

# FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Speaking on behalf of the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children (KYCEC), we are excited to have you as a member of our fantastic organization. The KYCEC is a part of the national leader in advocacy for the rights of children with exceptionalities and their families. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) advocates for policies and practices that promote the success of all children. Currently, KYCEC is made up of 623 amazing, exceptional educators that continuously work to improve student outcomes and opportunities.

We encourage you to [get involved in KYCEC](#). There are many ways to get involved, including attending our conference, joining a division, or volunteering through various other methods.

Thank you for your continued support of KYCEC. We look forward to working with you to improve the lives of children with exceptionalities across the Commonwealth.



### Benefits through our organization:

- Professional Development Opportunities: Conferences, webinars, and workshops all working to help you stay up-to-date on the latest research and best practices in special education
- Access to leading research and publications through CEC and its Divisions
- Networking Opportunities
- Exceptional Children's Conference in Louisville from November 19-21, 2023
- CEC's National Convention in San Antonio, TX from March 13-16, 2024

# 2023 KY EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE

The 2023 KY Exceptional Children's Conference is just around the corner! We are so excited to come together at the Galt House to celebrate our profession, network with one another, grow together, and celebrate all of our wonderful students. We invite you to attend November 19-21st, where a diverse group of educators will gather for one purpose—to improve their practices to help every student.

**REGISTER HERE**

The KY Exceptional Children's Conference is unique. It brings educators from every school setting across KY to one place for intense learning and professional growth. It also helps fuel your passion and make meaningful connections, while learning best practices from your colleagues. We guarantee that you will leave the Conference ready to make a difference.

Visit the [KYCEC Conference website](#) today to explore sessions and workshops. We can't wait to see you in Louisville!

## JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

We'd love to chat and share with you! Check us out on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). We share favorite resources, trainings, and conference information on our social media accounts - please check us out and like, share, and repost any news that catches your eye!

## NEW TEACHER ACADEMY

Calling all new and emergency-certified teachers! We are offering a **6-hour New Teacher Academy** at the Conference on **Sunday, Nov. 19!** Topics will include how to:

- ✓ Implement effective classroom management and evidence-based behavior strategies to support student learning
- ✓ Apply a trauma-informed lens to IEP development and implementation and to classroom management and behavior strategies
- ✓ Strengthen IEP Development, focusing specifically on robust Present Levels and Measurable Annual Goals
- ✓ Align evidence-based instruction (SDI & SAS) to the Present Levels of the IEP

Participants will receive tools to take back to their classrooms to support student engagement and positive behaviors! And, GREAT NEWS! We have opened spots for 350 participants! Arrive early to get a seat in the session! To participate, you must register for the Conference. For more information, visit [our website](#).







## ADVOCACY UPDATES

The [Special Education Legislative Summit](#) (SELS) is a joint activity organized by the Council for Exceptional Children and the Council of Administrators of Special Education. Typically held in Washington, D.C. during July, SELS is an opportunity for educators from across the country to advocate for change with Members of Congress. Your 2023 KY team was 13 members strong, and included pre-service teachers, higher education faculty, classroom teachers, a doctoral student, and special education consultants. Team KY participated in in-depth training about [three primary issues](#) and received legislative updates on key issues impacting the field of special education. The main initiatives of focus were: [appropriations](#), [mental health](#), and [educator shortages](#). We met with Senator McConnell and Senator Paul's staff, as well as five of our U. S. Representatives to not only share the needs across the Commonwealth, but also to relay our appreciation for their ongoing support. On July 10, 2023, the IDEA Full Funding Act was introduced in the House, and Team KY also advocated for our members of Congress to co-sponsor the bill. Our diverse voices from across the field proudly represented KYCEC members and KY educators during SELS 2023.

## YOU CAN BE AN ADVOCATE, TOO!

Do you want to advocate for students with exceptional needs? CEC has made it easy for you! First, sign up to receive the Policy Insider newsletter [here](#)! A great beginning is Advocacy 101 found [here](#)! Then, bookmark and visit CEC's [Legislative Action Center](#).

Within each issue, you'll be prompted to enter your zip code. Letters have been generated on your behalf and will be sent to your Representative with a few clicks of your mouse. In just a few short minutes, you will be a champion for your profession and your students!

You can also find advocacy information by checking posts in CECommunities! To find KY CEC's community, simply go to CECommunities, click "Access the CECommunity" and then "My Communities."

# YES I CAN! WINNERS



## **ACADEMICS: Matthew Beerwart, Lone Oak Middle, McCracken County**

Matthew is a phenomenal young man who also has Autism. He has worked through emotional regulation difficulties to join the school plays as well as choir. Matthew dedicates himself to memorizing lines, practicing for choir and using his coping strategies when faced with challenges. He radiates joy when he performs and is an inspiration to many classmates.

## **ARTS: Lacyann Howard, Newport High School, Newport Independent**

Lacyann is an excellent artist who has had artwork featured all across the Commonwealth of KY. Lacyann also has Retinitis Pigmentosa, which is a rare, progressive eye disease that affects her peripheral vision, and she is legally blind. She draws inspiration from her challenges, but others have made it tough for her by belittling her vision loss and poverty. She does not want others to feel that same humiliation, so Lacyann makes it her mission to inspire and spread kindness.



## **SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Noah Lyvers, LaRue County High School**

Noah was diagnosed as a young child with Oculomotor apraxia, which makes purposeful eye movement difficult and includes developmental delays. Noah has played flag football, basketball, and softball for the Special Olympics for the past four years. With the Special Olympics, he has found a community of friends that he encourages during practices and games.

## **SELF-ADVOCACY: Zurie Basso, North Middle School, Hardin County**

For many students with autism, the executive function required to effectively self-advocate often makes this a difficult task. Zurie was overwhelmed by middle school and stimming behaviors became more apparent, hindering her ability to self-advocate. Through communication, collaboration, social stories and role play, Zurie has learned to build appropriate friendships, care for personal hygiene and self-advocate. In her own words, "I can do anything....I feel like a rockstar!"



## **TRANSITION: Rebecca Robertson, Ahrens Educational Resource Center, Jefferson County**

Rebecca's unwavering spirit and commitment to self-improvement have not only inspired those around her, but have also ignited a positive change within the school community. Through her participation in the Ahrens Work Transition Program, she has grown both professionally and personally, and her achievements at Omni Hotels and independent transportation exemplify her remarkable progress.





## Stacy Crawford Bewley, President Elect, from Elizabethtown, KY

I love the [HLP Leadership Guides](#). The guides are a tremendous resource for administrators and building level instructional coaches who may not have a special education background. Each of the 22 High Leverage Practices has its own guide which includes "look fors," guiding questions, and additional resources to share with teachers. The learning in this resource is bite-sized and has potential to build capacity in building-level leaders to provide meaningful coaching and feedback for their special education teachers.

## KYCEC MEMBER MINI-GRANTS

KYCEC Members, Mini-Grants are coming soon! Members of KYCEC are eligible to apply for \$650.00 mini-grants to utilize/expand/innovate initiatives in their classrooms, including stocking up if you are a pre-service or early career teacher. Be on the lookout for applications to become available in January 2024!

## Merissa Waddey, Executive Secretary, from Florence, KY

I am so excited about the new [CEC Exceptional Teacher Repository](#)! I'm able to search by area of need (e.g., behavior, co-teaching) and find a wealth of tools that have been vetted by CEC's staff. My favorite so far has been this [SDI Observation Tool](#) to assist in my walk-throughs of classrooms. So helpful!



## MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Currently, KY has 623 members statewide. We are looking forward to seeing our members at the [KY Exceptional Children's Conference](#) in November - As always, we will offer a discount for joining or renewing your CEC membership at the conference AND fabulous prize drawings for those who join or renew!!! Bring your colleagues and let's work together to increase membership and include them in the wonderful professional development and networking opportunities provided by CEC.



## EKU SCEC CHAPTER

When asked about this event, Laken Bond stated, "Getting the opportunity to go to the SELS event in Washington, D.C. was one of the most positive experiences I have gotten to be a part of during my time at ECU. Being an undergraduate student at such an important event, with a lot of important people, is intimidating, especially since I have never been to something like that before. However, through the experience, I had the privilege of meeting knowledgeable and passionate people who took me under their wing and guided me when we were sharing our concerns with our state legislators. Knowing I was surrounded by so many who share the same goal of advocating for special education made the experience that much sweeter, as well as helped me start to build a network that I know will be there for support when I am special education teacher."

Three student members of ECU-CEC (Jessica Niehoff, Camryn Drye, and Laken Bond) attended the 2023 Special Education Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C. These students were taken to this event by Dr. Mary Jo Krile so they could have the opportunity to learn about special education legislation and advocate for special education appropriations, mental health of students and special education teachers, and the special education teacher shortage. Students spoke to Kentucky legislators about these issues, as well as their experiences as ECU pre-service special education teachers.





# KYDEC UPDATE

## KYDEC BOARD

**Past President** – Julie H. Rutland

**President** – Rebecca Crawford

**President Elect** – Zury Decker

**Treasurer** – Ryan Zuehl

**Secretary** – Caroline Gooden

**Membership** – Stacey Stevens

**CAN coordinator** – Meg Gravil

**Outreach** – Elizabeth McLaren

**Parent & Student Rep.** – Amanda Duncan

**Member-at-Large** – Sarah Hawkins-Lear

## GRANTS FUNDED!

### How It Feels to Learn

Growing Together Preschool, Inc.  
Denise Menshouse

The goal of this project was to provide 10 classrooms with the opportunity to have sensory materials in their rooms to help redirect or reduce behaviors.

These materials would help children identify their emotions and use their senses for learning.

Hello everyone! We are really excited for the upcoming year! We recently got some new officers, and we are all eager to collaborate to develop strategies to include ALL children within early childhood settings. I see that it is our responsibility to implement DEC recommended practices and provide best practice when working with young children and their families.

### Early Education for a Future World

Yates Elementary School, Fayette Co Public Schools

Tabitha Kittle

The goal of this project was to purchase inclusive materials to support the learning & development of all children in a public preschool classroom. Over 95% of children in the classroom are from minoritized racial groups & approximately 55% of all children fall into at least one disability category. Research has shown that high quality intervention & instruction in the early years of children's development leads to increased positive outcomes later in a child's life including cognitive development, academic achievement, & labor market success (Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2023). Racially & culturally representative class materials along with high quality sensory and adaptive materials will assist in preparing children for a highly globalized and more inclusive world.

## KYCEC SCEC



Welcome to the 2023 - 2024 School Year! We are excited about our new Student CEC members across the state of Kentucky! Student CEC members represent Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Murray State University, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, and Western Kentucky University. If you see us at the state conference please say hello! We are always looking for ways to learn and improve from those around us!

### SCEC officers for the 2022-2023 year:

Cheyenne Buckley: President, Morehead State University

Jessica Niehoff: Vice President, Eastern Kentucky University

Secretary - TBD

Faculty Advisor: Sarah Hawkins-Lear, University of Kentucky



## KYCCBD

KY Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

More information coming soon

[www.kyccbd.org](http://www.kyccbd.org)

July 15-16, 2024

Behavior Institute

Lexington

Central Bank Center

## Save the Dates and Plan to Attend!

KYCCBD welcomes new members. To learn more, send us an email and let us know how you'd like to get involved!

[kyccbdmembership@gmail.com](mailto:kyccbdmembership@gmail.com)





## KYTED LEADERSHIP

- **Kera Ackerman**- President, University of Kentucky
- **Allie Rhodes** –Vice-President, Asbury
- **Kayla Steltenkamp**- Secretary, Thomas More
- **Jamie Mahoney**- online journal editor, Murray State
- **Steve Crites**- Treasurer, Morehead State
- **Todd Whitney**- Past President, University of Louisville



Add **KYTED** to your CEC membership! We would love to have you. Our leadership team meets in collaboration with the IHE Special Education Consortium and KEEP State Leadership Team.

Questions? Please reach out to [kera.ackerman@uky.edu](mailto:kera.ackerman@uky.edu).

## Kentucky Teacher Education Journal

The current issue of KTEJ can be accessed here

<https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/ktej/>.

KTEJ is accepting submissions. Questions may be addressed to Dr. Jamie Mahoney at [jmahoney3@murraystate.edu](mailto:jmahoney3@murraystate.edu); Editor-in-Chief.

## Council of Exceptional Children's Mission

Cultivating, supporting, and empowering education professionals who work with individuals with disabilities by:

- ❖ Advocating for education professionals and for individuals with disabilities, and/or gifts and talents
- ❖ Advancing professional practice and scholarly research
- ❖ Promoting diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility
- ❖ Building networks, partnerships, and communities

