Kentucky Educational Collaborative
For State Agency Children

External Evaluation Report 2010
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Executive Summary

2010 KECSAC Evaluation Report

In February, 2010, the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) employed REACH of Louisville, Inc. to perform an external evaluation. The evaluation was one part of KECSAC’s ongoing mission to ensure that state agency children receive a quality education that is equitable to the education provided to all Kentucky public school children. Through the evaluation, KECSAC sought to identify future goals and priorities that would best serve state agency children, learn about the effectiveness of current KECSAC staff in working with state agency programs, and identify areas of needed improvement. Dr. Benjamin W. Birkby, Psy.D. and Margaret Pennington, MSSW, served as the lead evaluators from REACH of Louisville, Inc.

The evaluation rested primarily on emerging methods in qualitative inquiries, which were particularly suited for the types of information of interest to KECSAC. Qualitative methods allow important details about program processes to be surfaced, provide an in-depth understanding of “how” and “why” a program is working, and capture stakeholder perspectives across different levels in a meaningful way.

The following questions provided a guiding framework for the evaluation:
1. How well is KECSAC operating?
2. What services are actually being delivered by KECSAC? To what extent are they aligned with current KECSAC goals and legislative mandates?
3. How well are KECSAC services organized?
4. To what extent is KECSAC management functioning effectively?
5. Are program resources (e.g. staff, technical assistance, training) being used effectively?
6. How can KECSAC better support the needs of state agency programs and state agency children?

Methods and procedures for collecting data included individual, semi-structured interviews with all KECSAC central office staff (including the Program Improvement Specialists), a focus group with members of KECSAC’s Interagency Advisory Group (IAG), the implementation of a validated survey instrument (Wilder Collaboration Inventory) with IAG members to assess current perceptions of collaboration (a key component of KECSAC’s mission), six (6) program site visits (selected using a stratified purposeful sampling approach), and a web-based survey that was made available to all school administrators.

A primary finding from the evaluation points toward an unambiguous conclusion - across multiple stakeholder levels there is a belief that KECSAC is currently operating at a high level, and in large part this was attributed to the knowledge, commitment, and skill of the current KECSAC leadership and staff. Other main findings were similarly affirmative, and show that services being delivered are aligned with current KECSAC goals and legislative mandates, and are well organized. Program resources (e.g. central office staff, technical assistance, training) are largely viewed by state agency programs as high quality, and as being fairly well utilized.

The evaluation also identified suggestions for making additional progress, and these are provided in the body of the report.
Evaluation Findings

Central Office Staff

Central office staff was unanimous in their belief that KECSAC is operating well. Roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined, individuals perform their jobs well, and staff work well together as a team. While staff responsibilities are divided along functional lines (budget/finance, professional development, marketing and development, monitoring, and administration), there is a clear sense of one team, working together to support the State Agency Programs in their efforts to give State Agency Children a quality education.

Division of responsibilities: The positions on the KECSAC team mirror the expectations in the statute and regulations, and include a full time Budget Specialist to assure the timely and appropriate distribution of funds; a full time Training and Technology Support Specialist, to plan and coordinate necessary training and other professional development opportunities; a full time Development and Communication Coordinator, to create and coordinate the distribution of reports, newsletters, and other forms of communication between the KECSAC staff, the State Agency Programs (SAP), and the Interagency Advisory Group; and three part-time Program Improvement Specialists, to monitor the KECSAC funded programs on an annual basis. The Director and Associate Director share supervisory and administrative responsibilities; with the Associate Director responsible for policies and procedures related to the administration of KECSAC funding to local districts, and the Director responsible for the interface with funders, legislators, members of the IAG, and the media. The Director also takes the lead on responding to conflicts between state agency programs and local school district. Workloads allow time for professional development among the KECSAC staff members and time for planning and creative problem-solving. Staff appeared energized, productive and challenged, but not overwhelmed.

Leadership: Without exception, staff expressed appreciation for the collegial work environment and for the leadership of the KECSAC Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan. His knowledge, his commitment, and his leadership skills were universally affirmed. He also is credited with facing and dealing with problems as they become known. Staff feel fortunate to work with him and see him as an effective advocate for the program and the children they serve. His leadership style has enabled the creation of an environment of trust, mutual respect, and shared purpose. Staff commented that their “opinions matter to Ronnie and Kaye” and that they felt respected and valued for the work they do. Dr. Nolan was described by one staff member as a “power sharer”, seeking input from members of his staff and the IAG and engaging them in the decision-making process.

Dr. Nolan has introduced a focus on customer service; and staff seem to have embraced this approach. KECSAC staff, at all levels, express the intent to respond to inquiries and requests for assistance in a friendly, professional, and helpful manner. They strive to maintain this demeanor regardless of the attitude of the caller, and regardless of the number of times the question has been asked. Staff pursue the KECSAC mission of a quality education for all children by supporting the staff that provide educational and treatment services to State Agency Children. This approach seems to have contributed to the building of a relationship characterized by partnership between KECSAC staff and SAP educators and administrators. The fact that this has occurred even with KECSAC’s role in monitoring and assuring the accountable use of state dollars is noteworthy.
Adequacy of Resources and Professional Development Opportunities: KECSAC staff seem to have what they need to do their jobs, from training to supervisory support to essential supplies. In the words of one staff member, when asked if she gets what she needs, she responded “Yes, in a heartbeat. I don’t feel like I’m in this by myself.” Staff are appreciative of the support they receive from the Director and Associate Director to pursue additional training and educational opportunities; and they value the relationship between KECSAC and the University. Staff take advantage of being a part of Eastern Kentucky University by attending classes and workshops sponsored by the University.

Within the past several years, with a full-time Communications and Development Coordinator, KECSAC has improved its print and electronic communications (website, newsletters, and annual reports). They are professional in appearance and content, and are an excellent resource to SAPs and others seeking information about KECSAC.

Monitoring: Monitoring is an essential component of KECSAC’s efforts to ensure that state agency children receive a quality education, that requirements for state agency programs are being met, and that the entity with oversight responsibility for the funds is knowledgeable of how the funds are being used. Unlike other KECSAC staff, the monitors are located in their home community, have a regional “caseload”, and work under a part-time contract. KECSAC has done an effective job of hiring people into the monitoring role (Program Improvement Specialist or PIS) who are knowledgeable and respected by administrators and educators in state agency programs. They also are excellent emissaries for the KECSAC mission to people in the schools.

In spite of having the respect of program staff being monitored, multiple monitoring visits conducted by multiple state agencies have been a long-standing issue for state agency programs. Evaluators asked Program Improvement Specialists about their efforts to have agencies schedule their visits at the same time (a recommendation from the previous evaluation) and were told that, while they tried to coordinate with other agencies, these efforts had minimal success. To accommodate the schedules of the schools, the Program Improvement Specialists establish their calendars of site visits near the beginning of the school year, and confirm with each state agency program administrator the acceptability of the dates for their site visit.

Instead of pursuing a combined monitoring schedule [with the Department of Education (Title I) and the Department of Juvenile Justice], KECSAC has focused its energies on improving their own process. For instance, they have piloted conducting a two-person review. This has led to a better understanding of how each PIS handles the review process. Variances are being identified, and the Specialists are working together to maximize consistency across Specialists and regions and to continually improve the process.

In addition to the efforts to improve the onsite process, the potential impact of monitoring has been enhanced through the requirement for an intervention plan from programs that are not meeting the requirements. This additional step increases the accountability loop between funded programs and KECSAC; assuring that unmet requirements are addressed in a timely way.

Finally, steps were taken to strengthen the relationship between the Program Improvement Specialists and the Interagency Advisory Group (IAG). By including all three Program Improvement Specialists on the Interagency Advisory Board, the Specialists are building relationships with agency representatives across state government and they are gaining an appreciation for the state-level oversight role. Being present when policies are discussed gives the PIS a better understanding of the rationale for any changes in policy and enables the PIS to better explain those changes to program administrators at site-visit time. The IAG benefits from having someone at the table that is in frequent contact with multiple programs.
Continuous Quality Improvement:
Individual KECSAC staff members are well qualified for their positions; and as a team, they seem to be effective and mutually supportive. Their division of labor is responsive to the roles of KECSAC, set forth in statute and regulation. These attributes, combined with their mission-driven approach and the collegiality of the working environment, have enabled them to make numerous and significant improvements to the ways they support State Agency Programs and the children within. One of their strengths is that, while doing well, they want to do better. When asked “how well do you think KECSAC is doing in accomplishing the mission”, there were a number of ideas that, if implemented, were perceived to be strategies for making additional progress. These are listed below. Some are in process, others will require additional funding.

Suggestions for Additional Progress

- Given Dr. Nolan’s leadership skills, his knowledge of KECSAC, his passion for the youth served, and his personal style, staff are optimistic that KECSAC will be more involved in legislative issues in the future. The hope is that legislators will become more familiar with KECSAC and its mission, will utilize KECSAC as a resource on issues related to the education of at-risk youth, and will support the work of KECSAC.
- The need for a comprehensive cost analysis of a State Agency Program was identified. The hope is that such a study would address the issue of whether the funding available for a State Agency Program is sufficient to meet the regulatory requirements, or whether there is a gap that has to be funded by the District.
- Staff mentioned the need for a universal assessment tool, indicating that it is an essential element to measuring accountability. Staff acknowledged the challenge of creating an assessment tool, which would measure point-in-time progress at various times during the year, regardless of the child’s age and grade level. A previous RFA to solicit a vendor to create this tool received no responses.
- Also critical to measuring whether State Agency Programs are meeting their mission of helping youth achieve educational goals are location codes for all KECSAC programs. Without individual location codes, to be used in Infinite Campus, it is not possible to note the progress of an individual child DURING his/her time within the specific state agency program. Dr. Nolan is currently working with the IAG and KDE to bring about this change.
- An interest in developing a “safe harbor” logo and capacity was identified as a potential resource for youth in transition. The “capacity” would involve the identification of one person in every school who would be the “welcoming face” for a state agency child who is returning to the regular classroom from a state agency program. Youth would be informed of the existence of such an individual and the logo that would identify them.

As staff thought about other areas that might benefit from enhanced attention in the future, they listed the following.
- Additional resources for such things as higher quality paper, a bigger budget for the purchase of high resolution photographs, and funds for professional printing.
- Development of a data base that is adequate to the needs of the Communications and Development Coordinator. The development of such a data base is underway, but the product is not fully functional. There was some thought that someone with greater technical expertise might be needed.
- Renewed effort to train new IAG members, as some of the longer-serving members will eventually rotate off.
- Continuing efforts to build relationships with state agency programs, through non-monitoring site visits, other forms of communication, and the quality and responsiveness of our services.
- Continuing focus on making the most effective use of the IAG. Significant strides have been made in this area, with the IAG involved in every new policy or policy revision. The consistent, committed involvement of all agencies is desired.
- Suggestion that every KECSAC staff member participate in at least one monitoring visit (with the assigned Program Improvement Specialist), to introduce the Central Office staff to more programs and to have them experience the monitoring process.
Evaluation Findings

IAG Focus Group & Wilder Inventory

Current Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) membership is comprised of longer-term, seasoned members (10-12 years) and newer members (1 - 3 years) that meet legislative requirements. Recently, the Program Improvement Specialists (PIS) and the SACSAA President Elect have been brought in as members. The IAG is currently holding regular quarterly meetings, and they are also involved in an annual KECSAC retreat.

IAG members described working within the overall purpose/mission of KECSAC though state-level collaboration on a variety of issues. In large part, members see their role as advocating for state agency children, and supporting the programs that serve them, by bringing to bear relevant information from their own agency to the IAG. A current focus has been on the definition of State Agency Children, and the implications this has for program funding and service provision.

Additionally, IAG members described that attendance and participation at their meetings has improved greatly over the past two years, and attributed much of this directly to the recent change in KECSAC leadership, which has helped the IAG to enjoy:

- increased involvement in decision-making (e.g. definition of state agency children)
- meaningful agendas
- increased role in the monitoring of programs that consistently fail to improve, and
- collaborative advocacy.

As one member stated, “Our meetings used to be ceremonial, now it’s much more of a working group.”

IAG members perceive that KECSAC leadership is functioning very effectively.

Dr. Nolan and his staff were described as “exemplary,” “extremely knowledgeable,” “responsive,” “very proactive,” “focused on customer service.”

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

This questionnaire is designed to assist collaborative groups in identifying strengths and areas of concern based on twenty factors that research has identified influence the success of collaboration. General interpretive guidelines for factor scores are as follows:

- 4.0 or higher show a strength and probably do not need special attention
- 3.0 to 3.9 are borderline and should be discussed by the group
- 2.9 or lower reveal a concern and should be addressed

Noted collaborative strengths for the IAG:

- Skilled Leadership (4.75)
- Open and frequent communication (4.46)
- Shared Vision (4.38)
- Flexibility (4.38)
- Unique purpose (4.31)
- Concrete, attainable goals (4.25)
- Appropriate pace of development (4.25)
- Mutual respect, trust (4.13)
- Appropriate membership (4.13)
- Favorable political and social climate (4.1)
- Members see collaboration as in their self-interest (4.38)
- Established informal relationships and communication links (4.31)

Areas identified as borderline for the IAG:

- Adaptability (3.94)
- Development of clear roles and policy guidelines (3.94)
- Members share a stake in both process and outcome (3.92)
- Ability to compromise (3.75)
- Multiple layers of participation (3.75)
- History of collaboration or cooperation in the community (3.69)
- Collaborative group seen as legitimate leader (3.44)
- Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time (3.0)

No areas identified were identified as a concern for the IAG.

Suggestions from the IAG

- Focus on a potentially underserved population of state agency foster children, who are not likely being served by KECSAC programs.
- Provide an overview of KECSAC to new Department leadership across state agency partners.
- Continue to reinforce the connection between SIAC and KECSAC.
- Develop an intentional communication plan with KECSAC programs.
- Expand the KECSAC community by making presentations to other groups.
- Consider adding a youth and family member to the IAG, or create a community of youth and parents.
- For some program types (e.g. contracted day treatment), there may be a need to focus more on the treatment aspect of services; there is a general need to achieve a better balance between education and treatment and to increase relevant trainings in this regard to increase awareness (e.g. mental health for educators, education for treatment professionals, specific topical areas - grooming, anxieties, phobias).
- Set reasonable goals and remain centered on what KECSAC values most:
  - Academic success of state agency children
  - Program improvement
  - Supporting successful student transitions
  - Securing continued funding adequate to get the job done

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Evaluation Findings

Program Site Visits

One of the aspects of the evaluation involved site visits to selected programs (see page 8*). In order to make these selections, a stratified purposeful sampling approach was used, in which two programs were identified from each region. Program Improvement Specialists (PIS) were asked to select two programs each from their respective regions, paying special attention to selecting programs that likely had differing experiences with KECSAC (e.g. large/small programs). The important idea was to gather information from programs that might have potential variation in their encounters with KECSAC. In addition to gathering primary data for the evaluation, program sites were also asked to help evaluators craft questions for the web survey that was later conducted with all program school administrators. The program site visit protocol is included in the appendices.

The overall judgment from program sites is that KECSAC is a well run organization that has improved over recent years. Most site administrators seemed to have a good relationship with the previous director at KECSAC, but each one felt that the agency had improved under the direction of Ronnie Nolan. He was praised for increasing the frequency of communication, dealing fairly and openly with difficult issues, skilled public speaking, and for being quick to answer any question. One respondent stated that, "I always get an answer - even if it isn't what I want to hear."

All other office staff were noted to be responsive and pleasant. Program staff believe that KECSAC does an outstanding job in most areas, with only minor points they would like to see changed. While these complaints primarily center on budget concerns, they do not seem to have harmed the existing relationship between KECSAC management and the programs.

Each of the six programs praised KECSAC management for quickly responding to any concerns from the field and working with the programs on tough issues that arose. Programs were also very appreciative of the general support provided by KECSAC when special projects had been undertaken.

Monitoring: For most programs, the yearly visit is their primary interaction with KECSAC staff. Overall, the relationship between program managers and KECSAC Program Improvement Specialists seems to be very good, with some of the programs commenting that they actually looked forward to the visits. Typical comments made about the specialists included:

"XXXX doesn't come in with a 'gotcha' attitude"

"XXXX is flexible in letting us keep our paperwork with what works for us"

"XXXX spends the right amount of time with us"

Feelings were mixed about whether the current monitoring standards were excessive or not, and how improvements could be made. Since mostly high-achieving sites were visited, the majority of complaints pertained more to paperwork requirements. While some programs believe that the amount of paperwork involved in a visit is appropriate, several others would like to see a major reduction in that aspect of the visit. Specific complaints included redundant items between sections of the primary program improvement tool used by Specialists, especially items that do not apply to specific types of sites (day treatment vs. residential).

Comments included:

"I don't think they realize how much time we spend in paperwork."

"I don't have time to put in the effort needed."

It was proposed that program administrations have some say in the creation of standards to help ensure they worked well for different types of programs.

One individual suggested that the current site visit system be modified to take into consideration the amount of time spent at a site based on size and performance. The question was asked, why the same full day visit was appropriate for every site considering the ranges in program size. Also, programs that received lower scores in previous visits may warrant more time than those that have had consistently high scores. Another suggestion was to change the Specialists who come to a site or perhaps have more than one Specialist for some visits (this is currently happening in some sites). The point was made that after multiple years of visits a Specialist could lose some of his/her objectivity. Conversely, it was noted that having the same Specialist visit each year increased the level of knowledge that Specialist had about the program, thus contributing to a more meaningful evaluation.
The methodology of a site visit may vary somewhat between regions. It was noted that perhaps some program sites receive random records checks while others are allowed to pre-assemble binders of records. It was mentioned that non-randomized records checks raise the possibility of a site “gaming” the system by only following the guidelines on records that will be seen during a site visit. As an example, a couple of program sites mentioned that the paperwork coming from other KECSAC programs for student transfers was insufficient, and expressed surprise that those programs had passed their own site visits. Infinite Campus was brought up several times as a recent improvement to the situation with record transfers; however, they also thought that it would be helpful to have KECSAC enforce proper data entry procedures within the Infinite Campus system.

One program felt that it would be beneficial for site visit scores to be provided in comparison to regional and state-level aggregate scores, so that each program could see how they perform relative to others. They also noted that this might add some transparency to the monitoring process between different regions.

A couple of the programs mentioned that in the past they had relied on KECSAC to help mediate various problems. In the words of one administrator: “I always keep KECSAC aware of certain situations and issues.” In those cases they found KECSAC staff to be helpful and attentive to the circumstance. Most programs, however, do not think of KECSAC as providing any sort of mediation support and would be interested in hearing more about the ways in which KECSAC could help them in difficult situations.

Training & Dissemination: One KECSAC initiative for which there was repeated praise was the summer conference. The quality of speakers and materials were mentioned numerous times and program staff found it to be both informative and entertaining. The only complaints came from those who could not attend due to time/travel constraints. Those who have received new teacher training through KECSAC in recent years had similarly high praise, finding it an appropriate introduction into the specific needs of the KECSAC student population. There was a recommendation for multiple levels of new teacher training (basic/advanced) as teachers coming into the program could have a large range of experience.

For those programs not within 2-3 hours of Richmond, there was some frustration at the time and cost associated with attending KECSAC events. One respondent noted, “what they offer is great but getting there is the hard part.” Most programs were understanding that KECSAC had its own budget constraints to work within, but they would like to see as many regional events as possible. Web-based meetings and trainings are seen as a great solution by some and a poor replacement by others. One program recommended that KECSAC set aside part of the funding to each program specifically for professional development, but most other programs preferred to use their funds as they saw fit.

Recommendations for specific trainings included:
- Restorative model in working with students
- Trauma-infused therapy
- Side effects of medications
- Adult conflict resolution training

All interview participants were complimentary of KECSAC’s web site and report publications. For those who are responsible for KECSAC paperwork, they could find all the necessary forms easily online and the contact directory was mentioned multiple times to be a helpful time saver. One proposed improvement for the web site was an updateable page for each KECSAC program where they could post information, including things like photos and an expanded description of the services available. Many of the front-line staff admitted that they did not regularly read the newsletters or annual reports, but one teacher said that an annual report “opened my eyes to the disabilities and special needs of the population in the school.”

Funding: The recent decision to reclassify/ enforce the definition of state agency children was a major topic of discussion during the site visits. The programs that stand to lose the most funding are worried about the future of their programs and stressed the lack of similar programs to meet the needs of their community. Despite this, they uniformly felt that KECSAC management had handled the situation in an open and honest fashion. The majority of programs visited for this report will see only a mild impact on their bottom line.

The other funding issue that arose during the interviews related to the current system of a three times yearly census to determine the funding amount of each program. About half of the programs indicated that three was a good number of times to check the census; the rest were divided between those who wanted more checks and those who wanted fewer. One program administrator indicated that they were currently receiving less funding...
than they should, based on one unusually low census; but another program administrator had a similar issue and resolved it by working with KECSAC management to average previous months.

Suggestions for Additional Progress

- Consider the appropriateness of distributing monitoring resources based on school size and achievement level (e.g. schools doing well wouldn’t need a full visit each year).
- Review and consider revision of standards that don’t apply to all school types (e.g. residential sites in particular mentioned the homework requirement was nearly impossible for them to meet).
- Consider including program/school administrators in the creation of documentation requirements.
- Consider instituting random records checks in all site evaluations so that the program doesn’t control what the evaluator sees (if this is not already happening).
- Try to reduce redundancies and repetition noted across standards and requirements from different organizations.
- Consider notifying all programs about the ADM Appeal Process, as it may not be common knowledge among sites.
- Expand web-based trainings but continue to offer regionally-based in-person trainings.
- Consider incorporating multiple levels (beginner v. advanced) of training into current offerings.

* Programs included Calloway County Day Treatment, Cumberland Hall/Sivley House, Ramey-Estep High School, Sunrise Children’s Services Morehead Center, Bullitt County Day Treatment, & Bellewood.
Evaluation Findings

Web Survey of School Administrators

In late May 2010 a web survey was conducted with school administrators from all KECSAC programs. Information about the survey was disseminated via email from the KECSAC central office. In this email, KECSAC leadership encouraged participation in the survey, set a deadline for completion, and offered each program that completed the survey within 3 working days the chance to win a Kendall Book Reader.

In all, 36 program sites participated in the survey (out of 101 total programs). Thus, while the results are useful they are not representative of all KECSAC, school administrators. Evaluators tracked responses by zip code, and this is displayed in the graphic below to give a sense of geographic representativeness.

Results from open-ended questions

What is one specific suggestion you have for improving upon the current monitoring process?

The most common suggestion among school administrators was to differentiate between different types of programs, including allowing “different measures of success based on program mission” and having “different areas of accountability by type of program.” Also, many respondents felt that the monitoring process was overwhelming, and could be improved by making it a simpler, more streamlined process. For example, eliminating repetitive documentation, creating more definitive standards, and removing some potentially unnecessary standards and indicators were mentioned. Another common suggestion was the need for more explanation on the part of program monitors regarding program and facility deficiencies. A few respondents noted that allowing more time for one on one conversation, instituting formal follow-up sessions, and “sharing what monitors have learned and observed from other facilities” would be beneficial. A few respondents suggested that the monitoring should occur at the end of the school year, as opposed to the beginning. Other suggestions included alternating monitors every two years, inviting current state agency administrators to be a part site visits, scheduling various monitoring agencies (DJJ, Title 1, KECSAC) to monitor site visits together and utilize the same monitoring tools, and more training/preparation for the monitoring process.

Would you prefer regionally-based (in person) trainings or online/webinar trainings? Please explain why.

Response to webinar/online vs. regionally-based in-person training was about half and half. Many respondents stated that online training was an appropriate way to save money and to avoid having to leave their facility for an entire day at a time; many participants also responded that webinars were a smart and convenient alternative to in-person trainings. However, various other participants noted that they preferred in-person trainings because of the opportunity to network, have personal interactions, and ask questions. Also, many of these participants expressed concern that people may not pay attention when participating in a webinar.

How can KECSAC better support the needs of State Agency Programs?

Overwhelmingly, School Administrators mentioned that KECSAC could better support the needs of State Agency Programs by securing proper funding. Other suggestions included creating a centralized KECSAC office to hold records of State Agency Children (in hopes of creating a better
records system), become more involved in grant activities and interventions, creating a state-wide assessment instrument, and implement an online curriculum for children constantly moving. Notably, many survey participants stated that KECSAC was already doing a great job of supporting the needs of State Agency Programs.

What future goals and priorities should KECSAC embrace, in order to best serve state agency programs?

Common participant responses included continuing to secure funding for KECSAC programs, continuing to advocate on behalf of State Agency Children, and to implement better general record management for State Agency Children. Other responses included organizing KECSAC activities for students across the state, helping in removing academic barriers for State Agency Children, increase training, implement at least partial funding for non-State Agency Children attending programs, and ensuring compliance and uniformity in all State Agency Programs.

### Results from scaled questions

The materials published and disseminated by KECSAC (e.g. quarterly/annual reports, The Collaborative Newsletter) are beneficial.

- 88.9% of participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed
- 5.6% of participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed
- Two participants responded Neutral/No Opinion

I am satisfied with the schedule for conducting average daily membership counts (currently 3 times per year).

- 74.3% of participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed
- 22.9% of participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed
- One participant responded Neutral/No Opinion

There is an open line of communication with KECSAC.

- 91.7% of participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed
- 5.6% of participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed
- One participant responded Neutral/No Opinion

My interactions with Central Office Staff are friendly and polite.

- 91.7% of participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed
- 5.6% of participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed
- One participant responded Not Applicable

Overall, I have a satisfactory relationship with the Program Improvement Specialist (monitor) assigned to our program.

- 86.1% of participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed
- 5.6% either Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed
- Two participants responded Neutral/No Opinion and one responded Not Applicable
Conclusion

All methods of inquiry (individual interviews, focus groups, site visits, and web-based surveys) yielded an overwhelmingly positive response to the guiding evaluation questions regarding the effectiveness and responsiveness of KECSAC’s leadership and administrative staff.

- Central office staff was unanimous in their belief that KECSAC is operating well. Roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined, individuals perform their jobs well, and staff work well together as a team. While staff responsibilities are divided along functional lines (budget/finance, professional development, marketing and development, monitoring, and administration), there is a clear sense of one team, working together to support the State Agency Programs in their efforts to give State Agency Children a quality education.

- These attributes, combined with their mission-driven approach and the collegiality of the working environment, have enabled them to make numerous and significant improvements to the ways they support State Agency Programs and the children within. One of their strengths is that, while doing well, they want to do better.

- Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) members described that attendance and participation at their meetings has improved greatly over the past two years, and attributed much of this directly to the recent change in KECSAC leadership, which has helped the IAG to enjoy:
  - increased involvement in decision-making (e.g. definition of state agency children)
  - meaningful agendas
  - increased role in the monitoring of programs that consistently fail to improve, and
  - collaborative advocacy

- The overall opinion of administrative and educational staff during visits to program sites was that KECSAC is a well run organization that has improved over recent years. Program staff praised Dr. Ronnie Nolan for increasing the frequency of communication, dealing fairly and openly with difficult issues, skilled public speaking, and for being quick to answer any question.

A primary finding from the evaluation points toward an unambiguous conclusion - across multiple stakeholder levels there is a belief that KECSAC is currently operating at a high level, and in large part this was attributed to the knowledge, commitment, and skill of the current KECSAC leadership and staff.
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Central Office Staff Interviews

Respondent information

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<th>Role:</th>
<th>(Full/Part time)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number hrs/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. yrs. at KECSAC</td>
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Date: 

1. Tell me a little bit about your role at KECSAC, and the duties and responsibilities you have. How do you spend the majority of your time?

   Approximate percent of time in:
   ___ Training
   ___ Providing or Arranging for Technical Assistance
   ___ Administering the funding (application review; payment processing)
   ___ Monitoring and Evaluation
   ___ Supervision
   ___ Working with interagency partners (state/community level)

2. Do you "get what you need" in order to do your job well? Are your particular skills and knowledge being used effectively? How can they be maximized?
Appendix A (continued)

3. To what extent do you believe KECSAC management (central office) as a whole is functioning effectively? Are there ways in which operations in the office could be improved? Does a lack of resources negatively impact KECSAC’s ability to work effectively?

4. [First briefly review the Mission and primary Goals of KECSAC] In thinking about the mission and goals of KECSAC at a broad level, how well do you think KECSAC is doing in accomplishing the mission? In reaching its broad goals? Are there areas of particular strength or weakness? Which elements may need more attention?

5. What is your general sense of how state agency program administrators/educators view their relationship with KECSAC staff? If it is positive: What do you think has contributed to that relationship? Has it always been that way? If it is negative: What thoughts do you have for improving that relationship?

6. To what extent are you involved with the IAG? How well does the IAG seem to be functioning? Is it your sense that interagency collaboration is apparent among the statewide partners? What is their current focus?

7. To what extent are you called upon by program administrators/educators to assist with a conflict/issue involving the school district or another school? Have you been in a position to help resolve the issue? To what extent did you use the IAG (or individual members of the IAG) as a resource?
Appendix A (continued)

8. To what extent are training and technical assistance support services used by the state agency programs? How does KECSAC encourage their use? Is the website well utilized? Are there any feedback mechanisms in place for improving either the training and TA, or the website? If so, what feedback has been suggested?

9. How can KECSAC better support the needs of the IAG or state agency programs?

10. What future priorities and goals should KECSAC embrace, in order to best serve SAC?

Additional questions for Program Improvement Specialists

11. In your role as a PIS, do you believe you are able to meet the needs of educators and administrators?

12. How do you balance the possible competing roles of “monitor” and “support/resource broker”?

13. What, if any, recommendations re: monitoring from the 2005 evaluation have been embraced by KECSAC (streamlining, integrating, documentation, etc.)?
Appendix B - IAG Focus Group Questions

KECSAC IAG Focus Group Questions
4-13-2010
Safe Harbor Academy

1. About how long have you each served on the IAG? Are you able to attend meetings as often as you’d like? How often does the IAG meet?

2. In your own words, how does the IAG work within the overall purpose/mission of KECSAC? How do you provide support and consultation to KECSAC? What has been your current focus?

3. Are you familiar with the KECSAC external evaluation done in 2005? [Review main findings related to IAG]. To what extent were the recommendations about clarifying the role of IAG members embraced? Are you involved in meaningful work that is engaging?

4. To what extent has the IAG been involved with the recommendations that called for improving the monitoring system? For improving transitions for SAC?
Appendix B - (continued)

5. To what extent have you been called on to assist with a conflict/issue involving a local school district or another group? Have you been in a position to help resolve the issue?

6. Do you get what you need from KECSAC management in order to do your job well? Are your collective skills and knowledge being used effectively? How can they be maximized?

7. How do you think the LEA’s perceive the IAG?

8. To what extent do you believe KECSAC management as a whole is functioning effectively? Are there ways in which operations could be improved? Does a lack of resources negatively impact KECSAC’s ability to work support the IAG?

9. In thinking about the mission and goals of KECSAC at a broad level, how well do you think KECSAC is doing in accomplishing the mission? In reaching its broad goals? Are there areas of particular strength or weakness? Which elements may need more attention?
Appendix B - (continued)

10. What is your general sense of how state agency programs administrators/educators view their relationship with KECSAC staff? If it is positive: What do you think has contributed to that relationship? Has it always been that way? If it is negative: What thoughts do you have for improving that relationship?

11. To what extent are training and technical assistance services used by SAP’s? How does KECSAC encourage their use? Is the website well utilized? Are there any feedback mechanisms in place for improving either the training and TA, or the website? If so, what feedback has been suggested?

12. How can KECSAC better support the needs of the IAG, or SAPs?

13. What future priorities and goals should KECSAC embrace, in order to best serve SAC?
Appendix C - Program Site Visits Interview

Program Site Visits

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<th>Name of Program Site:</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of person:</th>
<th>(Full/Part time)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number hrs/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. yrs. at program</td>
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1. Tell me a little bit about your role at [program site], and the duties and responsibilities you have. How do you spend the majority of your time?

2. Do you “get what you need” from KECSAC in order to do your job well? If so, can you provide some examples? If not, can you describe what you aren’t getting that you need?

3. To what extent do you believe KECSAC management (central office) as a whole is functioning effectively? Are there ways in which operations in the KECSAC office could be improved?
4. [First ask for their thoughts about the Mission and primary Goals of KECSAC] In thinking about the mission and goals of KECSAC at a broad level, how well do you think KECSAC is doing in accomplishing the mission? In reaching its broad goals? Are there areas of particular strength or weakness? Which elements may need more attention?

5. What is your general sense of how state agency program administrators/educators view their relationship with KECSAC staff? If it is positive: What do you think has contributed to that relationship? Has it always been that way? If it is negative: What thoughts do you have for improving that relationship?

6. To what extent are you familiar with the Interagency Advisory Group (IAG)? How well does the IAG seem to be functioning? Is it your sense that interagency collaboration is apparent among the statewide partners? What is their current focus?

7. To what extent have you received help from KECSAC with a conflict/issue involving your program site? Did KECSAC help resolve the issue?
8. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “very little” to 5 being “a lot”, to what extent does your program use the training and technical support services offered by KECSAC to state agency programs? Do you think other programs have a similar level of use? How does KECSAC encourage the use of these training/support services? Is the website well utilized? Are there any feedback mechanisms in place for improving either the training and TA, or the website? What feedback might you suggest?

9. How can KECSAC better support the needs of state agency programs?

10. What future priorities and goals should KECSAC embrace, in order to best serve state agency children (SAC)?

11. [Tell them we will be creating a web-based survey to get input from all of the programs, regarding KECSAC’s role in supporting their work with state agency children]. Are there particular questions you think we should definitely include on the survey?
Appendix D - Web Survey Questions

Online Survey Questions for State Agency Program (SAP) School Administrators

Please rate your agreement with the following statements
[These questions had a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 to 5, with 3 = Neutral/No opinion - there was also an option for Not Applicable]

1. The materials published and disseminated by KECSAC (e.g. quarterly/annual reports, The Collaborative newsletter) are beneficial.

2. I am satisfied with the schedule for conducting average daily membership counts (currently 3 times a year).

3. There is an open line of communication with KECSAC.

4. My interactions with Central Office Staff are friendly and polite.

5. Overall, I have a satisfactory relationship with the Program Improvement Specialist (monitor) assigned to our program.

Please answer the following open-ended questions.

6. What is one specific suggestion you have for improving upon the current monitoring process?

7. Would you prefer regionally-based (in person) trainings or online/webinar trainings? Please explain why.

8. How can KECSAC better support the needs of State Agency Programs?

9. What future goals and priorities should KECSAC embrace, in order to best serve state agency children?