

# NKCES Report – April 2025

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

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BEECHWOOD INDEPENDENT

## Executive Director Update:

BELLEVUE INDEPENDENT

BOONE COUNTY

BRACKEN COUNTY

CAMPBELL COUNTY

CARROLL COUNTY

COVINGTON INDEPENDENT

DAYTON INDEPENDENT

ERLANGER-ELSMERE INDEPENDENT

FLEMING COUNTY

FORT THOMAS INDEPENDENT

GRANT COUNTY

GREENUP COUNTY

KENTON COUNTY

LEWIS COUNTY

LUDLOW INDEPENDENT

MASON COUNTY

NEWPORT INDEPENDENT

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

OWEN COUNTY

PENDLETON COUNTY

SOUTHGATE INDEPENDENT

WALTON-VERONA INDEPENDENT

WILLIAMSTOWN INDEPENDENT

CoSN 2025, 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.

Finance Meeting, April 3: Each month, Dr. Razor meets with the finance director, Mrs. Angie Perkins, to keep abreast of finances and plan for future expenses. The focus of this meeting was department budgets and the 2025 salary schedule. We also met about long-term goals and the sustainability plan for NKCES.

Superintendent Webcast, April 8: Dr. Amy Razor joined a virtual call to stay informed of current events impacting education across the state and nation.

Executive Committee Meeting, April 9: 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.

Education Cooperative Executive Director Meeting, April 11: Dr. Amy Razor joined the other Executive Directors, along with members of KDE, to discuss current events taking place on the educational landscape in Kentucky as a whole, as well as to report highlights from each Cooperative's region.

NKCES Team Meeting, April 14: 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.

NKCES Board Meeting, April 16: The NKCES April Board meeting highlighted NKIAE National Presentations as the spotlight. Budgets and the 2025-2026 salary schedule were also approved.

Excellence in Education Celebration & Dinner, April 23: Dr. Razor supported local teachers and students being recognized by attending this celebratory event.

PL Consortium, April 25: 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.

Walton Verona, Facility Tour, April 30: Dr. Robb Smith orchestrated a tour for district leaders of the newly constructed Walton-Verona Intermediate School. Overall, the tour centered around the district's unwavering commitment to investing in 21st-century facilities that support high-quality education. It also fostered a spirit of collaboration among district leaders, benefiting the broader educational landscape in the region.

### **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. We will begin the parking lot expansion project this summer, which will add 25 parking spaces.

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. The sunshades have been added 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:**

**April Professional Learning:** NKCES supported 44 professional learning opportunities focused on academics, culture and climate, leadership, and special education during April, serving 1,076 educators.

**Professional Learning (PL) Consortium:** The 24.25 NKCES PL Consortium continued in April with a collaborative meeting. Topics included [NKCES Learning and Empowerment & SERTAC](#), and planning for the monthly district share-outs. We also had Marcus Blackwell, Jr., with [Make Music Count](#) present on work that he 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 April 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 April with a collaborative meeting. Topics included ACT (Scores available in 3-8 weeks, Final data and reports by 5/27), K Screen (Train the Trainers - April 30th, [Link to register](#) - by 4/25), Site Visits (Calls to verify information, [KSA and AKSA Site Visit Survey Questions](#), In-person - 30 minute call prior to DAC, Virtual - OAA will contact to schedule in advance, Caveon - OAA will contact DAC), AKSA (4/14 - 5/23, SRD for window two and TAR - open now & closes 5/30, Reminder on Trainings & emailing with SSIDs, Reminder on Quality of School Climate & Safety Survey), SDRR (Spring Rosters - April 23 - June 11, Student demographic IC info should be updated by 4/18), EOP (Results & certificates to be released 4/16), and ACCESS (Score Reports (ACCESS & 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:**

Reverse Career Fair Success Spotlight: Led by Jacki Alexander, the Reverse Career Fair was a powerful example of student-centered innovation and community partnership. Unlike a traditional career fair, students hosted their own booths while employers rotated through to interview and learn about potential candidates. By the numbers:

- 92 students showcased their skills and participated in interviews.
- 30 employers engaged with students across a variety of career pathways.
- 12 employers provided formal feedback:
  - 2 intend to hire students directly from the event.
  - 7 plan to contact students for future interviews.
  - 2 intend to offer internships.
  - 2 are reaching out to multiple students for follow-up.

This event not only created authentic connections between students and employers, but also directly resulted in job and internship opportunities—a testament to the value of preparing students for post-secondary success through real-world experiences.

LRP Special Education Law Institute – Professional Learning in Action: Emily Borchers represented NKCES at the national LRP Special Education Law Institute, attending alongside several Directors of Special Education (DoSEs) from NKCES member districts. This high-impact professional learning experience deepened her expertise in current legal updates, compliance trends, and best practices in special education. Emily will use this information to calibrate the NKCES SERTAC team and strengthen the technical assistance provided across our region. She will also present key takeaways at the May DoSE meeting, ensuring all member districts benefit from this timely, expert-level training.

### Building Inclusive Systems in Campbell County – Kim Snowball’s Leadership

Kim Snowball is leading transformative work in Campbell County Schools by supporting the development of sustainable, inclusive systems through co-teaching models and professional learning. Her focus is twofold:

- Building general education teacher capacity to effectively serve students with diverse learning needs.
- Promoting a deep understanding of specially designed instruction (SDI) among all staff to ensure students with disabilities are supported meaningfully within general education settings.

Kim’s efforts are helping schools move beyond compliance to build intentional, inclusive school cultures that reflect best practices and equity for all learners.

### Removing Barriers Through Assistive Technology – Barb Wietlisbach’s Regional Impact

Barb Wietlisbach continues to lead the way in providing high-quality Assistive Technology (AT) support across the NKCES region. Through coaching, consultation, and professional learning, Barb is actively building capacity with both teachers and students to ensure that learning barriers are removed through the thoughtful use of AT tools and strategies. Her work empowers educators to implement practical, personalized solutions that increase access, engagement, and independence for students with diverse

needs. Barb's expertise is helping schools create more inclusive, equitable learning environments where every student has what they need to succeed.

### **Learning and Empowerment Team:**

#### Northern Kentucky Institute for Arts Education (NKIAE):

In April, Joe Bertucci reviewed and provided feedback and approval for Comprehensive Arts Plans for the 30 schools in Cohort 4 of the *Arts In Mind* program. In partnership with Harris Media, Mr. Bertucci interviewed 15 artists and educators for Season 4 of our *Arts In Mind* video series, supporting learning paths and college/career readiness in the arts; new videos will be shared in late summer. Along with project evaluator Dr. Joan Ferrante and project director Vicki Dansberry, Mr. Bertucci submitted the mid-year performance report for our *Assistance for Arts Education* grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The project has met or is on target to meet all performance measures. Presenters have been scheduled and plans are underway for our July arts workshop series, scheduled for July 21-25.

#### Northern Kentucky Institute for Strategic Prevention (NKISP):

In April, the NKISP team engaged in a range of activities focused on youth prevention, strategic collaboration, and professional development. The month began with a Youth Summit planning meeting to design impactful youth-focused programming. The Steering Committee and Institute meeting was held in person at NKCES, and guest speaker Carol Lucio from SADD was featured. As part of our direct engagement efforts, we presented the CATCH My Breath vaping prevention curriculum to Carroll County Middle School students on April 16. We submitted our Annual Target Report accordingly. In parallel, we applied for two funding opportunities—a new 5-year SPF grant for \$425,000 and an Interact for Health Rapid Response grant for \$25,000—to support initiatives such as the Youth Summit, Youth Roundtable, and a future youth advisory council.

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. In April, the TISS, in collaboration with the SBMH team, advanced several key initiatives aimed at supporting student mental health and fostering systemic improvement across partner districts. The team actively planned for the Youth Mental Health Roundtables, an event designed to elevate student voices and promote wellness. Collaboration remained a central focus, as partnership continued with HQIR (High Quality Instructional Resource) teams and districts to further implement the Conditions for Success framework. Additionally, both teams joined Williamstown Schools to support their Sources of Strength event. The SBMH team supported several districts at career fairs and met with district leaders to discuss implementation plans for ongoing grant projects, ensuring alignment with program goals. Reporting to SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, reflected impactful outcomes, and 808 educators were trained to support student mental health. Coordinations occurred with the national evaluation team to design a student focus group and a climate survey.

#### Learning Acceleration:

The Learning Acceleration team facilitated three impactful days of OpenSciEd training, delivering targeted professional learning tailored to specific grade levels. Additionally, the team concluded the final session of content-specific HQIR work, successfully completing this year's cadre efforts. The Sprouting New Teachers cadre wrapped up the school year with a celebration of accomplishments and a reflective dialogue on next steps, setting a strong foundation for continued growth into the next academic year. The Learning Acceleration team kicked off a new NKCES book study exploring *The New Science and Art in Teaching* to further the training from the High Reliability Summit.

**Grant Consortium Update:**

Grants available

[5-5 Drug Free Communities](#)

A discussion about the Boone County Alliance and the Campbell County Drug Free Alliance emerged. Vicki will give info about Michelle and Jamee to the respective coalitions to see if there is room for collaboration on some activities.

Grants Pending

- [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#).
- [2-28 AED 2025](#) . Big awards news! Bellevue, Campbell County, Erlanger-Elsmere, Fleming County, Fort Thomas, Greenup County, Kenton County, Ludlow, Newport, Owen County, Pendleton County, Walton Verona, and Williamstown were awarded a total of 89 Automatic External Defibrillators for their school facilities! Congratulations to all.
- [3-6 Numeracy Counts](#) More awards news! Congratulations to Campbell County, Erlanger-Elsmere, Grant County, Kenton County, and Walton Verona, all of whom were awarded!
- [3-7 Connecting Kids to Coverage](#) Expecting announcement 9-30-2025 for Bellevue, Southgate, and Dayton.
- [3-17 Strategic Prevention Framework](#) Expecting announcement 9-30-2025 for all NKCES districts.
- [4-14 Rural Communities Opioid Response Program – Pathways](#) Expecting announcement 9-30-2025 for Mason and Bracken Counties
- [4-24 KYILN Travel Grant](#): No one at the meeting has applied for this grant.

Multi-District Grants in Implementation

- NK Institute for Strategic Prevention: Christi Jefferds and Tai Faulkner have a report due at the end of April, however, the Federal reporting system is changing, and they are awaiting information about how to proceed with the report.
- NK Institute for Arts Education: Joe Bertucci submitted his report early! It was a fantastic summary of the work in your districts through this project, and it recognized that just as all arts are for all students, the project is working to support all teachers as well. He is working to review Comprehensive Arts Plans and to prepare for the next Cohort’s events.
- Project Prevent: Kerry McHugh reported that the project is completing its mission. Through ProjectPrevent, Covington and Erlanger Schools provided extensive MTSS supports, summer STEAM-SEL programming, Restorative Practice supports, support for after-school programming, as well as staff members: counselors, a psychologist, and a BCBA/MTSS leader.
- Trauma Informed School Services and School-Based Mental Health Services: Emily Giles summarized the work of these two grants: Trauma Informed School Services will continue until September of 2026; School-Based Mental Health will continue till December of 2027.
- Positive Action: This grant was completed last August, and we just received word that the Federal Government has closed it out! Congrats to Kathy Burkhardt and all the teachers, counselors, and more who supported the Positive Action curriculum.

Grant Tips and News

- Federal actions: What’s next for us? The group discussed some possibilities for the next year, as we anticipate that new Federal opportunities might not be flowing.
- Vicki will begin deep research for grant opportunities with foundations and businesses likely to fund schools. She anticipates these will be for smaller amounts and more limited projects, and that not many will be enough to support salaries. They likely will be more appropriate for teacher or other school/district

applications, and she will provide whatever support your staff needs to create applications with the strongest chance of success.

- It will behoove us all to build relationships with funders you may already have contacts with from your community; others likely will need to be built. If you already know funders who want to support our schools, let Vicki know.
- Next year's meeting schedule and format:
  - First Tuesday of each month, virtually
  - Office hours are in person on the third Tuesday of each month.
- Words to watch: Vicki distributed
  - A list of words reported to trip Federal attention in grants.
  - She also distributed a list of long ways to say things with suggestions to make them shorter.

**Regional School Programs (RSP) Update:**

- KSA begins 5/8/26 for RSP.
- RSP's official last day of school for students will be May 28, with noon dismissal
- RSP's field day will be May 23.
- Our awards and promotion ceremony will be on May 27, at 12:30 pm.
- RSP's first day of school for students for the 25-26 school year is August 14.