



April 24, 2024

Dear Dr. Razor

We are looking forward to the implementation of the Northern Kentucky Institute for Mental Health Services School Based Mental Health 2024 project. The school districts of Northern Kentucky recognize the critical need for improved and increased mental health services in our schools. This proposal is a strong step forward in our commitment to increasing the number of credentialed school-based mental health service providers in Northern Kentucky providing mental health services to students in Local Education Authorities with demonstrated need.

The project will provide staff to build relationships among our schools with demonstrated need through a three-pronged approach. By 1) building mental health pathways in schools appropriate to their individual needs; 2) hiring additional mental health professionals using an equitable distribution based on ratios of mental health providers; and 3) advocating for links between state mental health certification and licensing entities and Education Professional Standards Board. These three tiers of the project will change the face of mental health hiring and support in our schools.

Project staff will work closely with schools with the highest need to develop courses and identify appropriate teachers to create career pathways that will lead students to mental health professions. The staff will recruit eligible candidates for mental health services re-specialization, placement, and hiring. The project expects to provide \$65,000 toward costs of hiring a certified or licensed mental health provider. These costs will begin in year two for districts with the highest need, and staff will continue throughout the grant period, so that, by year five, all districts will have had at least two years of support from school-based mental health professionals. In addition, in the first year that mental health professionals are hired with grant funding, districts will receive \$2,400 for office supplies, \$1,000 for mental health supplies, and \$25,000 for developing a mental health career pathway. Until school-based professionals can be hired, the project will help fund community-based providers of mental health services in our schools. The project also will provide training for both mental health professional advancement and for career pathway development. Finally, the project will work closely with the staff of the Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky towards aligning education standards with those of the mental health authorities responsible for certification and licensure.

Participating schools and districts will invest time and resources in support of the project, including: identifying a Site Coordinator who will be responsible for managing the project and building buy-in within participating schools (paid by the grant in Years One through Three; match in Years Four and Five); supporting recruiting efforts and professional learning about diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and about the various paths to mental health credentials and licensure; placing and supporting mental health professionals in schools with demonstrated need, with a focus on increasing equity and placement in school communities where candidates live to increase retention; working with participating Institutions of Higher Education to support pathways for students; and hiring and supporting retention of credentialed and licensed mental health professionals in our schools with demonstrated need. We will integrate the work of those mental health providers with our existing multi-tiered systems of support to ensure the project becomes part of the fabric of our schools.

Our contribution to the required 25% match will include: time of school administrators (principals; existing counselors; MTSS teams; finance staff; human resources staff; diversity, equity and inclusion staff; and school administrative support staff) to manage grant-related activities and processes; meeting spaces in our schools for construction, implementation, and monitoring of the Mental Health Careers Development plan; travel of Steering Committee members and others for meetings and professional learning; and existing supplies and materials needed to support hiring.



Thank you for your continuing work in support of our students' mental health and school achievement. Through this project we will take a significant step forward in achieving the vision of our schools' work with Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services: With a united voice and unwavering commitment to high-quality public education for all, NKCES leads the P-12 educational agenda for the region through a whole-child, whole-school and whole community approach to ensure all students are college, career, and life ready.

Sincerely

Misty Middleton

Superintendent