

## NKCES Report – October 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

**Board of Directors Meeting, October 1:** We began the month with our October Board of Directors meeting, which was held early to accommodate the majority of member districts that were on fall break during the first couple of weeks. Dr. Robb Smith, Chief Academic Officer, shared an NKCES Assessment Update outlining how and when districts are testing students, as well as the assessments used to measure student growth. Brittney Howell, Regional Director of Special Education, provided a SERTAC update highlighting regional supports and initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for students with exceptional needs.

While there was no new business, the discussion was rich, and the shared learning among district leaders was invaluable.

**Finance Meeting, October 2:** Each month, Dr. Amy Razor meets with Finance Director Mrs. Angie Perkins and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Smith to closely monitor the sustainment plan and discuss future projects that will support the long-term maintenance and longevity of the building and grounds.

**Virtual Meeting with Ken Broermann of Intellispark, October 6:** Mr. Ken Broermann is a long-time partner of NKCES and has collaborated with us on several projects. Dr. Razor held a meeting with him to learn about the new tool, Intellispark, and potential grant opportunities.

**Walgreens Onsite Vaccinations, October 7:** Dr. Razor remains committed to supporting the health and well-being of employees by offering convenient on-site vaccination opportunities. In partnership with Walgreens, a licensed pharmacist visited NKCES for half a day to provide vaccinations to staff members. This initiative reflects NKCES's ongoing dedication to fostering a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

**Virtual Meeting with Nolan Marx, Leader In Me, October 7:** Dr. Razor met with Mr. Nolan Marx to discuss a partnership that would provide high-quality training for the region's leadership. This is an exciting opportunity for our region, and she looks forward to sharing upcoming dates soon.

**Instructional Leadership Team Meeting, October 7:** During the monthly internal instructional leadership meeting, Dr. Smith guided discussions centered on SERTAC updates and reinforcing alignment across all teams.

Leaders revisited the strategic plan to assess how current initiatives align with long-term objectives and began preparations for the upcoming professional consortium meeting. The meeting highlighted the continued value of collaboration, coherence, and intentional reflection within leadership teams.

**Greenup School Visit, October 8-9:** Dr. Razor, Dr. Smith, and members of the NKCES leadership team visited the Greenup County School District (GCS), spending the day at multiple schools, including Greenup School of Innovation. Recently, KDE held an immersion day at GCS and the NKCES leadership staff went

on a separate day to experience firsthand the incredible learning opportunities students are engaged in each day and the implementation of the District Local Accountability System.

The visit showcased a vibrant culture of hands-on, project-based learning that emphasizes creativity, critical thinking, and real-world application. Students demonstrated impressive technical and entrepreneurial skills across a variety of disciplines.

During the visit, just a few examples of student learning and engagement the team experienced:

- Students designing and 3D printing custom objects, showcasing not only their design and engineering skills but also their ability to use technology to solve real-world problems.
- Students creating custom t-shirts for the school band, combining graphic design, production, and business skills to bring their creative ideas to life.
- Students caring for chickens as part of an agricultural education project, where the eggs produced are later used in school-based food preparation – a remarkable example of sustainable, student-led farm-to-table learning.

The NKCES leadership team was inspired by the innovation, collaboration, and enthusiasm displayed by both students and staff. The visit highlighted how Greenup County Schools are cultivating future-ready learners through authentic experiences that connect classroom learning to community impact.

**Education Cooperative Executive Director Monthly Meeting with KDE, October 10:** Dr. Razor, along with the other Education Cooperative Executive Directors from across the state, participated in a virtual meeting with KDE to stay informed about KDE initiatives. The Commissioner was extremely complimentary about the support and partnership with cooperatives.

**Superintendent Webcast, October 14:** Dr. Razor, along with leaders from across the state, participated in a virtual meeting to stay informed about important updates from the Education Commissioner and his staff.

**PL Consortium Meeting, October 17:** At the PL Consortium Meeting, the team highlighted upcoming NKCES professional learning opportunities and dedicated time for districts to collaborate, exchange ideas, and support one another's learning.

**Team Meeting, October 20:** The NKCES Team meeting provided a valuable opportunity to reaffirm our mission and vision, with a focus on *ElevateNKY* and aligning NKCES resources and professional learning opportunities with the Portrait of a Graduate framework. Together, we explored how our collective efforts can best support districts in developing the skills and dispositions outlined in the portrait. This time together is always meaningful for strengthening our communication, deepening relationships, and ensuring that our work remains connected, collaborative, and purpose-driven in service to our schools and students.

**Synergy Team Meeting, October 21:** Each month, Dr. Razor and Dr. Smith meet with the leadership team to hear department reports and review the RACI chart, ensuring major initiatives are progressing on time with the right team members engaged. The team also revisits the NKCES mission and vision, keeping them at the center of every decision and action.

**Facility Tour, Dayton & Southgate, October 22:** The recent facility tour highlighted the Dayton and Southgate Independent School Districts. This facility tour took on additional meaning, continuing the

positive momentum achieved at the recent Northern Kentucky Education Council (NKYEC) convening. With all our districts facing recent scrutiny, this is an opportunity to demonstrate the regional support we have for one another, regardless of size or demographics. Superintendents Greg Duty and Rick Wolf shared how they have embraced the past, maximized resources, and have a distinct vision for student success.

**Alternative Education Program of Distinction Site Visit, October 23:** RSP applied and was selected for a site visit to earn the Alternative Education Program of Distinction Award. Principal Mrs. Stephanie Turner and the NKCES Leadership team collaborated to prepare for this visit, and we appreciate the districts that participated in the process. We look forward to learning more about the possibilities of this distinction.

**Aurora Conference, October 25-28:** The Aurora Conference is the premier event of education innovators working to transform K-12 education at the FullScale Symposium on October 25-28, 2025. Presentations will focus on community, lessons from the field about education innovation, and the latest research and policy to support educational transformation. The NKCES Leadership team has been asked to share highlights of our work to impact a region as we create a world yet to be.

**NKY Youth Summit, October 28:** NKCES led the NKY Youth Summit on October 28, an inspiring event that brought together students from across our region to develop leadership skills, promote mental health awareness, and advocate for positive change in their schools and communities. The Summit provided opportunities for youth voices to be heard and empowered through collaboration, dialogue, and action planning. NKCES was proud to support this initiative, which aligns with our mission to cultivate a world yet to be to amplify student awareness and engagement across Northern Kentucky and beyond.

**Aspiring Leaders Institute, October 30:** The NKCES Principal Institute cultivates a robust network of school leaders dedicated to growth, collaboration, and shared success. Through monthly in-person sessions, participants engage in leadership development, community building, and feedback-driven learning. With programming valued at over \$3,200, the institute is offered at a significantly reduced rate for NKCES members and non-members alike.

**KDE Facilities Meet and Greet, October 30:** NKCES hosted representatives from the Kentucky Department of Education, including Mr. Greg Dunbar, for a Facility Tour and collaborative session. This session focused on outlining the assistance and guidance KDE can provide to school districts in the areas of district facilities planning, capital construction, and property transactions. The discussion also highlighted current challenges and emerging opportunities that districts face as they plan for safe, efficient, and future-ready learning environments.

**RSP Fall Festival and Trick or Treat, October 31:** The students at RSP were thrilled to participate in the annual Fall Festival sponsored by NKU College of Education students. NKCES joined in the festivities by participating in the trick-or-treat portion of the event. The NKCES staff welcomed students into the administrative building to check out our costumes and receive treats. Both students and staff enjoyed the afternoon fun!

### **Facilities:**

**Building Update:** The hill in front of the RSP parking has been smoothed and seeded. We are currently soliciting bids for additional split units at the training center. New landscaping has been installed at the front of the building, and this work will continue to the other side of the building next month.

Additionally, NKCES is in the process of designing a more prominent sign for the side of the building most visible to US 27, which will bring together the NKCES & RSP logos.

### **Professional Learning (PL) Update:**

**October Professional Learning:** NKCES supported 173 professional learning opportunities focused on academics, culture and climate, leadership, and special education during September, serving 2,334 educators.

**Professional Learning (PL) Consortium:** The 25.26 NKCES PL Consortium continued in October with a collaborative meeting. Topics included NKCES [Instructional Team Reports](#) given by IDEA - Ms. Brittney Howell and Learning & Empowerment - Mrs. Emily Giles and Dr. Kim Weber, Instructional spotlight: Mr. Adam Bessler with ThinkCERCA, and planning for the monthly district share-outs. The meeting ended with a member-led PLC discussion.

**Title I & Title II Meeting:** The 25.26 NKCES Title I/Title II Consortium continued in October with a collaborative meeting. Topics included [Declaration of Participation](#) (deadline - Nov. 17), [Confidentiality Agreement](#), [Comparability Report](#) (Nov. 3), and [Title I Handbook and Resources](#). The meeting ended with a member-led PLC discussion.

**District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) Meeting:** The 25.26 NKCES DAC Consortium continued in October with a collaborative meeting. Topics included K Screen/Brigance Updates, SAT ([New Survey Question Testing Date](#), [Official SAT Practice](#), [SAT Suite Ordering and Registration \(SSOR\) system](#), [Guidance document](#) and access codes, [Spring 2026 SAT Junior State Administration In-Person Training Registration](#), [NKCES/Torchprep 11/14](#), [SSD Online](#) - for Accommodations ([Accommodations Webinar](#) - 11/12 from 10-12, Have a College Board account, and [SSD Coordinator Form](#)), [Technical Readiness Webinar](#), DAC/BAC Support ([kentuckysat@collegeboard.org](mailto:kentuckysat@collegeboard.org), (866) 609-2430, or [Kentucky-specific webpage](#)), Testing Sophomores (Contact Information - Mark Yoho - [myoho@collegeboard.org](mailto:myoho@collegeboard.org)), Assessment & Accountability Data, Alternate Assessment, WIDA ACCESS & Alternate ACCESS, College Admissions Exam Update, and [Scott Trimble Workshop - October 27th and 28th](#). 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:**

**SERTAC / Regional Special Education Supports:** The SERTAC Team completed the ISPROUT data collection visit at Tichenor Middle School, focusing on inclusive practices, instructional alignment, and systems of support. The team is now compiling a comprehensive data package that will inform school-level planning and improvement priorities.

**Community-Based Instruction (CBI) Partnership:** We hosted our first CBI site visit with Highlands High School at Perspectives, supporting meaningful community engagement and real-world learning experiences for students.

**Professional Learning – Inclusive Practices:** Mrs. Amanda Bell and Ms. Brittney Howell attended the All Means All Workshop with Solution Tree, focused on improving outcomes for diverse learners through strengthened PLC structures and collaborative instructional planning. Key learning will be shared regionally through upcoming leadership and district supports.

**KATC Autism Training:** Mrs. Annie Wheatcraft completed a professional learning session with the Kentucky Autism Training Center (KATC), focused on evidence-based strategies for supporting students with autism in both classroom and community settings. This training strengthens our region's capacity to provide consistent, high-quality supports across districts. Mrs. Wheatcraft will now begin sharing key practices and resources with school teams through consultation, coaching, and collaborative planning.

**New Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) Launch:**

- We held the first School Psychologist PLN, establishing a structured space for collaboration, problem-solving, and regional alignment of best practices.
- We held the first Preschool Coordinator PLN, supporting early learning leaders in strengthening transitions, instructional practices, and family engagement across districts.

**College & Career Readiness Cadre Participation:** Mrs. Emily Borchers attended the regional College and Career Counselor Cadre, contributing a special education lens focused on supporting students with disabilities in postsecondary planning. Mrs. Borchers provided guidance related to Indicator 13 compliance, transition planning requirements, and effective practices for connecting students to college and career pathways.

**Erikson Early Math Program (EEMC) –** SERTAC team members, led by Mrs. Kim Snowball, facilitated the Erikson Early Math Program (EEMC) session. The EEMC is grounded in the work of the Early Math Collaborative at the Erikson Institute, which focuses on strengthening early mathematics instruction for young learners. The program provides research-based professional development, deepens teacher understanding of foundational math concepts, and uses the "Big Ideas" framework to support consistent, developmentally appropriate math instruction across classrooms.

**Learning and Empowerment Team:**

**Northern Kentucky Institute for Arts Education (NKIAE):** In October, Mr. Joe Bertucci collected, organized, and shared data with the project evaluator for the Assistance for Arts Education grant, and began preparing information for the grant's final report. Mr. Bertucci arranged delivery of "Arts In Mind" banners to the thirty schools in the latest cohort of that program, and met with a representative of MindPop, one of our national arts partners, to bring ideas from their Creative Learning Initiative to our region. Finally, Mr. Bertucci participated in iSprout at Tichenor Middle School and supported the NKCES Youth Summit.

**School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) and Trauma-Informed School Services (TISS):** This month the School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) Team proudly represented our region at the annual Kentucky Counseling Association Conference, showcasing the innovative and impactful work being done to support students' mental health and well-being across Northern Kentucky. Additionally, the Youth Summit was a tremendous success, bringing together more than 350 students and school connectors from across the






region. This event focused on prevention, self-advocacy, and mental health awareness, empowering youth to take an active role in their own well-being. Both initiatives have had a significant positive impact on our region, highlighting the strength of our collaborative efforts and continued commitment to supporting student mental health. The TISS Team continues to provide valuable support to schools and districts through behavior management and coaching, responding to a variety of needs across the region. Their collaborative approach and training/support in the Conditions for Success has promoted consistent, positive practices across schools.


**Learning Acceleration Specialists (LAS):** In October, the learning acceleration team had a productive month of engagement and collaboration. The LAS work included connecting with educators during a regional Smekens Writing training focused on strengthening writing instruction and practice. The High Quality Instructional Resources (HQIR) team began the intensive process of becoming Curriculum-Based Professional Learning (CBPL) certified through Rivet Education. AI innovation continued this month through a regional workshop and focused district-level work to develop and refine district AI policies that ensure responsible and effective use of emerging technologies. Additionally, the team worked on two new federal grant applications: the School-Based Mental Health grant and the Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) grant—both designed to strengthen student safety and well-being across our region.

### **Grant Consortium Update:**

#### **Grants available**

- [11-20 CTE Innovation and Support Grant](#)
- [STOP School Violence](#)
- [Read to Achieve](#)
-  SPARK KDE
-  Opioid Abatement 25
-  21 CCLC 25

#### **Grants Pending**

- [Interact for Health Safe and Supportive Spaces](#) (Bracken, Grant, and Pendleton Counties and Williamstown)
- [9-8 Rural Changemaker](#) (Bracken County)
-  School Based Mental Health 25

#### **Multi-District Grants in Implementation**

- [NK Institute for Strategic Prevention](#) ended as of August 31. Materials for Red Ribbon Week were available and distributed to schools.
- [Trauma Informed School Services and School Based Mental Health Services](#) Emily Giles shared information about these grants, including the schedule for schools to send invoices to NKCES for relevant reimbursement. Both will receive continuation funding.

#### **Grant Tips and News**

- Thanks for sharing: Houchens and KEMI grant, Public School Districts' Opioid Recovery Trust. These are grants not currently available, but alert Grants Consortium members let us know about them so they are on our radar. Please continue to share information you find about new grant possibilities.
- [Custom Chat GPT for Grant Search](#)
- [Opioid Abatement Advisory Symposium Oct. 12-14 Louisville October](#). Mrs. Vicki Dansberry met with leaders of the group awarding these funds. One of them will join us November 4 by zoom at 10 AM: [Zoom Link for meeting about Opioid Settlement availability](#). Join us if you can!

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

- NKU hosted the annual Fall Festival for RSP on October 31st. We followed that with our annual RSP Trick or Treating around the school-and we visited some of our friends at NKCES!
- RSP hosted KDE for our site visit, as part of our Alternative Program of Distinction application process. This occurred on October 23rd. Thank you again to our district partners for coming to be a part of that process.
- RSP will have our 2nd annual Thanksgiving Day Parade on November 21st.
- RSP Standing Committee is working on ideas for potential transportation for RSP students to various opportunities (CBI, College/Trade School visits, etc.).