Mulcahy’s middle-school class, listening to students talk about their summers, their thoughts on school and reading goals.

The Providence School was in the spotlight recently when its composite ACT score for juniors jumped to 16.1 in 2011, up from 15.3 in 2010 and 14 in 2008. The school was named a “best practice site” by the Kentucky Department of Education in 2009 and 2010.

The first lady visited Jessamine Early Learning Village in March and said she was proud of the efforts of the Jessamine County school district on all levels. “You’re meeting the needs of the children here in the community in whatever direction works best for them,” Beshear said.

Beshear is behind the Graduate Kentucky initiative that aims to raise the dropout age to 18 in the commonwealth of Kentucky. She mentioned that effort several times during her tour, saying Providence was a prime example of how schools can tailor learning to students to keep them from dropping out.

Several local government officials were on hand to greet Beshear, including Nicholasville mayor Russ Meyer, Wilmore mayor Harold Rainwater, Jessamine County judge-executive Neal Cassity and state Sen. Tom



*Kentucky First Lady Jane Beshear examined bracelets in a Providence School class with 17-year-old student Virgil Mitchell. (Photo by Jonathan Kleppinger)*



*Kentucky First Lady Jane Beshear talks with a Providence School student about her Origami project. (Photo by Jonathan Kleppinger)*

Buford. School-district leaders were also present, led by superintendent Lu Young and Jessamine County Board of Education chairman Eugene Peel.

After the tour, Adams presented Beshear with a gift of pottery made by a former student and Spurlock. The first lady thanked the school for the gifts but said she would treasure her visit to the school even more.

“This confirms what I’ve been talking about all along, that given the right environment and the right opportunity, all of our children can reach their goals,” Beshear said. “And I am so proud of this school and this administration and the entire Jessamine County area for supporting this and for supporting these young people, because they will be successes. If we can do this all over the state, we’ll change the whole focus for the future of the commonwealth.”



*Kentucky First Lady Jane Beshear takes a picture with a Providence School student. (Photo by Jonathan Kleppinger)*

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identify who those educators are. The word about “Where the Heart Is” is spreading quickly. Many KECSAC programs are already on board with this initiative and across the Commonwealth the logo can be found in many of our regular public schools. To help the program grow within our KECSAC facilities, we ask you to familiarize your students with this logo. Let them know that when they see this logo in another school or facility it means there is someone in that classroom or work area that has made a commitment to listen in a positive and non-judgmental way. The person behind the logo can be counted on to offer a sense of welcome and belonging to our students.

A strong presence of the logo in our KECSAC facilities is a crucial piece in enhancing the statewide effort to ensure that our youth will feel at home in a new school environment. Because state agency children often move from one KECSAC setting to another, we want them to know that we are working together on their behalf and share the desire to see them succeed.

Knowing the meaning of this logo will remind students who transition back to public school that the sense of belonging is not behind them, but can be a part of the new school as well. Research shows that students are often lost within the first three months after transition. Having a caring person to share life’s concerns with could make all the difference for these students.

We encourage all KECSAC facilities to educate our students about the meaning of this logo and become a part of the “Where the Heart Is” transition network.

For the printable logo, brochure, and a complete resource guide including Mission/Vision/Objectives, please visit the KECSAC website at:

**[www.KECSAC.eku.edu](http://www.KECSAC.eku.edu)**

November 7-8

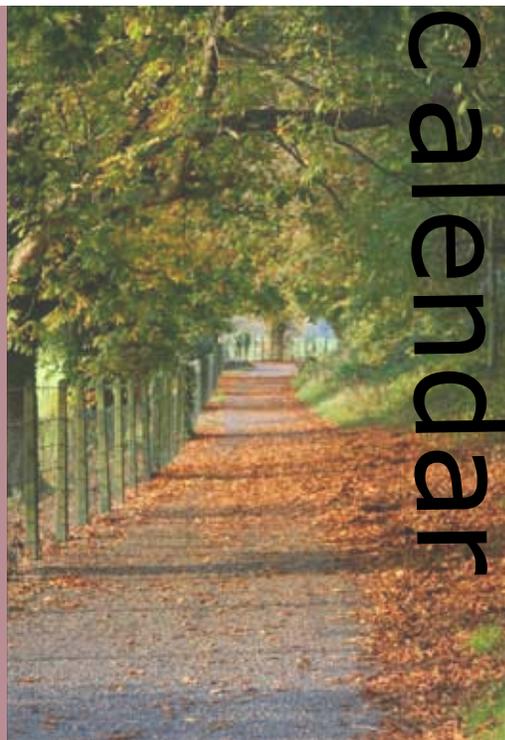
**Co-Sponsoring 17<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Safe Schools - Successful Students  
Galt House East, Louisville, KY**

November 9

**Innovative Strategies Series  
Western Kentucky Regional Location**

November 17

**Innovative Strategies Series  
Jefferson County Regional Location**



**KECSAC Deadlines**

October 2011

- 14<sup>th</sup> ADM Report, due by the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- \*25<sup>th</sup> First Quarter reimbursement MUNIS report due in the KECSAC Central Office.

**Across  
Kentucky**



**CHRISTIAN COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Cumberland Hall Behavioral  
Health Services**

On June 24, 2011, Cumberland Hall had a groundbreaking ceremony for their new 97-bed psychiatric hospital in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. "The new facility will help meet the behavioral health needs of our community," said Jim Spruyt, Cumberland Hall Hospital CEO. "We will provide more specialized

programs as well as provide a number of new jobs for the community."

Through discussions with local and regional mental health providers and Fort Campbell officials, Cumberland Hall identified the present and future needs of the communities it serves. Collaboration with Stengel Hill Architecture Incorporated (SHA), of Louisville and InDesign, of Boca Raton, Florida, has produced a solid and exciting plan for Cumberland Hall's new hospital.

The state-of-the-art facility will add a children's unit, as well as serve adolescents, adults and active duty military. Services will include acute psychiatric, addiction recovery and medical detoxification. Key features include an on-site school, fully-equipped

gymnasium and recreational outdoor space. The project is estimated to be completed in the first quarter of 2012.

**JEFFERSON COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Audubon Youth Development Center**

Regan Leo at Audubon Youth Development Center worked with the organization, Shakespeare Behind Bars in order to bring their innovative program to the students. Shakespeare Behind Bars is the oldest company of its kind in the country using Shakespeare to work with incarcerated youth. Over the course of two-months, 42 students at Audubon YDC participated in this program. Through planning and development with the Superintendent and staff of Audubon to meet the therapeutic needs of the students and

goals of the institution, this program developed into an exciting new multi-discipline arts program. Focusing on the principles of the adult Shakespeare Behind Bars program and using the text of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, the juvenile participants were immersed in an intensive residency that profoundly changed their lives and provided new options, experiences, and ways of thinking and behaving.

Highlights of the Spring 2011 program:

- Screening and discussion of the award-winning Shakespeare Behind Bars documentary kicked off the residency.
- Prejudice Reduction workshops with guest specialist from the Peace Education Program.
- Playwriting workshops with professional, published playwright.
- Student viewing of live performance of *York: Black Explorer of the Louis and Clark Expedition*, allowing students the opportunity to see a professional performance, many had never seen live theatre before, and a positive role model. The performer, Hasan Davis, is also Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice.
- Through special permission from the Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Corrections, juvenile participants submitted written questions to inmates in adult Shakespeare Behind Bars program allowing powerful mentoring and lessons learned.
- Reflective daily journal work by students working through issues and discoveries.
- Students created multi medium visual art works inspired by issues in *The Merchant of Venice*.

The final performance focused on sharing of skills learned, scenes, original writings and performances, visual art, journal work, and testimonials. Guests included J. Michael Brown, Secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet and his staff, Ronald Haws, Commissioner of the

Department of Juvenile Justice, Deputy Commissioner Hasan Davis, plus other Department of Juvenile Justice officials and family and friends of participants. There was also a student presentation of t-shirts and awards for participation.

### JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Maryhurst

Congratulations to MaRi Renn, Art Teacher at Maryhurst! Her project "Creative Technology with At-Risk Teens" won the Gheens Institute award for Creativity and Entrepreneurship. This past year, Ms. Renn focused on differentiated instruction, combining core content with art and technology in order to create CTART or "Creative Technology with At-Risk Teens." Students used technology to take and edit pictures for their Survivors Magazine and even made their own PSA (public service announcement) with MovieMaker—combining technological skill building with reading and writing core content goals as well as treatment. Ms. Renn received the award at the Ali Center on September 15, 2011.

Also at Maryhurst, the teachers and students are excited about some new technology their school has this year. Associate Principal Jill Tabor procured iPads for teachers and students to use in the classroom. The iPads are a new and exciting way to integrate technology into the classroom. There are thousands of educational applications from every content area that can be downloaded to the iPads. The iPads can be used as a whole group supplemental resource to a program or textbook. They can also be used for enrichment and intervention with small groups and one on one instruction. The iPads have created excitement and have dramatically increased student engagement. Many of the students are motivated to learn through the use of the iPads. English Teacher Noah Glass recently used the iPads for teaching

poetry. He downloaded an application called iPoetry which teaches students about various forms of poetry and guides students through the process of creating poems.

### MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Mercer County Day Treatment

Mercer Day Treatment has instituted Jr. Guard program for all high school Day Treatment students. The mission of the Jr. Guard is to mentor high school students by providing realistic short-term and long-term goals. They emphasize life skills, health and nutrition, physical fitness, leadership skills and discipline. Paul Rains, Dean of Students, thinks this program could fill a vacancy in curriculum that has existed for Day Treatment students. "What better program to help our at-risk students who struggle in most, if not all of, the areas mentioned? This is exactly what most of our students need, I can already see our students becoming more confident and doing things they didn't think they would like at first. Especially our young men; they seem to gravitate to this type of discipline. I think the future is very bright for this program within Mercer Day Treatment."

Past results of program have shown:

- Students increased their fitness scores on APFT by 83%.
- Decrease in discipline problems from students in program by 51%.
- Improvement in GPA's and Graduation Rates.
- Increase in sense of pride and self-discipline among Guardsmen in the program.

Sgt. Steven Morgan reflects, "Once students have been in program a little while they realize it is not a punishment, but an opportunity to grow and look at important things from a different angle. They soon feel at ease in course."



KECSAC

104 Case Annex

Eastern Kentucky University

521 Lancaster Avenue

Richmond, Kentucky 40475

452383

Comments: Contact the editor at

(859) 622-5780 or email

heather.carpenter@eku.edu

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