

Kentucky Department of Education

Program Review

Monroe County Falcon Academy Monroe County School District May 3, 2012

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Introduction

The Alternative Education Consultants from KECSAC acting on behalf of the Kentucky Department of Education conducted a review of Monroe County Falcon Academy (MCFA) on May 3, 2012. The purpose of the site visit was to review Falcon Academy to determine if its program could be considered as a 2012-2013 Alternative Education Best Practice Site. MCFA was nominated for Best Practices in Academic Performance, Learning Environment and Efficiency.

Monroe County Falcon Academy has been in existence for ten years as an alternative to suspension; however, reorganization in 2006 expanded the program's scope to include credit recovery, early intervention, and a Response to Intervention (RTI) center. The program is located in a former school and is part of the Monroe County Community Resource Center (MCCRC), which includes programs in adult education, head start, community education, day care, youth theatre, summer intervention, and drug free communities. Currently, MCFA serves over 70 students in grades 6-12. The predominately white student population is 65% male. African American and Hispanic students make-up 1% of the populations each. Students are referred to MCFA by the school principal, court appointment, or a parent. An intake committee reviews all referral and makes a final decision on placement. The length of stay at MCFA is a minimum of nine weeks (45 schools days) up to a maximum of one school year.

MCFA has an educational staff that includes a principal, an assistant principal/counselor, three (3) teachers, a behavior modification instructional assistant, drop-out prevention coordinator who also coordinates the on-line curriculum, three instructional assistants, an attendance clerk, and five volunteers. The certifications of the teaching staff include English, special

education, biology, math and elementary education. MCFA also works in conjunction with two teachers who comprise the homebound instructional program for Monroe County.

With a school day from 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., student attendance is reported by the A1 school. A cafeteria and full-size gymnasium are available to students within the building, but library services are obtained from the public library located across the street.

Review activities included:

1. Review of the program questionnaire
2. Interviews with principal, teachers, and students
3. Review of the district's Comprehensive Improvement Plan, the Program Improvement Plan, curriculum materials and samples, lesson plans, discipline and safety plans, test data, professional development offerings and other pertinent documents
4. Walk-through observations and classroom observations
5. Observation of supervision practices and procedures during student transition times

The Program Report was based upon the examination of the documents provided by the program, as well as the consultants' experiences and observations. The specific findings are organized under the headings of Academic Performance, Learning Environment, and Efficiency. Nine standards for success in Kentucky schools are addressed in the following pages:

Academic Performance

The following Academic Performance Standards address curriculum, assessment, and instruction:

Standard 1: The school develops and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.

Standard 2: The school utilizes multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.

Standard 3: The school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied and research-based practices to improve student performance.

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Summary Findings in Academic Performance

Standard 1 Curriculum

Based on interviews and inspection of pertinent documents and materials, it was concluded that the school develops and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards. A variety of curriculum resources is used to meet the needs of a diversified multi-age, multi-ability level classroom for core curriculum, credit recovery, and general education development (GED) needs (i.e., APEX, Jefferson County curriculum, Monroe Virtual Program,). Students have access to the entire Microsoft Office suite of products and the internet. In addition to the core academic curriculum, students may attend the Monroe County Area Technology Center for applied classes. Curriculum standards are identified and communicated to all students (i.e., course syllabi) and the curriculum accommodates the learning needs of students while maintaining expectations for high academic performance. All core curriculum courses are offered as well as aviation and drama.

The Performance Level was found to be **Fully-Functioning**

Standard 2 Assessment

Based on interviews and inspection of pertinent documents and materials, it was concluded that the school uses multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work. Formative and summative assessments are used to guide continuous improvement at both the individual and program level. Classroom formative assessments are used to identify areas of strength as well as to establish goal areas for growth. The principal and curriculum coordinator monitor instruction and ensure that state standards and core content are followed by each teacher.

Teachers use various assessments to determine how well they are meeting core content goals and how to differentiate instruction to assist in meeting those goals.

A score of 80% proficiency has been established as the base line for all assessments. Data from practice assessments of K-Prep, End of Course assessment, the ACT, and district learning checks were combined with teacher-made tests to develop the school's Response to Intervention (RTI) for each student. Students who fall below the 80% proficiency for a unit are re-taught and enter the RTI program.

The performance Level was found to be **Fully-Functioning**

Standard 3 Instruction

Based on interviews, observations, and inspection of available documents and materials, it was concluded that the school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance. Instructional strategies that are aligned with state and Monroe County School district learning goals and assessment expectations are used in all classrooms to address academic, social, and behavioral needs. Teachers supplement direct instruction with computer-based software, supplemental teaching materials, current textbooks, and other teaching manipulatives. The instructional staff follows the pacing guides established at Monroe County Middle and High Schools to ensure that academic standards are the same at MCFA as the other district schools. All teachers participate in sustained, classroom-focused professional development, as well as use technology as an integral part of instruction in all content areas. The administrative staff provides feedback and support to the teachers to assist them in their instructional technology practices.

The Performance Level was found to be **Fully-Functioning**

Conclusion:

Based on interviews, observations and inspection of pertinent documents and materials by the Alternative Education Consultants for KECSAC, it was concluded that Monroe County Falcon Academy is recommended as a Best Practice site for Academic Performance for the 2012-2013 school year.