

NKCES Report – March 2025

Our mission at NKCES: We connect, grow, and serve our community of educators.

BEECHWOOD INDEPENDENT

Executive Director Update

BELLEVUE INDEPENDENT

NKCES Team Meeting, March 3: The NKCES Team meeting is held monthly to foster collaboration and communication among team members. During these meetings, we discuss ongoing projects, share updates, and brainstorm solutions to challenges. The goal is to support each other in our mission to enhance education and provide exceptional services within our community.

BOONE COUNTY

BRACKEN COUNTY

CAMPBELL COUNTY

CARROLL COUNTY

COVINGTON INDEPENDENT

Executive Committee Meeting, March 5: The executive committee met to review the Board agenda and provide input. The budgets for 2025-26 and the salary schedule were the primary discussion items. The committee also discussed upcoming events and regional items.

DAYTON INDEPENDENT

ERLANGER-ELSMERE INDEPENDENT

FLEMING COUNTY

Grant's Lick Elementary Career Fair, March 11: Dr. Amy Razor provided an insightful overview of the various occupations at NKCES during the Career Cafe. The students were actively involved and posed thoughtful questions, making the day enjoyable and interactive.

FORT THOMAS INDEPENDENT

GRANT COUNTY

GREENUP COUNTY

NKCES Board Meeting, March 12: The NKCES March Board meeting highlighted Adolescent Literacy as the spotlight and had the first reading of the budgets. The dates for the 2025-26 NKCES Board meetings were also approved.

KENTON COUNTY

LEWIS COUNTY

LUDLOW INDEPENDENT

NKCES Synergy Team Meeting, March 17: The NKCES leadership team convenes monthly with an agenda created by the team. Recently, we concluded our book study of "The Art of Possibility" by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander. This enlightening discussion has encouraged team members to adopt innovative thinking and cultivate a creative culture within the organization. In addition to promoting creativity and leadership development, the team is dedicated to driving organizational growth by strategically enhancing our social media presence and branding efforts, aiming to effectively convey the vision and initiatives to a wider audience.

MASON COUNTY

NEWPORT INDEPENDENT

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

OWEN COUNTY

PENDLETON COUNTY

SOUTHGATE INDEPENDENT

Planning for Retreat, March 18: As we approach this time of year, we are excited to start planning the Superintendent Retreat. This event will not only feature valuable learning opportunities for our Superintendents but also provide dedicated time for fellowship and celebration.

WALTON-VERONA INDEPENDENT

WILLIAMSTOWN INDEPENDENT

CAO Interviews, March 21: I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to the interview committee for their time and commitment to this important process. We are pleased to announce the successful hiring of Dr. Robb Smith as our new Chief Academic Officer, effective July 1, 2025. We eagerly anticipate the significant contributions Dr. Smith will make to our NKCES team and region.

PL Consortium, March 21: CAO Melody Stacy, along with her dedicated team, guided district leaders through a series of important regional updates and introduced innovative learning opportunities.

Their collaborative efforts aimed to enhance educational initiatives and foster professional growth among the leaders, ensuring they are well-equipped to support their respective districts. The session included discussions on best practices, emerging trends in education, and strategies for implementing new initiatives effectively. Attendees were encouraged to share their insights and experiences, creating a dynamic environment for learning and collaboration.

CoSN2025, Seattle, WA, March 29 - April 2: Dr. Razor attended the conference to learn more about crucial topics such as cybersecurity, student data privacy, and the implementation of AI in schools — issues at the forefront for educational institutions and their communities. Dr. Razor looks forward to deepening her understanding of these critical issues and exploring effective strategies for addressing them safely and successfully within the K-12 system.

Facilities:

Building Update: As our organization grows, we find it more challenging to host larger groups at NKCES as space is limited. The parking lot is an area of concern and we are seeking bids to resolve this issue. As part of the Arts In Mind project, the long-awaited outdoor learning space is nearing completion. The larger portions of the project are complete; we have some electrical work for lighting and sound that will be installed this spring as well as sunshades to keep the space cooler in the hotter months. We can't wait to share this space with our members; the possibilities are endless!

Professional Learning (PL) Update:

March Professional Learning: NKCES supported 96 professional learning opportunities focused on academics, culture and climate, leadership, and special education during February, serving 2,132 educators.

Professional Learning (PL) Consortium: The 24.25 NKCES PL Consortium continued in March with a collaborative meeting. Topics included [NKCES Learning and Empowerment & SERTAC](#), High Reliability School Summit Reflections, and planning for the monthly district share-outs. We also had Lauren Karas with [Holocaust & Humanity Center](#) present on work that she is very passionate about. The meeting ended with a member-led PLC discussion.

Title I & Title II Meeting: The 24.25 NKCES Title I/Title II Consortium continued in March with a collaborative meeting. Topics included Carryover Waiver Anticipation, Coordinator's Year at a Glance, and [Regional District Policy and Procedure spreadsheet](#) discussion (March - Homeless, EL, Parent Engagement and April - District Level Program, Private Schools, & Fiscal Management). The meeting ended with a member-led PLC discussion.

District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) Meeting: The 24.25 NKCES DAC Consortium continued in March with a collaborative meeting. Topics included ACT (Any issues/discussion & Medical non-participations), KSA ([Scripts available](#), 3/24 - PAN opens, 3/26 @ 10 am - Office Hour, Trainings prior to testing, Site Visit Forms, [KSA and AKSA Site Visit Survey Questions](#), [ACT Site Visit Survey Questions](#), & Caveon Visits), K Screen (Ordering due March 28th & [Google Form](#)), AKSA (4/14 - 5/23, SRD closes 5/30, & Reminder of Trainings), SDRR (Window collection for elem, middle, high, & Due 3/28), EOP (Testing window 3/28 & Results & certificates to be released 4/16), and ACCESS (Date Validation - 3/19 - 4/2, Score Reports (ACCESS - online April 28 & Paper May 7-8), (WIDA Alternate ACCESS - Online April 28 & Paper May 7-8). The meeting ended with a member-led PLC discussion.

Professional Learning Networks (PLNs): PLNs provide opportunities for educators to grow professionally in collaborative environments focused on collective learning. [2024.25 NKCES PLN Dates](#).

NKCES is honored to offer a variety of professional learning opportunities. All of them can be found in our [Professional Learning Catalog](#).

Special Education Update:

iSPROUT Visit at Southgate Schools: In collaboration with the IDEA team, Learning and Empowerment supported the implementation of NKCES's iSPROUT process at Southgate Schools. This comprehensive visit involved collecting data across six key modes, including classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers, IEP reviews, and administrative input at both school and district levels. The joint team facilitated a structured data analysis session with school leadership and staff to identify trends, celebrate strengths, and determine actionable next steps to strengthen inclusive practices and support student success.

Dr. Amanda Bell successfully defended her dissertation titled "Courageous Learning: An Elementary Special Education Teacher's Guide to Student Empowerment" on February 26, 2025, at Northern Kentucky University. Her research focused on developing a curriculum centered around Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) tailored for students with intensive support needs. Building upon her dissertation, Dr. Bell established Courageous Learning, LLC in December 2024 to further implement and promote this curriculum

Ms. Brittney Howell (Regional Director of Special Education) and Ms. Michelle Klein (Director of Learning and Empowerment) held connection meetings with districts to facilitate their summer and back-to-school PL plans. These sessions provided a comprehensive regional overview and allowed offering tailored support for each district's goals. These connection meetings emphasized that quality PL is crucial—it not only fosters educator growth but also ensures that every learning opportunity is strategically aligned with district objectives. By planning PL around clearly defined goals, we can deliver focused, research-backed initiatives that enhance teaching practices and drive measurable student success, reinforcing our commitment to supporting each district's unique needs.

Ms. Kim Snowball attended the RTI at Work™ Institute. This professional development event, presented by Solution Tree, focused on building effective multi-tiered systems of support to meet individual student needs. By participating, Ms. Snowball aimed to enhance the Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services' (NKCES) Conditions for Success initiative, which strives to create optimal learning environments for students. The insights gained from the conference are expected to inform and strengthen NKCES's ongoing efforts to support educators and students effectively.

Ms. Emily Borchers and Learning and Empowerment's Lyndsey Mayberry have collaborated to facilitate the third session of the Chronic Absenteeism Cohort. This initiative aims to address and reduce chronic absenteeism by engaging educators in comprehensive training and strategy development. The third session focused on implementing evidence-based interventions and fostering community partnerships to support consistent student attendance. Participants engaged in interactive workshops, shared best practices, and developed action plans tailored to their respective educational settings. The collaboration between Ms. Borchers and Ms. Mayberry exemplifies a commitment to enhancing student engagement and educational outcomes through targeted professional development.

Learning and Empowerment Team:

Northern Kentucky Institute for Arts Education (NKIAE):

In March, schools in Cohort 3 of the *Arts In Mind* program submitted quarterly reports, and schools in Cohort 4 wrote Comprehensive Arts Plans for the 2025-26 school year. On March 3, Season 4 of our *Arts Express* video series, supporting elementary theatre standards, was filmed. The new collection of videos will be released this summer. On March 11-12, along with the project's consultant and evaluator, Ms. Vicki Dansberry and Mr. Joe Bertucci attended the U.S. Department of Education's *Assistance for Arts Education Project Director's Convening* and presented a session sharing highlights from our regional program. The session was well-received and prompted connections with fellow grantees from across the country. Mr. Bertucci also led two regional PLN meetings: one on March 25 for Visual and Performing Arts Teachers, and one on March 27 for teachers integrating the arts with other subjects.

Northern Kentucky Institute for Strategic Prevention (NKISP):

The NKISP team hosted the Steering Committee meeting and attended several community partner meetings in the region. The team focused on NKY Youth Summit 2025 planning and collaborated with the TISS team to support the upcoming Mental Health Roundtable event. The team provided CATCH My Breath Implementation Training for Southgate Independent. They also focused on finalizing and submitting a new proposal for the continuation of the work through another SPF grant.

School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) and Trauma Informed Services in Schools (TISS): The Northern Kentucky Institute for Empowerment (NKIE) includes the School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) and Trauma-Informed School Supports (TISS) grant work within the NKCES member districts. The SBMH and TISS team provided a full day training for all districts around Strengthening School Mental Health Teams for Effective and Sustainable Impact. SBMH exhibited at the American Counseling Association conference focusing on the recruitment for mental health providers. SBMH worked with Kentucky Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education, Behavioral and IDD Workforce, and the Kentucky Department for Behavioral health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities to create the first course of the behavior health pathway, which was published in program of students and will be available for schools to offer for the 25-26 school year.

Learning Acceleration:

The Learning Acceleration team provided two days of OpenScied training, which focused at specific grade level audiences. In addition, professional learning opportunities were offered regionally for Adolescent Literacy Camp Tier 3 instruction, the final session in the social studies series, and Instructional Coaches Professional Learning Network. The Learning Acceleration team attended the next series of RIVET training which included school visits to evaluate High Quality Instructional Resources implementation.

Grant Consortium Update:

District Reports: Erlanger-Elsmere is submitting two proposals to the Dollar General Youth Literacy program.

Grants available:

- Renew America's Schools are open until April 3. Fleming County expressed interest in this high funds energy grant
- Rural Communities Opioid Response Program -- Pathways is open until April 14. Bracken and Mason Counties are working on a proposal, with Mason County as Fiscal Agent. It's for \$400,000 a year for 3 years to develop pathways in rural areas to encourage youth to pursue behavioral health careers.

- Drug Free Communities, due May 5. This grant provides \$125,000 a year for five years to build collaborative work with 12 community sectors on substance misuse prevention for youth. It funds the current county coalitions, and the funder loves funding subsets of local areas, even down to neighborhoods. Let Vicki know if you are interested [at this link by April 14](#). So far, Erlanger-Elsmere and Ludlow have expressed interest.
- KYILN Travel Grant, due April 24. This grant provides \$3,000 for staff from your district to visit another district as a model.

Grants Pending

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers, reportedly to be announced soon: Districts applied
- Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) grant: Districts applied
- Numeracy Counts: Multiple districts applied. Ms. Emily Giles noted that the Numeracy Counts Math Academy will take place in multiple parts of the state, and only one is in Northern Kentucky, so if you are awarded and you are planning to participate, you should register immediately when you find out about the award. Registrations at each location are limited to the first 125 registrants, and if you don't get your first choice of location you'll need to travel to other areas of the state.
- Connecting Kids to Coverage: Bellevue, Southgate, Dayton together
- Strategic Prevention Framework: Regional

Multi-District Grants in Implementation

Trauma Informed School Services and School Based Mental Health reported many activities already summarized in this report. Ms. Emily Giles also noted the following information:

- If you have a job opening in any area, this crew is recruiting locally and nationally, so send them information and they will help publicize your need. Email Tasha.taylor@nkces.org for the recruiting issues.
- Funding in the next year to districts has a few changes. Steering Committee meeting on May 29 will provide more info.
- Quarter 3 invoices for TISS and SBMH to NKCES are due April 4. Emily requested that grants representatives check with finance or program folks in your district to make sure these are submitted timely.

Grant Tips and News

- Federal actions: A team went to Washington for the NKIAE grant and met with Federal officers the very day the Department of Education staff cuts were made. The project officers seemed confident that their positions would hold since the project is required by statute.
- Next year's meeting schedule and format: Next year's meetings will be on the first Tuesday of each month at 1:00. We will return to an online format unless we are actively planning a grant proposal, and then we will announce an in-person meeting. This will begin in July. For now we will continue to meet on our usual schedule in person at NKCES.

Regional School Programs (RSP) Update:

- We continue to work on our KSA testing schedule for RSP
- RSP's official last day of school for students will be May 28th, with noon dismissal
- Our tentative awards and promotion ceremony will be on March 27th, with time to be determined
- RSP's Americorps Coach is organizing a reality store for our secondary students to be held in April.
- RSP Round 1 slot forms have all been received and are being reviewed to determine the next steps for possible rounds 2 and 3.