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Issue Paper

DATE: 06/02/2026

AGENDA ITEM (ACTION ITEM):

Consider/Approve the First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding Between Northern Kentucky University and Participating Districts of the Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services for the NKU Votruba Young Scholars Academy.

APPLICABLE BOARD POLICY:

01.11 General Powers and Duties of the Board

HISTORY/BACKGROUND:

The Young Scholars Academy (YSA) started in April of 2019 through a partnership with the KCS D and NKU. In 2022 YSA became a regional program and currently serves 7 Northern Kentucky school districts. Since its inception, 547 KCS D students have participated in YSA, including the 168 KCS D students who are enrolled for the 26-27 school year. Three-year trend data indicates that KCS D has not exceeded 175 students enrolled, with 147 students enrolled in 23-24, 146 in 24-25, and 165 in 25-26. Based on this trend data, a cap-size of 175 KCS D students is recommended beginning in 26-27. NKU, NKCES, and participating school districts currently have an MOU through July 31, 2031 that was approved by the KCS D board in September 2024. The first amendment is for the 26-27 school year and is resulting from changes from the 2026 legislative session that removes districts' ability to receive SEEK funds for YSA. The amendment states that NKU will cover the cost of tuition for YSA students for up to 15 credit hours per semester, as well as staffing costs. NKU will also cover the cost of meals for students who apply and are approved for the federal free/reduced lunch program. The NKU student services fee will be waived for all participating school districts. Families will be responsible for the cost of textbooks, any credit hours beyond the 15 hours per semester, and meals if a student does not qualify for free/reduced lunch. Trend data indicates an average of 120 KCS D students have utilized transportation to and from YSA annually in the past three years. An estimated 133 students will utilize KCS D transportation to attend YSA in 26-27. Three-year trend data of transportation costs shows an average of \$21,830 spent annually. KCS D will continue to pay for transportation at an estimated cost of \$22,104.00 in FY 27.

FISCAL/BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Estimated \$22,104.00 in FY 2027 for transportation costs.

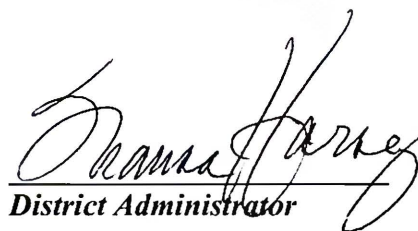
RECOMMENDATION:

Approval to accept the First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding Between Northern Kentucky University and Participating Districts of the Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services for the NKU Votruba Young Scholars Academy.

CONTACT PERSON:

Amanda Dempsey

Principal/Administrator


District Administrator


Superintendent

Use this form to submit your request to the Superintendent for items to be added to the Board Meeting Agenda. Principal -complete, print, sign and send to your Director. Director -if approved, sign and put in the Superintendent's mailbox.

First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding Between

Northern Kentucky University and

Participating Districts of the

Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services

for the NKU Votruba Young Scholars Academy

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027

This First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding (“Amendment”) is made between Northern Kentucky University (“NKU”), the Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services (“NKCES”), a collective of Northern Kentucky public school districts, and individual participating school districts (each a “Party” and, together, the “Parties”).

WHEREAS, the Parties entered into the Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) in August and September 2024, which governs the operation and financial support of NKU’s Votruba Young Scholars Academy; and

WHEREAS, the Parties now wish to amend the MOU for the 2026-2027 academic year only, except as expressly provided herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

- 1. Duration of Amendment.** The terms of this Amendment apply only to the 2026-2027 academic year and not to any subsequent academic years, except as expressly provided herein. The Parties will confer beginning in late summer 2026 to discuss and finalize terms for the YSA program beyond the 2026-2027 academic year.
- 2. Tuition.** NKU will cover the cost of NKU tuition for YSA students from participating school districts (up to 15 credit hours per semester). To receive this benefit, students must apply for the general education and work-ready dual scholarship, with assistance from YSA and school staff. The estimated cost to NKU is \$930,900.
- 3. YSA Staffing.** For the 2026-2027 academic year, participating school districts are not required to pay the per-student cost described in Attachment A to the MOU. During that academic year, NKU will pay up to \$131,910 to cover the cost of one YSA staff member, who is an employee of Kenton County in collaboration with NKCES. The Parties intend that if this position becomes vacant, NKCES will hire the replacement.

For the 2026-2027 academic year and subsequent academic years during the term of the MOU, NKU also will pay all employment costs associated with up to three NKU employees who support the YSA program. The Parties acknowledge that this reflects an additional hire by NKU beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

4. Food Services. NKU will pay the cost of providing breakfast and lunch in NKU's dining halls to YSA students from participating school districts who apply and are approved for the federal free / reduced lunch program. This cost is estimated to be \$334,370. NKU will pay those costs only for students who apply and are approved for the program; students who attend a CEP school still must apply and be approved. Participating school districts and NKU will reasonably cooperate to establish a process for verifying approvals of student applications. Participating school districts at their option may continue to pay the cost of meals for their students, including those who do not apply or qualify for the free / reduced lunch program.

5. Student Service Fee. The Student Service fee described in section 24.g of the MOU will be waived for all participating school districts.

6. Costs Covered by NKU. The Parties acknowledge that the costs previously covered by participating school districts that will be paid by NKU for the 2026-2027 academic year consist of the following:

Projected YSA Costs to NKU 2026-2027		
Tuition	290 @ \$3210	\$930,900
Staffing	1 FTE	\$131,910 (not to exceed) (not including new NKU hire)
Meals	290 @ \$1153	\$334,370
Total Cost		\$1,397,180

7. Transportation; Textbooks. Participating school districts will address costs and arrangements for transportation and textbooks for their own students. NKU will not pay costs associated with those responsibilities.

8. Funding Changes. This Amendment reflects the Parties' assumption that SEEK funding cannot be used to support YSA students during the 2026-2027 academic year. If during the 2026-2027 academic year participating school districts are permitted to use SEEK funding to support some or all of their YSA students, via legislative, agency, or other action by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, then the Parties will negotiate appropriate modifications to this Amendment to reflect that additional source of funding.

9. **Other Terms.** All terms of the MOU not directly modified by this Amendment remain in full force and effect for the 2026-2027 academic year.

10. **Counterparts.** This Amendment may be executed in counterparts, and by each of the Parties on separate counterparts, each of which, when so executed, shall be deemed an original, but all of which shall constitute one instrument.

11. **Entire Agreement.** This Amendment embodies and constitutes the final understanding between the Parties with respect to modifications to the YSA program for the 2026-2027 academic year, and all prior or contemporaneous agreements, understandings, representations, and statements (oral or written) are merged and incorporated into this Amendment.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Amendment has been duly executed and delivered by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties herein as of the dates documented below.

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

**NORTHERN KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE
FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

Cady Short-Thompson, Ph.D.

Amy Razor, Ph.D.

President

Executive Director

Date: _____

Date: _____

District: _____

District: _____

Print Name: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

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