After the passage of House Bill 180 in 2013, the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Board of Education began the task of meeting its requirements which included the establishment of a statewide system of evaluation for all certified personnel, in consultation with teacher and principal steering committees, prior to the 2014-2015 school year.

The Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) was the solution to meet these requirements for Kentucky education. It is designed to create and implement a fair and equitable statewide system of evaluation, to provide teachers and principals with a clear understanding of how they can be most effective, provide regular feedback about how their practices align with the Kentucky Framework for Teaching, and provide the tools, resources, and support they need to develop and perfect their craft in order to promote student growth, achievement, and readiness.

PGES will be used in Alternative School settings as well. These settings, while uniquely different in almost each instance, will apply PGES for both teachers and principals. Due to this fact, a workgroup of A5 and A6 school administrators, Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice representatives, and KECSAC leadership was created to ensure the needs and requirements of principals and teachers in these settings were captured in PGES.

“Over the course of the last year, many of us who work with alternative programs began to realize the original framework, including student growth and voice, had not been taken into consideration for non-A1 schools,” said Paula Stafford, program administrator for KECSAC programs in Rowan County. “The group whole-heartedly supports the use of Danielson’s framework to improve the quality of teaching and move our programs forward. None of us wanted the standards to be lowered, but we did want to be sure program differences were taken into consideration.”

As a result of the workgroup’s efforts certain components of PGES for teachers and principals in alternative settings may look slightly different than in a “traditional” setting. However, all components will still be used and will provide valuable feedback.

School Administrator Dan Belding of Barren County Day Treatment is also a member of this workgroup who wanted to ensure school leaders had a voice in how PGES would be applied in unique alternative settings. “This group allowed principals and directors to voice our concerns and solutions, and it allowed, over a relatively short period of time, for the creation of a very good guidance document for PGES in alternative settings,” Belding said.

Guidance for PGES in Alternative Settings will provide suggestions on how or where PGES may be adapted to better fit an alternative setting. In no way does this...
Dear Friends,

Harry S. Truman had a famous tag line posted on his desk, “The Buck Stops Here!” I think of those words often, especially when we talk about accountability for our students and our work around ensuring every single state agency child has a quality educational experience.

KECSAC and our state partners know how important accountability is to our children. In fact, accountability is a staple of our organization and has been throughout our history. In our efforts to ensure quality educational services are being delivered by our partnering school districts, KECSAC provides annual monitoring of our programs using a comprehensive evaluation process, led by seasoned education professionals with direct experience in alternative learning environments.

We have a long history of working with our partnering school districts to ensure they provide high quality service to state agency children. KECSAC has monitored our programs annually for at least the last 15 years, long before accountability was widely introduced for non-KECSAC programs. As a matter of fact, state agency programs are the only education programs in Kentucky monitored by any outside agency annually.

In addition to annual site reviews, our programs are held to a high level of academic accountability as well. All state agency children participate in the same assessments administered to other public school students, including the state required assessments in grades 3-8, the college readiness tests, the writing on demand tests, and end-of-course examinations. Beyond the state assessments, our children also participate in an initial district administered assessment upon placement in a state agency program. All state agency programs receive annual report cards, just as traditional public schools.

Because we believe all kids, especially those in the care or custody of the Commonwealth, deserve educational opportunities that are of the highest quality, we are committed to holding our programs accountable for educational outcomes that meet the changing needs of our students.

Our continued focus on accountability is necessary to hold us all to higher standards for the improvement of educational outcomes of our students. We know, as educators, administrators, and advocates, that education is one of the fundamental psychological, emotional, and economic drivers for our students. We know they need quality services to lead quality lives and we are in the field, working daily, to make sure our kids have the resources they need to lead lives of great promise and purpose.

Accountability
document purport to be all-encompassing. With the varied settings within alternative schools across the Commonwealth, no document will ever be able to include every situation. Nor is there an expectation that anyone outside the alternative settings will be more insightful or knowledgeable about how PGES might be best applied in any of these settings.

“For example, the student growth piece was of special concern because many of our programs have a typical length of stay 30 days or less. To develop academic goals where ‘proficiency’ would be attained wasn’t realistic,” Stafford said. “Our group has met several times to develop sample student growth goals that reflect different ways student growth may be measured, including enduring skills, concepts and/or processes. These sample student growth goals were sent to KDE, who has been a receptive working partner with us throughout the process.”

This feedback has formed the basis for the Guidance Document in Alternative Settings, which can be found for download online at KDE’s teacher and principal PGES web pages, or from KECSAC’s website at www.kecsac.eku.edu/documents. It is anticipated this document will be a living document. It will be edited as new and more experiences occur in the field that will help shape how PGES can best support teachers and principals in alternative settings.

For more information about PGES in alternative settings, contact Cindy Parker at cindy.parker@education.ky.gov, or the KECSAC office at (859) 622-6552.
New Venue and Interactive Sessions at the 13th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference

Along with a change of venue for this year’s At-Risk Conference came new opportunities to learn about some of the most innovative and exciting youth interventions happening throughout the Commonwealth. The 2014 Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference was held on July 23-24 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort.

This location not only enabled participants to have overnight accommodations in the same venue as the conference, but it allowed KECSAC’s state agency partners to play a more active role in the event. The commissioners of all four partnering agencies were on hand to provide remarks, encourage the educators in attendance, and present awards to outstanding professionals, community members, and students. Teresa James, Commissioner of the Department for Community Based Services, provided opening remarks and welcomed the audience before Charlie Appelstein, renowned youth behavior expert, served as the opening keynote speaker.

Commissioner Terry Holliday of the Kentucky Department of Education spoke to the teachers and administrators during the luncheon awards ceremony and awarded each deserving winner. Department for Behavioral Health, Development and Intellectual Disabilities Commissioner Mary Begley spoke at lunch on the second day of the conference, reminding the audience of the behavioral health needs of all of Kentucky’s at-risk students. Finally, newly appointed Acting Commissioner of the Department for Juvenile Justice Bob Hayter thanked the audience for attending the conference prior to the closing keynote address by Dr. Jane Bluestein, a celebrated classroom management specialist.

In between the powerful and humorous keynote addresses, participants from all over the state attended breakout sessions on topics ranging from classroom strategies and teaching tips to mental health and substance abuse issues. While one group inside was learning about how the DJJ Greyhound Program at Morehead YDC helps students learn valuable life and vocational skills another group outside was exploring how this is also achieved with horses at the Bluegrass Training and Therapy Center. Attendees didn’t have to take the trainers’ words for it – the dogs, horses and students were all present to give hands on lessons about how these innovative programs change lives.

Another innovative program highlighted at the conference was the art curriculum being implemented in the Rowan County School District. Inspirational student art lined the event space, giving conference goers an impactful reminder.
of the talent waiting to be encouraged in their students.

KECSAC would like to thank conference sponsors, the Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice and Community Based services, along with the many talented teachers, administrators, and state agency partners who shared their experiences and passion with colleagues. By connecting and collaborating, we can all continue to work together to provide the best education possible to Kentucky’s at-risk students.

Over 70 teachers, administrators, and state agency partners came together on August 27 to share ideas and strategies for working in state agency children programs. New Educators’ Training is designed to orient new staff in KECSAC programs to the unique challenges and rewards that come along with working with children in the care or custody of the Commonwealth. KECSAC staff along with our partners at the Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice, Community Based Services and Behavioral Health look forward to working with each of our new colleagues in the coming year! We asked a few of our new educators what they were most looking forward to in working with KECSAC programs and here’s what they said...

Jim Sullivan
Teacher
Hardin County Day Treatment
“I’m looking forward to having the opportunity to impact lives in a positive way. So many of the students in KECSAC programs have had negative school and life impacts – they need a new chance.”

Shealonda Unseld-Dorsey
Teacher
Boys’ Haven
“I am looking forward to a great year. I am excited about seeing my kids grow academically, socially and physically. Watching these children transition from childhood to young adulthood is amazing.”

Travis Anderson
School Administrator
Calloway County Day Treatment
“I am most excited about getting to know each student on a personal level so I can have a deeper understanding of their individual needs and how to better meet those needs.”

Kendra Waddell
Teacher
Home of the Innocents
“I am excited to be working with a wrap-around care team that is focused on student growth.”
**CHNK Receives $1.5M Grant for Substance Use Disorder Treatment**

This September Children’s Home of Northern Kentucky was presented with a $1.5 million grant award by State Attorney General Jack Conway and First Lady of the Commonwealth Jane Beshear. The grant, made possible through the KY Kids Recovery Grant Program and the Substance Abuse Treatment Advisory Committee (SATAC), will allow the Home to expand its services to include substance use disorder treatment.

“This grant will enable us to launch new treatment lines and further expand the type of behavioral health treatment we’re already providing through our residential treatment program and the school/community-based Champions program,” explained Chief Executive Officer Rick Wurth.

The KY Kids Recovery Grants were made possible after Attorney General Conway settled cases against two pharmaceutical companies; settlements totaled $32 million, and court orders required that $19 million be earmarked for statewide adolescent substance use disorder treatment. Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear then established the SATAC to oversee the distribution of those funds. The grant awarded to CHNK will provide, in part, the first residential treatment facility in Northern Kentucky that is targeted specifically towards youth battling substance abuse and chemical dependency.

**CHNK and CIPS Launch Innovative Therapeutic Day School Initiative**

In a strategic endeavor to marry traditional academic services with behavioral/mental health treatment for adolescents, CHNK partnered with Covington Independent Public Schools (CIPS) and launched a therapeutic day school this academic year. The day school, housed in the newly renovated historic administration building of CHNK’s Covington campus, provides services for youth who would previously have found themselves in the school district’s alternative school.

“There’s a growing at-risk population of students who struggle in a traditional school setting due to behavioral issues,” Wurth said. “A therapeutic day school on CHNK’s campus will give these students access to an array of treatment services that will help them better navigate both the school day and their home life.”

Such services include individual and group therapies, cognitive behavioral therapy, recreational therapy, substance use disorders treatment, and family therapy. Throughout the school day, CHNK supplies trained therapists to treat students in need of therapeutic interventions, including emotional stabilization and verbal de-escalation.

While there are other types of therapeutic day schools in Kentucky, none are similar to the model being adopted by CIPS and CHNK. Presently, models exist for youth who have already experienced court/judicial involvement, such as with the Department of Juvenile Justice, or have been placed into out-of-home care under the auspices of the Department for Community Based Services. The endeavor at CHNK is a more proactive approach that brings services to at-risk youth even before there has been an opportunity for such involvement. The therapeutic day school also features two self-contained classrooms for use by CHNK’s clients in residential treatment.

“Our goal is to integrate services across systems – specifically, the educational and behavioral/mental health systems – to create a more efficient and coordinated approach for impacting at-risk youth,” said Wurth. “If we can reduce the barriers to success that students in our target population face, we expect to see fewer incarcerations, fewer removals of children into state custody, fewer psychiatric hospitalizations, and the saving of thousands – if not eventually, millions – in taxpayer dollars, while simultaneously improving individual and family functioning.”
Audubon Youth Development Center’s 1st Annual field day for staff and youth was held on July 11, 2014. The day provided a unique opportunity for staff and youth from Audubon YDC, Louisville Day Treatment, Westport Group Home (WGH), Transportation, Detention Alternatives and Community and Mental Health to enjoy activities and lunch. To start the day, 3rd shift staff were provided a breakfast of eggs, bacon, biscuits and gravy, and homemade waffles to show appreciation for all they do.

At 11 a.m., the afternoon activities began with corn hole and volleyball, a feast prepared by Audubon’s very own chef Mr. Cox alongside Mr. Steitz on the grill. Mayor Susan Barto from the City of Lyndon came to help celebrate and donated the desserts for the lunch. After lunch a balloon toss and the much anticipated pie eating contest was held. A resident from Audubon won in the youth contest and Mr. Washington from Community and Mental Health prevailed over Mr. Scott from WGH, Mr. Dandy from Audubon, and Mr. Harris competing for Louisville Day Treatment. Special guest Deputy Commissioner Sherre Smith-Jones participated as judge for the contest.

Lake Cumberland YDC Gives Back

On May 9, 2014, several youth and staff from Lake Cumberland Youth Development Center installed new basketball goals at Wayne County Elementary School. The purpose of this project was to expose students to the concept of restorative justice by allowing them to give back to the community along with addressing playground safety issues and recreational enhancement for the elementary school students. Prior to the installation of the new basketball goals, the elementary students had to travel some distance to another location to play basketball. With the addition of these new goals, the students can now play in a central location which benefits both students and their supervising faculty. The basketball goals were a collaborative effort between Lake Cumberland YDC’s Vocational Welding Department and the facility’s maintenance department. The vocational welding students provided the metal fabrication under the guidance of instructors, Mr. Gary Koger and Mr. T.J. Dishman, while the maintenance department helped with the installation process. The staff of Lake Cumberland YDC would like to thank elementary school Principal, Mr. Stuart York, for allowing the program to return a portion of the support that has been given by this community.

SAFE HARBOR ACADEMY INTRODUCES NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Safe Harbor Academy is proud to offer a direct instruction environment, blended environment, and semi blended environment this year.

“We have some exciting new computer facilitated courses offered through APEX and A+,” Principal Logan Culbertson said. “We also are hosting our math RTI through IXL and reading and language RTI through Achieve 3000, which are both research based and data driven software programs.”

The faculty at Safe Harbor are participating in The Liaison Program this year as well, where they collaborate with content specific cohorts at the middle and high school to ensure access to content, rigor of instruction, and consistently high expectations of student products.

The Academy is also unveiling an aquaponics unit later this fall. Staff are using restorative discipline with students to take advantage of every possible teaching moment. The Community Action Partners committee is hosting a community forum for parents and community members to provide feedback and insight into the employability skills being taught and which students are evaluated on.

“We are further changing our image from being a traditional alternative school to an alternative learning environment,” Culbertson added. “Changing our community’s perspective and our students’ perspective is key to involving as many community stakeholders as possible to come in and connect with our young adults. We are excited and working hard to ensure all of our kids will be college, career, and life ready citizens.”
Calloway County Schools would like to welcome Travis Anderson as the new Principal and School Administrator for Calloway County Day Treatment. Last year Mr. Anderson served as the Assistant Principal at North Elementary and the previous 11 years he worked within the Logan County School system as a physical education and health teacher at a K-8 school. In addition to his teaching responsibilities he coached high school baseball, high school football, middle school football, and middle school basketball.

“I am excited and enthusiastic to get to work with the students and staff here,” Anderson said. “I am looking forward to the challenges and rewards that will come as I learn my new responsibilities.”

Christian County Alternative Programs would like to announce and welcome Mr. Chris Gilkey as the new Administrator for the 2014-2015 school year. Mr. Gilkey has been with Christian County Public Schools since 2001 his previous assignments including: social studies teacher at Christian County Middle School; US history, sociology, criminal justice, African American studies, Christian County history, psychology and AP psychology teacher at Hopkinsville High School; and Assistant Principal at Hopkinsville High School and North Drive Middle School. Mr. Gilkey has also served as the assistant football and basketball coach at Christian County Middle School, and as the H Club sponsor at Hopkinsville High School. All of the Alternative Programs look forward to an exciting year.

Woodsbend YDC Holds Ribbon Cutting After Rebuilding From Tornado Damage

On March 2, 2012 an EF3 tornado touched down in Morgan County heavily damaging or destroying many homes and businesses. The tornado also caused six casualties and left at least 75 people injured. The Woodsbend Youth Development Center campus, which houses at-risk youth, was heavily damaged as well and had to be evacuated immediately following the tornado.

Once the tornado passed, several DJJ employees tried to make contact with the facility to check on the well-being of residents, but were unable to make contact due to phone and power outages. Therefore many DJJ staff attempted to make their way to Woodsbend to assist.

“As superintendent of the facility, I continue to think about all of those who helped that night and the days following the disaster and how fortunate we were that no one was injured,” said Woodsbend Superintendent Brad Lawson. “The department is fortunate to have had that team of staff on duty the evening of March 2, 2012 at Woodsbend.”

As a result of the tornado, Woodsbend rebuilt a three bay storage area and constructed a new administration building, educational workshops, conference room, and classrooms. The project totaled more than $1.6 million and was completed in phases over the past two years.

On July 9, 2014, the facility held a ribbon cutting ceremony. Superintendent Brad Lawson and the Woodsbend staff welcomed to their facility both past and present facility staff members, DJJ staff from across the state, Cabinet Secretary J. Michael Brown, Acting DJJ Commissioner Bob Hayter, Deputy Commissioner Diana McGuire, local and state leaders, the construction company staff, and many other guests who recognize the accomplishments that have taken place at Woodsbend YDC.

“The bravery and professional conduct of the eight staff members on duty that night is a testament to the character of the department and those who work to carry out its mission,” Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary J. Michael Brown stated. “The employees understand that safety for the youth comes first.”
CLEP Cadets Perform Service To Their Community

On March 2, 2014 Cadets at the Cadet Leadership and Education Program (CLEP) participated in “Read Across America” day, which has been established by the National Education Association each year in celebration of Theodor Seuss Geisel’s birthday. Theodor Seuss Geisel is the American writer, poet, and famous cartoonist we all know as Dr. Seuss. The cadets from CLEP traveled to two different local elementary schools on that day to share their favorite books with the young students.

CLEP Cadets and staff also participated in the annual PRIDE cleanup on Tuesday, May 6, 2014. The PRIDE initiative promotes Personal Responsibility In a Desirable Environment in 42 counties in Southern and Eastern Kentucky and the Spring Cleanup season is the chance for citizens to demonstrate personal responsibility by volunteering to pick up litter along roadsides and local tourist attractions. All cadets participated in the cleanup and took great pride in the fact they were a part of picking up over 80 bags of trash along Highway 30 West which leads to the facility. After the cleanup was completed cadets enjoyed a cookout in the park and playing a game of softball.

Are you interested in attending the National Dropout Prevention Network Conference held in Louisville this November? If you work at a KECSAC program we may be able to cover your registration fee in return for help manning our booth or other duties. For more information please email Dr. Ronnie Nolan at Ronnie.Nolan@eku.edu as the scholarships are limited and first-come first serve!
Gateway Children’s Services students have been very eager to participate in “Commit to be Fit”, which is their new fitness and wellness program that has classroom teachers involved as well. Students are learning the value of physical activity in very practical ways and gaining a better understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and eating habits so they can focus on their education and career goals.

The program involves walking/running one to two miles at least two mornings each week. The students also have the opportunity to walk/run an extra mile each day, in addition to weight lifting exercises during their time at the Downtown Athletic Club. Each week they also look forward to their respective exercise classes; girls go to Zumba and boys participate in Boot Camp at local businesses. Firefighters and Paramedics from Montgomery County Fire/EMS have also worked with the students on several occasions by setting up drills for exercise used by the firefighters themselves in trainings.

In class, students have also been learning how to take readily available garden foods and prepare them as well as how to take advantage of price-reduced fruits and vegetables to make healthy smoothies. The program has made arrangements with a nutritionist from the local Kroger in order for students to visit the store and learn how to shop for practical, inexpensive, healthy foods. Following their visit, the students will prepare the food into easy meals.

All the students have been willingly and actively participating and staff report they are already reaping the benefits pertaining to maintaining a healthy mind and body. Gateway Children’s Services attributes the success of “Commit to be Fit” to the generosity of all their community partners and all the time and resources they have donated to the program and students.

Maryhurst Partners with Blackacre Nature Preserve to Create Cross-Curricular Learning

Maryhurst and Blackacre, a state nature preserve and historic homestead in Jefferson County, entered into a collaborative and engaging six week multi-disciplinary educational experience this school semester titled "Harnessing the Healing Power of Nature" from August 28 to October 2.

Maryhurst students attended Blackacre on Thursdays and engaged in a variety of kinesthetic, hands on, and real world learning experiences. Maryhurst and Blackacre staff both worked together in providing the students with cross-curricular activities in the content areas of science, social studies, mathematics, writing, and technology. Each student also used a self-made journal to reflect and write about their learning experiences and how Blackacre relates to their own life and healing process.

Students at Gateway Children’s Services ‘Commit To Be Fit’ With Their New Fitness and Wellness Program

Gateway Children’s Services students have been very eager to participate in “Commit to be Fit”, which is their new fitness and wellness program that has classroom teachers involved as well. Students are learning the value of physical activity in very practical ways and gaining a better understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and eating habits so they can focus on their education and career goals.

The program involves walking/running one to two miles at least two mornings each week. The students also have the opportunity to walk/run an extra mile each day, in addition to weight lifting exercises during their time at the Downtown Athletic Club. Each week they also look forward to their respective exercise classes; girls go to Zumba and boys participate in Boot Camp at local businesses. Firefighters and Paramedics from Montgomery County Fire/EMS have also worked with the students on several occasions by setting up drills for exercise used by the firefighters themselves in trainings.

In class, students have also been learning how to take readily available garden foods and prepare them as well as how to take advantage of price-reduced fruits and vegetables to make healthy smoothies. The program has made arrangements with a nutritionist from the local Kroger in order for students to visit the store and learn how to shop for practical, inexpensive, healthy foods. Following their visit, the students will prepare the food into easy meals.

All the students have been willingly and actively participating and staff report they are already reaping the benefits pertaining to maintaining a healthy mind and body. Gateway Children’s Services attributes the success of “Commit to be Fit” to the generosity of all their community partners and all the time and resources they have donated to the program and students.
Summer Happenings at WRJDC

Summer Reading Program Results In More Than 100,000 Pages Read!

On June 5, 2014, Warren Regional Juvenile Detention Center began their Summer Reading Program with the Warren County Public Library. The students were challenged to participate in this community event, and they accepted with enthusiasm. During the summer read last year WRJDC students read 74,774 pages, and they decided they could do better this year. The program then committed to reading 100,000 pages this summer. However, enrollment numbers were down by about half as many students at the program this summer than last, which meant students would need to read twice as much, but they were up to the challenge. The faculty got involved and the facility staff lends a hand too, which led to WRJDC students reading a grand total of 103,310 pages!

To visualize all the reading accomplished, students constructed three ‘pyramids’ with book cover printouts of material they read. The students considered these structures to be testaments of their reading enthusiasm and determination. During the month of June, all students completed reading “City of Ember,” and during the month of July all students completed reading “The Maze Runner” for book talks. At the conclusion of the challenge students were rewarded with certificates, pizza, and soda for their great accomplishment.

Crosswalk Performers Leave Students With Inspiring Messages

On July 8, 2014, Mr. Kevin A. Engel, the new DJJ superintendent at WRJDC arranged for the group Crosswalk to visit with students. Crosswalk is comprised of energetic individuals who focus on a motivational message delivered through song and skits. This group has been touring detention centers since the 90s with the goal of visiting students to share a message of hope and inspiration.

The presentation addressed practical living skills by focusing on mental and emotional wellness. It highlighted the need for self-sufficiency with a positive self-concept and reinforced the need for being a responsible member of a group by highlighting consistent, responsive, and caring behavior. The songs and skits underlined the need for critical thinking, decision making, and productive problem solving. The Crosswalk performers ended with an emphasis on recognizing and applying multiple perspectives, developing new ideas, and expanding existing knowledge. Their performance provided a valuable distraction from the daily stress found in this challenging setting, which the students enjoyed and appreciated.

Crosswalk performance at WRJDC this summer, leaving the students with an inspirational message that focused on self-sufficiency and critical thinking.
The Collaborative

Register now at www.dropoutprevention.org!

ON TRACK FOR SUCCESS:

26th Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference
November 2-5, 2014, The Galt House Hotel, Louisville, KY

CONFERENCE PARTNERS
The National Dropout Prevention Network • Kentucky Department of Education • Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) • Jefferson County Public Schools • Kent State University • National Center for Families Learning (NCFL)

CONFERENCE FEATURES
Local School Board Member Training • Track for School Administrators Featured Session by the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles USD