

NKCES Report – August 2025

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

BEECHWOOD INDEPENDENT

Executive Director Update:

BELLEVUE INDEPENDENT

BOONE COUNTY

BRACKEN COUNTY

CAMPBELL COUNTY

CARROLL COUNTY

Walton Verona, Leadership Retreat, August 1: NKCES had the pleasure of hosting the Walton-Verona Independent Schools Leadership Retreat. It was an incredible opportunity to welcome their leaders and witness the energy, collaboration, and synergy taking place in the room. The retreat highlighted the district's commitment to growth, teamwork, and continuous improvement, and we were honored to support their important work.

COVINGTON INDEPENDENT

DAYTON INDEPENDENT

ERLANGER-ELSMERE INDEPENDENT

FLEMING COUNTY

FORT THOMAS INDEPENDENT

RSP Special Ed and AI PD, August 4: The NKCES Team led a professional development session for the Regional School Program (RSP), focusing on Special Education and the integration of AI in education. The training provided staff with valuable strategies and tools to enhance learning experiences for students. Dr. Razor stopped by to welcome everyone back and engaged with the team, setting a warm and encouraging tone for the new year.

GRANT COUNTY

GREENUP COUNTY

KENTON COUNTY

LEWIS COUNTY

LUDLOW INDEPENDENT

NKCES Board of Directors Meeting, August 6: We were thrilled with the strong attendance at this month's Board of Directors meeting, especially with many of our districts welcoming staff back that same week. The excitement at NKCES is evident as we celebrate several key milestones, including the launch of the new RSP logo, the implementation of our NKCES staff evaluation tool, and the completion of the NKCES handbook and policy & procedures.

MASON COUNTY

NEWPORT INDEPENDENT

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

As we begin this new school year, NKCES is honored to walk alongside our districts, continuing to provide cutting-edge, high-quality professional learning. The year ahead holds great promise, and we are grateful for the strong partnerships and shared commitment to serving our region's students.

OWEN COUNTY

PENDLETON COUNTY

SOUTHGATE INDEPENDENT

WALTON-VERONA INDEPENDENT

WILLIAMSTOWN INDEPENDENT

Finance Meeting, August 7: Finance Director Angie Perkins and Executive Director Dr. Amy Razor met this month with a focus on reviewing the 2025–2026 budget and ensuring alignment with district needs and long-term planning. The sustainment plan was updated to reflect current priorities and future growth. They also celebrated the completion of the parking lot expansion, which will improve accessibility and convenience for staff and visitors, and discussed progress on several upcoming projects that will continue to strengthen NKCES facilities and services.

Education Cooperative Executive Director Meeting, August 13: Dr. Razor spent the morning joining in the excitement of the new school year, warmly welcoming students back into the building. The first day of school at RSP was filled with energy as students began a new year of learning and growth. A highlight of the morning was seeing the students' reactions to the newly designed RSP logo. A sense of pride across the school community could be felt all around the building. The day went smoothly, with students settling in quickly and embracing the start of a strong school year. We look forward to continued learning, growth, and success for all students at RSP.

Superintendent Webcast, August 12: Dr. Razor, along with leaders from across the state, joined the virtual meeting to stay informed on important updates from the Education Commissioner and his staff.

Instructional Leadership Team Meeting, August 14: Dr. Smith led the recent internal instructional leadership meeting, which included important SERTAC updates and a focus on ensuring all groups remain in alignment. The team also revisited the strategic plan to confirm current initiatives are supporting long-term goals and discussed preparations for the upcoming professional consortium meeting. The session emphasized the importance of collaboration, alignment, and strategic reflection across leadership teams.

Facilities:

Building Update: The parking lot expansion is now complete. When you visit NKCES, you will now see that most RSP Staff are utilizing the new parking spaces directly in front of the school. This has significantly increased parking availability to our visiting guests. To finish off this project we will have a landscaping company smooth out the hillside and freshen up the landscaping in the front of the NKCES Administrative building.

Professional Learning (PL) Update:

August Professional Learning: NKCES supported 148 professional learning opportunities focused on academics, culture and climate, leadership, and special education during June/July, serving 3,519 educators.

Professional Learning (PL) Consortium: The 25.26 NKCES PL Consortium kicked off in August with a collaborative meeting. Topics included NKCES IDEA/SERTAC Update, NKCES Learning and Empowerment Update, [District Request Form](#), and planning for the monthly district share-outs. We also had a District Spotlight. Keith Faust with Fort Thomas Independent shared their [PL Plan Workshop/Cadre](#). The meeting ended with a member-led PLC discussion.

Title I & Title II Meeting: The 25.26 NKCES Title I/Title II Consortium kicked off in August with a collaborative meeting. Topics included [Federal Programs Resources](#), [Funding Assurances upload instructions](#), and [Declaration of Participation](#) (November 3 - 17). The meeting ended with a member-led PLC discussion.

District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) Meeting: The 25.26 NKCES DAC Consortium kicked off in August with a collaborative meeting. Topics included K Screen/Brigance Updates (Window - no earlier than fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the start of the current academic year and no later than the thirtieth (30th) instructional day of the academic year, [OMS](#) is live - District-Level Users: Format: first.last@district.kyschools.us_XXX (where XXX is your three-digit district code), School-Level Users: Format: first.last@district.kyschools.us_XXXXXX (where XXXXXX is your six-digit school code), [Child Care Facility Addition Request Form](#), KASA Data (Week of August 4th - Assessment Student Data Released, August 13th - 21st - Fall QC Data Review, October 23rd - Quality Control Day, Mid-Late November - District Embargo, Mid-Late November - Public Reporting, 10-day regulatory period and add data to your school and district websites), Updated Trainings ([Admin Code](#), [Inclusion of Special Populations](#), [Other Trainings](#) (Accountability & Back to School)), [AKSA DAC Binders Option](#) (by 8.15), [Scott Trimble Workshop](#) (October 27 & 28), Discussion on SAT ([Slides from KASA](#), [SAT Resources](#), Sophomores), and DAC Sharing. 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.

[2025.26 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:

Leadership Meetings: Ms. Brittney Howell facilitated the first Directors of Special Education (DoSE) meeting of the year as well as the first Preschool Coordinators meeting. Both gatherings set a strong foundation for collaboration, shared learning, and alignment of goals to support districts in the year ahead. It was especially encouraging to see leaders come together with such energy and commitment at the start of the school year. The meetings provided space for networking, problem-solving, and celebrating the collective work that will strengthen services for students across the region.

Paraeducator Conference: NKCES SERTAC led the Paraeducator Conference and it was a tremendous success and provided a strong start to the school year. Sessions focused on equipping paraeducators with practical strategies, tools, and resources to support students and teachers effectively. The event fostered collaboration, boosted confidence, and ensured participants felt prepared and valued as essential members of the school community.

SERTAC In-District Trainings: This quarter, the SERTAC team provided a wide range of professional learning across districts to strengthen support for students with disabilities. Training topics included Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), co-teaching practices, IEP development, ARC chair leadership, and strategies for executive functioning and behavior. Sessions also addressed alternatives to suspension, special education updates, and ways general education staff can better support students with special needs. These trainings ensured educators and administrators are equipped with practical tools, up-to-date knowledge, and collaborative strategies to enhance outcomes for all learners.

Summer Literacy Camp: The SERTAC team co-led a Summer Literacy Camp in partnership with the Learning and Empowerment team. This professional learning experience provided educators with high-quality resources, targeted support, and effective strategies to strengthen literacy instruction within ELA classrooms. The camp emphasized practical application, ensuring teachers left with tools they could immediately implement to support student success.

High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) Training: Ms. Kim Snowball facilitated multiple sessions on High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), focusing on how to effectively integrate supports for diverse learners. These sessions equipped teachers with practical strategies to ensure instructional materials are accessible, inclusive, and impactful for all students.

IDEA Team Meeting: The SERTAC/IDEA Team held its first meeting of the year on August 18, 2025. The team focused on planning and collaboration for upcoming professional learning, coaching, and PLNs, while also reflecting on prior work to inform future practice. Key updates included IDEA conferences, the upcoming NKCES retreat, online module development and relaunch, and task group planning. The team also reviewed CAP training updates, Perspectives tour logistics, cadre planning, and new feedback tools to connect with North Star Priorities. The meeting set a strong foundation for coordinated support and professional learning across the region.

Learning and Empowerment Team:

Learning and Empowerment Team Meeting: The Learning and Empowerment Team held its first meeting of the year on August 18, 2025. The session centered on intentional planning and collaboration around upcoming professional learning opportunities and PLNs, while also reflecting on previous efforts to guide future growth. Key highlights included planning for upcoming conferences, preparation for the NKCES retreat, progress on online module development and relaunch, and grant updates. This meeting laid a strong foundation for continued, coordinated support and impactful professional learning across the region.

Northern Kentucky Institute for Arts Education (NKIAE): In August, Joe Bertucci led professional learning in Covington Independent, Fleming County, Grant County, and Stephens Elementary (Boone County). Mr. Bertucci also attended a meeting of the Greater Cincinnati Alliance for Arts Education and, in partnership with ArtsWave and The Carnegie, led Professional Development for Teaching Artists, strengthening relationships between schools and local arts partners. Finally, with Ms. Vicki Dansberry and Mrs. Emily Giles, Mr. Bertucci developed and submitted a proposal for new funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Assistance for Arts Education program.

Northern Kentucky Institute for Strategic Prevention (NKISP): Planning for the 2025 NKY Youth Summit continued with leadership transitioning to NKCES staff Rachel Ball and Brian Brentlinger. The Summit is scheduled for October 28, 2025, and counselors were invited to register ten students each. Quarter Progress Report (QPR) 3 was submitted, and QPR 4 will follow after approval; all grant funds were finalized for Summit expenses and Red Ribbon Week. August activities included a *Screenagers* screening with 27 attendees, distribution of vaping prevention materials at community and school events, and the final site visit for the Activating Youth Voice grant. The NKISP Steering Committee concluded its work, meeting two of three goals, and Youth Vaping Prevention Training was delivered to introduce evidence-based programs and resources. The month ended with a retirement reception for Christi Jefferds.

School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) and Trauma-Informed School Services (TISS):

In August, the SBMH and TISS teams focused on delivering district- and school-specific training on topics such as Conditions for Success, classroom behavior management, teacher wellness, and professional opportunities tailored to support local needs. The teams also reviewed and are in the process of finalizing all district invoices for the 2024–2025 school year for both SBMH and TISS services. These efforts reflect the teams' ongoing commitment to strengthening trauma-informed practices, supporting educator well-being, and ensuring effective systems of support across the region and supporting district plans.

Learning Acceleration: In August, the Learning Acceleration Specialists (LAS) team, in collaboration with other NKCES staff, delivered professional learning across more than 15 districts, reaching over 2,733 educators. Training sessions addressed a wide range of topics, including Open SciEd, AI integration in instruction, The New Science and Art of Teaching, and additional evidence-based practices to strengthen teaching and learning. In addition, Natasha Smith and Alison Teegarden represented NKCES on the national stage, presenting at the Big Sky Literacy Conference on the Science of Reading and NKCES's Conditions for Success framework. Emily Giles, with the help of Alison Teegarden, has also continued preparations for the 2025–2026 cohorts with the initial launch of Numeracy Counts CEO and LETRS Phase IV CEO. Furthermore, planning is underway for the September Sproutbox, which will highlight innovative instructional practices in the areas of arts, artificial intelligence, and prevention strategies.

Grant Consortium Update:

Dr. Cindy Sanders, cindy.sanders@gcfdn.org of the [Greater Cincinnati Foundation](#) said that Greater Cincinnati Foundation really would like to expand work in Northern Kentucky's Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties. She described existing offerings (Learning Links, Summertime Kids) and said that a new RFP, the Educational Success Grant, would be coming out August 25. This is expected to be \$15,000 to \$30,000 to fund activities in support of early literacy. She encouraged partnerships with nonprofits in support of the topic.

District Reports: Kerry McHugh reported she had been contacted by the project officer with a question about the Erlanger-Elsmere application for Drug Free Communities they submitted. This is generally considered to be a good sign, but of course not definitive.

Grants available

[8-20 Agility Gambling prevention](#) \$40,000 for prevention services


[9-8 Rural Changemaker](#) \$10,000 to \$70,000 for rural counties only (Bracken, Pendleton, Grant)

[11-20 CTE Innovation and Support Grant](#) \$100,000 to build a new career pathway. Work with CTE and ATC.



Foundations to Check Out

- [Robinson Foundation Grant](#) – Grant amounts vary for U.S.-based nonprofits working in youth services, education, health, family support, disaster relief, veterans' issues, animal welfare, nature conservation, and faith-based initiatives. [Due Oct 15]
- [Lawrence Foundation Grant](#) – \$5,000 to \$10,000 available for U.S.-based nonprofits and public schools supporting environmental conservation, community services, or disaster relief. Funds can be used for general operating or project expenses. [Due Oct 31]

Grant Application Summary

 Ready4Life NK Summary of activities and staffing NKCES applied for this funding on July 29.

Grants Pending

-  [3-17 Strategic Prevention Framework](#)
-  [4-14 Rural Communities Opioid Response Program -- Pathways](#)
- [5-5 Drug Free Communities](#)
- [6/18 and 6/26 School Violence Prevention Program](#)
- [Ready4Life NK](#)

Award announcements are expected in September.

Multi-District Grants in Implementation (see reports above)

- NK Institute for Strategic Prevention
- NK Institute for Arts Education
- Trauma Informed School Services and School Based Mental Health Services

Grant Tips and News

- [Communications with Federal officers monitored](#) (Message # 14). The announcement at this link contains a warning that all Federal communications are likely being monitored, possibly even on personal cell phones, for topics unwelcome to the current administration. Here's the list sent a few months ago of [Words to avoid](#).
- Grantx issues: Grantx is an AI-based grant search company that will **charge an organization 5%** of any grant the organization finds on their website. Use careful judgement about logging in.

- [Opioid Abatement Advisory Symposium Oct. 12-14 Louisville October](#). This is to discuss ideas of how to use the Opioid Settlement funds. Vicki will attend and would welcome members who would like to build prevention using these funds.
- Newsletter, [The Grants Briefcase](#). The first edition was sent this month! This will create a series of information over the next year that anyone can use to learn about grant basics.
- Vicki is circulating a [survey](#) to discover which districts have affiliated 501 c3s.

Regional School Programs (RSP) Update:

- RSP welcomed students back on August 13th for the start of our school year!
- Our theme for the year is “Every Scorpion has a Song”.
- The Advisory Board will have its first quarterly meeting on September 16th.
- RSP is working on the initial application for Alternative Program of Distinction, which recently opened back up!