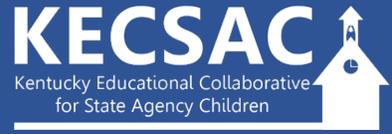


Recommended Practices for Improving Educational Outcomes in State Agency Programs



KECSAC is committed to ensuring that state agency children receive a quality educational experience comparable to all Kentucky students. To that end, we recommend that the following practices be implemented in your programs. Through our collaborative partnerships with multiple state agencies we recognize that programs are developed to meet a wide variety of student needs and that may limit the ability to fully implement some of these recommendations. We also recognize that educational practices are multi-faceted, diverse and not fully encompassed in this non-exhaustive list, however, when fully implemented, the following recommendations should improve educational outcomes for all state agency children.

- **Curriculum**
- **Online Curriculum**
- **Student Instructional Plan**
- **Transition**
- **Early Graduation**
- **Behavior Management Plan**
- **Incentive Program Guidance**
- **Safe School Assessments**
- **Facilities**
- **Personnel**

Curriculum

- During the state-required six-hour minimum instructional day students should be actively engaged in coursework, making progress towards earning credits and be under the supervision of a certified teacher.
 - Exceptions to this are day treatment programs, who are required to provide a minimum of two hours of group and one hour of individual counseling per week.
 - Other programs should make every effort to protect the instructional day for students and schedule any non-academic services after the school day.

Online Curriculum

- Provide active monitoring of student progress to ensure mastery of subject content is being met.
- Credit Recovery describes a wide variety of educational strategies and programs that give high school students who have failed a class the opportunity to redo coursework or retake a course through alternate means—and thereby avoid failure and earn academic credit. Credit recovery SHOULD NOT be a substitute for taking the original course.
 - For over-age under-credit students (i.e. students who are one or more grade levels behind for their age) credit recovery may be an appropriate tool for closing the credit deficiency in an effort to help them move to the appropriate grade level for their cohort.
- Pacing should be comparable to a standard A1 school classroom (district pacing guide)
 - Students who use online curriculum to accelerate their graduation process should be a rare exception, not the norm.
- Develop guidelines to ensure that students are actively participating in the educational process (reading the lesson, taking notes if necessary, limiting retakes, no skipping straight to tests, completing all components of the lesson including essay questions, compositions, etc.)
- Online Curriculum should be supplemented with the following:
 - blended learning opportunities (i.e., CNN 10 news, science labs, bell ringers and exit slips)
 - direct instruction

- whole group instruction (common elements occur across grade level and content areas as review, enrichment, or instruction)
- Project-based learning (hands-on learning activities tied directly to the curriculum)
 - ⇒ This can be cross-curricular/school wide (i.e. school fair, living museum, literacy fair, etc.)

Transition

- **Intake:**
 - Request records in a prompt manner.
 - Conduct a student interview and orientation of policies and procedures.
 - Meaningful pre-assessments should be completed as soon as possible upon enrollment.
 - Immediate enrollment or update of student records in Infinite Campus (student schedule, etc.).
 - Student schedules should be developed based on the graduation requirements for their particular cohort.
 - Review student transcripts to determine possible credits for accuracy.
 - Review student transcripts to ensure all graduation requirements are being met (i.e., classes, civics test, financial literacy, essential workplace skills, technology competency, lab-based science classes, etc.).
- **Enrolled:**
 - Track student grades and progress in Infinite Campus or by other trackable and shareable means that follow the student.
 - While enrolled, students should know the courses they're taking, how many credits they have, and should be able to articulate and know where to find their academic records.
- **Exit:**
 - Send student records to receiving school immediately (law requires records to be sent within five days but recommended practice is same day), including current grades and student progress in each class.
 - Contact receiving school to make a smooth transition (discuss current classes, progress, triggers, what works, etc.) including follow-up when possible.

- When possible provide students with helpful documents to make a smooth transition (transition, schedule, current grades, who to see at the receiving school, other appropriate info or data, etc.).
- Districts should follow all post-assessment requirements of partner agencies (i.e., Title 1, DJJ, etc.).

Early Graduation

- If students are making appropriate progress for their grade level/age based on the best practice recommendations outlined above, very few students should graduate early. However, in the event a student completes all requirements for a diploma prior to exiting our programs districts should develop supplemental educational services for those students such as:
 - dual enrollment college credit
 - vocational training
 - employment
 - apprenticeship programs
 - co-ops
- Students who are 17 years old and deficient in credits may be enrolled in a dual-diploma track and/or high school equivalency diploma program.
 - **KRS 158.143 Eligibility of state agency child to seek high school equivalency diploma.** (1) Notwithstanding any other statute to the contrary, a state agency child, as defined in KRS 158.135(1), who is at least seventeen (17) years of age shall be eligible to seek attainment of a high school equivalency diploma. (2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to exempt a student who has attained a high school equivalency diploma from the compulsory attendance requirements of KRS 159.010.

Behavior Management Plan

(i.e., discipline code, PBIS, student handbook rules)

- A written behavioral management plan should be in place and communicated to students.
- Interventions are utilized prior to consequences.
- Alternatives to suspension should be considered.

Incentive Programs

- Any incentive time is still structured – no “free time”
- Incentives should be tied to curriculum (activities can be educational)
 - Educational Movies (Hidden Figures) – ex. Science, math, black history month, civil rights, STEM, Women’s rights, etc.
 - Field Trips (trip to lake) – ex. Science, PE, swimming, CPR, water quality, history of lake, etc.
- Should be “worth it” or effective but should not be too long (all day free days)
- Value of incentive should be weighted towards the achievement: comparable/complementary
- Consider student voice and choice when considering incentives – more valuable and motivating to students

Student Instructional Plan

- Every student should have a developed instructional plan leading to graduation and be involved in the development of it.
 - While enrolled, students should know the courses they’re taking, how many credits they have, and should be able to articulate and know where to find their academic records.
- Students should be in core content classes daily and making progress in each of them (students should not exclusively work on one course per day when their enrollment includes other core content and electives).
- Each student’s transcript should be reviewed to ensure they are not enrolling in courses for which they’ve already received credits.
- Logical course sequencing should be followed in the development of course schedules (i.e., students who have earned the first semester credit for English 1 should be enrolled in English 1 second semester credit before enrolling in English 2).

Safe School Assessments

- All programs should work with their district Safe School Coordinator to ensure compliance with all requirements
 - KECSAC Programs may be included in Safe School assessments.
 - All programs are responsible for meeting the district training requirements as included in the KSBA personnel guidance document (03.19 AP.23 Attached to Document)

Learning Environments

- Learning environments should be inviting and motivating educational settings (i.e., motivational quotes and posters, learning materials displayed, etc.).
- Programs should celebrate student achievement and successes and reflect that in their facility (i.e., student work displayed, involving students in creating their learning environment, etc.).
- The program should maintain facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.
- Environmental considerations such as lighting, sensory supports, adaptive seating, etc., are implemented.
- Implementing unique ways to utilize indoor and outdoor learning spaces is best practice.

Personnel

- While the professional education standards board (EPSB) recognizes any certified teacher may teach in an alternative setting, it is recommended that teachers be certified in the subject area they are teaching.
- Professional development should be relevant to the specific needs of teachers outlined in individual professional growth plans or the program improvement plan, and specific to alternative education.
- The identified school administrator shall work with district leadership to ensure special education requirements of the student population are being met.