

## **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **STAFF NOTE**

#### **Review Item:**

Non-Traditional Instructional Program Update (previously referred to as “snow-bound”)

#### **Applicable Statute or Regulation:**

KRS 158.070 (9)

#### **History/Background:**

**Existing Policy.** In its regular session in 2014, the Kentucky General Assembly amended the school calendar statute, KRS 158.070. Among those amendments was the introduction of a new section, Section 9, which authorizes the Non-Traditional Instruction Program. Specifically, Section 9 states:

*Notwithstanding any other statute, each school term shall include no less than the equivalent of the student instructional year [in subsection (1)(d) of this section,] except that the commissioner of education may grant up to the equivalent of ten (10) student attendance days for school districts that have an alternative instruction plan approved by the commissioner of education for the use of alternative methods of instruction, including virtual learning, on days when the school district is closed for health or safety reasons, on nontraditional days, or on nontraditional time. The district's plan shall demonstrate how teaching and learning in the district will not be negatively impacted. Average daily attendance for purposes of Support Education Excellence in Kentucky program funding during the student attendance days granted shall be calculated in compliance with administrative regulations promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Education.*

In the summer of 2014, staff implemented an application process for the Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) program that included a rubric-based scoring system to measure the quality of applications. In all, thirteen (13) district applications were scored as at least proficient and thirteen (13) districts were approved for Non-Traditional Instruction.

Throughout the 2014-15 school year, the Non-Traditional Instruction districts took advantage of the option to varying degrees. Several districts used all ten (10) days available to them. One district used only four (4) days.

Kentucky Department of Education staff used a two-part system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. First, districts were required to submit written evidence of the following:

- Student learning including copies of lesson plans, student work, and assessments

- Student participation and teacher participation including evidence of interaction between teachers, parents, and students

Second, Kentucky Department of Education staff visited each of the thirteen districts. These site visits provided an opportunity to meet administrators, teachers, parents, and students and to connect their input to the written evidence submitted.

During the spring and summer of 2015, revisions have been made to improve the application based on lessons learned in the first year. The application process for the 2015-16 school year also has been completed, and applications are currently being reviewed. All thirteen current participants applied again, and an additional 39 applications are being reviewed from new districts.

The Kentucky Department of Education constantly works with districts to avoid the learning loss associated with harsh winter weather conditions that require schools to be closed. The Non-Traditional Instruction Program, which combines traditional instructional practices with digital models to create “blended” instruction, has great potential to address lost learning when school is closed for multiple days in a row. Non-Traditional Instruction also encourages the reconsideration of how learning occurs when students are unable to get to school. Non-Traditional Instruction could ultimately change how attendance is defined and how progress is measured.

### **Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

Allowing local school districts the flexibility to continue to conduct school through weather or other safety related events provides an excellent opportunity to better engage students and, in turn, to increase the opportunities for students to graduate college and career ready.

### **Contact Person:**

Kelly Foster, Associate Commissioner  
Office of Next Generation Schools and Districts  
[Kelly.foster@education.ky.gov](mailto:Kelly.foster@education.ky.gov)  
(502) 564-5130



---

**Commissioner of Education**

David Cook, Director  
Innovation and Partner Engagement  
[david.cook@education.ky.gov](mailto:david.cook@education.ky.gov)  
(502) 564-4201

### **Date:**

June 2015