# THE NON-TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Guidance Document

Kentucky Department of Education

Division of Innovation and Partner Engagement

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# General Information about the Non-Traditional Instruction Program

## History of the Non-Traditional Instruction Program

Prior to 2011, school districts across the Commonwealth had a shared problem: students were missing too much school due to health or safety-related school cancellations. In some cases, school districts were closed for 20 or more days a year, which is the equivalent of over a month of instructional time. Missing this much school resulted in significant disruption of instruction and learning loss similar to "summer slide."

As a potential solution for the disruption of instruction, Dr. Terry Holiday, former Commissioner of Education (Commissioner) proposed a plan that would allow school districts to continue to provide instruction to students when it was necessary for school to be cancelled due to health or safety reasons. This solution was the Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot, also known as the Snow Bound Pilot. In this pilot, which began in 2011, the legislature allowed districts the opportunity to conduct school through virtual or other non-traditional means on days that the district would have normally had to call school off. The district would then submit a request showing evidence of student participation and learning to the Commissioner to consider approving those specialized school days as regular instructional days. If approved, the district would not have to make up those non-traditional instructional days.

The primary criteria a district had to meet to submit an application for participation in the Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot was to have missed an average of 20 school days the previous three years. Due to the mild winters in the two previous years (i.e. 2011-12 and 2012-13), most districts had not missed enough days and, accordingly, were not eligible to apply to the Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot. There were, though, 2-3 school districts that were able to participate in the program, which lasted for three years.

During the 2014 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly, the Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot program was expanded to a full-time program called the Non-Traditional Instruction Program. Specifically, House Bill 211 (2014) removed the language requiring school districts to miss 20 or more school days in order to participate in the program, which opened eligibility up to all 173 Kentucky school districts.

In 2018, the Non-Traditional Instruction Program was again revised by the legislature. Senate Bill 73 (2018) revised the language of KRS 158.070 and also mandated regulations for the Non-Traditional Instruction Program be promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Education and implemented for the 2019-2020 school year.

Since 2014, the Non-Traditional Instruction Program has grown significantly in the number of districts participating. In the first year of state-wide eligibility, 13 school districts implemented non-traditional instruction (NTI). Now, in the sixth year of state-wide implementation, 83 school districts are participating in the Non-Traditional Instruction Program during the 2019-2020 school year.

## Statutory Authority

**KRS 158.070(9)** ***states:***

> *Notwithstanding any other statute, each school term shall include no less than the equivalent of the student instructional year in subsection (1)(f) of this section, or a variable student instructional year in subsection (1)(h) 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 a nontraditional instruction plan approved by the commissioner of education on days when the school district is closed for health or safety reasons. The district's plan shall indicate how the nontraditional instruction process shall be a continuation of learning that is occurring on regular student attendance days. Instructional delivery methods, including the use of technology, shall be clearly delineated in the plan. 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.*

**KRS 158.070(10)** ***states:***

> *By December 31, 2018, the Kentucky Board of Education shall promulgate administrative regulations to be effective beginning with the 2019-2020 school year to prescribe the conditions and procedures for districts to be approved for the nontraditional instruction program. Administrative regulations promulgated by the board under this section shall specify:*
>
> > *(a) The application, plan review, approval, and amendment process;*
> > *(b) Reporting requirements for districts approved for the program, which may include but are not limited to examples of student work, lesson plans, teacher work logs, and student and teacher participation on nontraditional instruction days. Documentation to support the use of nontraditional instruction days shall include clear evidence of learning continuation;*
> > *(c) Timelines for initial approval as a nontraditional instruction district, length of approval, the renewal process, and ongoing evaluative procedures required of the district;*
> > *(d) Reporting and oversight responsibilities of the district and the Kentucky Department of Education, including the documentation required to show clear evidence of learning continuation during nontraditional instruction days; and*
> > *(e) Other components deemed necessary to implement this section.*

## Regulatory Authority

In compliance with KRS 159.070(10), the Kentucky Board of Education promulgated 701 KAR 5:150.

## Program Data

### Year One (2014-2015)

- Number of participating school districts: **13**
- School district size range: **724 - 8,982 students**
- Average school district size: **3,229 students**
- Average number of NTI days used per school district: **7.7**
- Participation rates across all participating districts:
    - Student participation: **91%**
    - Teacher participation: **98%**

### Year Two (2015-2016)

- Number of participating school districts: **44**
- School district size range: **420 - 11,402 students**
- Average school district size: **3,367 students**
- Average number of NTI days used per school district: **5.7**
- Participation rates across all participating districts:
    - Student participation: **94%**
    - Teacher participation: **99%**

### Year Three (2016-2017)

- Number of participating school districts: **72**
- School district size range: **131 - 39,670 students**
- Average school district size: **3,485 students**
- Average number of NTI days used per school district: **2.7**
- Participation rates across all participating districts:
    - Student participation: **94%**
    - Teacher participation: **99%**

### Year Four (2017-2018)

- Number of participating school districts: **75**
- School district size range: **131 - 11,412 students**
- Average school district size: **2,971 students**
- Average number of NTI days used per school district: **7.1**
- Participation rates across all participating districts:
    - Student participation: **93%**
    - Teacher participation: **99%**

### Year Five (2018-2019)

- Number of participating school districts: **83**
- School district size range: **102 - 11,406 students**
- Average school district size: **2,762 students**
- Average number of NTI days used per school district: **4.8**
- Participation rates across all participating districts:
    - Student participation: **93%**
    - Teacher participation: **99%**

# Specific Information about the Non-Traditional Instruction Program

## Application Process

### Application for New Districts

The Non-Traditional Instruction Program application for new districts asks questions related to:

- Delivery method of instruction;
- Student access to the internet and/or devices;
- Fulfilling student-specific plans, such as Individual Education Programs (IEP), 504 Plans, Gifted Student Services Plans (GSSP), and Program Services Plans (PSP);
- Gathering student and teacher participation data;
- Gathering evidence of learning;
- Professional learning for staff;
- Duties of certified and classified staff;
- Shared service agreements with other districts;
- Stakeholder involvement;
- Community partner engagement; and
- Informing the public about the program

To have an application considered for implementation at the beginning of the upcoming school term, the application must be submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) at least one hundred and twenty (120) days prior to the beginning of the school term.

### Application for Returning Districts

School districts interested in participating in the Non-Traditional Instruction Program for another year must re-apply. The application for returning districts is considerably shorter than the application for new districts, and returning districts are asked to reflect on the effectiveness of their NTI program and describe changes being proposed in order for the program to grow in rigor and efficacy. As with new district applications, returning districts must submit the application to KDE at least one hundred and twenty (120) days prior to the beginning of the school term in order to have an application considered for implementation at the beginning of the upcoming school term.

### Scoring of Application

There is a committee of cross-agency KDE personnel that scores all new and returning district applications. Each committee member uses a leveled rubric that assess application responses for thoroughness and details. The rubric measures responses with categories of *Unsatisfactory, Emerging, Proficient*, and *Exemplary.* Each application is scored by more than one scorer and the separate scores are averaged into a final score. District applications must receive an overall *Proficient* rating in order to be recommended for approval into the NTI program. The scoring rubric is placed on the Non-Traditional Instruction Program website in order for districts to better understand how applications will be assessed.

### Notification of Participation

The review committee must score all new and returning district applications and make a recommendation of approval or denial to the Commissioner within 45 days of receipt.

Thereafter, the Commissioner approves or denies each application within 30 days from receipt of the review committee's recommendation. After formal approval is granted by the Commissioner, districts are notified of acceptance into the program. Districts who were not approved are also notified of the status and are given feedback on the application in order to aid in re-applying for the program in the future.

### Amendments to the Initial Application

Districts that have been granted approval to participate in the Non-Traditional Instruction Program may make minor changes to the NTI plan as the year progresses. Resubmission or re-approval of the application is not necessary. Minor changes include using a different Learning Management System (LMS) than originally planned, refining staff duties, collecting documentation using a different method, etc. Major changes to the NTI plan, such as a drastic change in the instructional delivery method, must be approved by KDE before implementation.

## Approval of NTI Days

Districts whose plans have been approved by the Commissioner may choose to participate in the Non-Traditional Instruction Program. In order for an NTI day to be approved as an instructional day, districts must submit documentation to the Commissioner for each NTI day, including student and teacher participation rates along with evidence of student learning. After the Commissioner has approved one or more NTI days, the district will be notified that their NTI day(s) can be counted as instructional days. Documentation is generally due to KDE at the beginning of April and approval is granted for NTI days later in April.

## Area Technology Centers (ATC) and Other Shared Services

Some districts may have agreements with other districts that involve sharing students or facilities. Such agreements could include preschool services, a state operated area technology center, or private schools. Before the first Non-Traditional Instruction day, the cooperating districts should come to an agreement about what students from NTI districts should be doing on NTI days. Possibilities for students from NTI districts could include completing online coursework or working on a long-term project. Creating a plan for students on NTI days is especially important if not all the cooperating districts have a Non-Traditional Instruction Program, as school schedules will be altered due to the instructional day designation of NTI days.

## Attendance

### Student Participation

As Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days, all K-12 students are expected to participate. Districts may determine what participation is for students, whether it be accessing online course work, completing a project or paper assignment, or other method of participating in instructional activities. Districts track and report to KDE the overall district student participation rate for each NTI day. There is no minimum percentage of student participation that is necessary for a Non-Traditional Instruction day to be approved by the Commissioner; however, a low student participation number may result in an NTI day not being approved.

### Teacher Participation

Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered teacher work days and count towards fulfilling the number of work days required by contract. As such, teachers are required to work on NTI days, though each district decides the work location and duties of the teachers on NTI days. If a teacher decides not to work, or is unable to work on an NTI day, leave time must be used according to district policies. Teachers on pre-arranged leave are not required to work on NTI days. Districts track and report to KDE the percentage of teachers working on Non-Traditional Instruction days. There is no minimum percentage of teacher participation that is necessary for a Non-Traditional Instruction day to be approved; however, a low teacher participation number may result in an NTI day not being approved.

### Staff Participation

It is each district's prerogative whether classified staff, including those that offer instructional support, work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Classified staff (e.g. instructional assistants, clerical staff, food service personnel, transportation personnel, etc.) may work on NTI days or the district can assign work-related tasks at other times in order for classified staff to meet contract days. Depending on the category of staff, examples of work-related tasks could include driving to sporting events, working in the summer feeding program, conducting inventory at the end of the school year, or assisting with afterschool tutoring sessions. Districts should keep in mind that there is no transportation reimbursement or federal food reimbursement on NTI days and, if staff salaries are paid out of those funds, the district should have a plan to cover those costs.

### ADA for NTI Days

After the Non-Traditional Instruction days are approved by the Commissioner, districts will receive the previous year's average daily attendance (ADA) for each NTI day. The coding of an NTI day in Infinite Campus should be done at the district level, and the attendance personnel at KDE will make the appropriate changes to the master calendar in order to ensure receipt of ADA allocation.

### Extra-Curricular Activities

It is advised to not hold extra-curricular activities on Non-Traditional Instruction days. The NTI days do count as instructional days; however, if school is closed due to travel hazards, rampant illness, or another NTI-eligible reason, it is not recommended for students to gather for extra-curricular activities after school hours.

## Attendance Codes in Infinite Campus

### N: Non-Traditional Instruction

If a district is **not** submitting a January Growth Factor report, please set up the Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) days as follows, so there will be no issues with Assessment Accountability or Student Voice reports:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Day Event:** | N: Non-Traditional Instruction |
| **School Day:** | Checked |
| **Instruction:** | Checked |
| **Attendance:** | Unchecked |

**Reference *Amending the Calendar* guidance document, page 6 for NTI calendar updates.**

*Again, NTI days in months that are **not** used for January Growth Factor should be set up as above.*

### January Growth Factor - NTI Day(s)

If you have NTI day(s) in month 5 or 6 and plan to submit a January Growth Factor, please contact Ronda Devine at 502-564-5279, Ext. 4444, for additional information on setting up these days.

### Help

For help with coding, Infinite Campus, or attendance-related questions, it is recommended to contact your district's attendance field staff representative.

## Certified Staff Duties

### Teachers

Teachers are required to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is a district decision as to the work location of the teachers, either working virtually from home or community location, or reporting to the school building. Work duties are also decided at the district level. Teachers should be accessible to the students virtually or via phone in case of questions about the coursework, however other tasks such as calling students, participating in PLCs, or conducting record-keeping tasks may also be assigned at the discretion of the district.

### Counselors

Similar to teachers, school counselors are required to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is the district's discretion as to the work location and duties.

### Related Services Staff

Related services staff such as speech and language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, etc. that are certified employees of the district are required to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Work location and duties are at the discretion of the district.

### Administrators

Administrators are required to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is the district's discretion as to the work location and duties.

## Classified Staff Duties

Classified staff are not required to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is at the discretion of the district to determine whether classified personnel or certain categories of classified personnel, including those that that offer instructional support, work on Non-Traditional Instruction days and, if so, the location of the work as well as the work duties.

### Instructional Assistants

If working, instructional assistants may help teachers monitor the virtual classroom, make "check-in" calls with students, answer student questions virtually or via phone, assist with grading, perform classroom clerical duties, participate in a Professional Learning Community (PLC), or perform any number of tasks related to typical duties. If not working on Non-

Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for instructional assistants to meet the contracted work day agreement.

### Clerical Staff

If working, clerical staff duties may include answering parent and student calls and routing them to the appropriate teacher, performing typical office tasks, or assisting the administrators as needed. If not working on Non-Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for clerical staff to meet the contracted work day agreement.

### Transportation Personnel

If working, transportation personnel may participate in professional development opportunities, perform maintenance work, or complete other tasks. Districts should keep in mind that there is no transportation reimbursement on NTI days and, if salaries derive from that funding, a plan should be in place to cover the associated costs. If not working on Non-Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for transportation personnel to meet the contracted work day agreement.

### Food Service Personnel

If working, food service personnel may participate in professional development opportunities, clean or conduct inventory, or complete other tasks. Districts should keep in mind that there is no federal food reimbursement on NTI days and, if salaries derive from that funding, a plan should be in place to cover the associated costs. If not working on Non-Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for food service personnel to meet the contracted work day agreement.

### Custodial Staff

If working, custodial staff may conduct regular work activities or special assignments from the building administrators. If not working on Non-Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for custodial staff to meet the contracted work day agreement.

## Community Partners

It is recommended to involve community partners in the Non-Traditional Instruction program planning process as well as in the implementation stage. Community partners could assist the school district by providing locations with internet or device access to students, funding or materials for costs associated with continuing education on cancellation days, or publicity for the successes in learning occurring on NTI days. Involving community partners in the NTI planning and implementation process promotes cooperation and involvement and increases positive perception and smooth implementation of the program.

## Copyright

Before uploading copyrighted material (reading passages, worksheets, tests, etc.) to a publically-accessible classroom, school, or district website, it is recommended that the school district consult with its board attorney to review the license to determine what types of use are permitted.

## Day Counts

Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days and should be included when counting school days for purposes of determining and complying with legally required timelines . For example, Non-Traditional Instruction days would be included in the following counts: the First 100 Days of School, student suspensions, Home and Hospital schedules, and special education timelines (e.g. Child Find).

## Documentation

### Documentation Submitted to KDE

Districts submit documentation to KDE after using Non-Traditional Instruction days. The documentation for **each** NTI day includes:

- District-wide student participation rates;
- District-wide teacher participation rates; and
- At least one lesson plan and/or student work sample from each grade span (i.e. one elementary, one middle, and one high).
    - If submitting documentation for more than one NTI day, please submit documents that reflect a variety of grade levels in each span and subject matter. For example, if Day 1 elementary documentation is 1st grade reading, Day 2 documentation could/should be 4th grade social studies.

It is encouraged that school districts retain other forms of documentation relevant to Non-Traditional Instruction days, such as staff sign-in sheets, student contact logs, PLC agendas, etc. While this documentation is not required to be submitted to KDE, failure to adequately document evidence of learning may result in an NTI day not being approved by the Commissioner.

### SharePoint Site

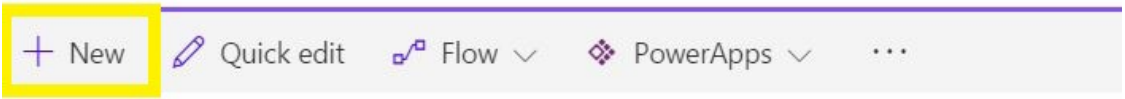
District documentation of NTI days is submitted via the Non-Traditional Instruction SharePoint site. This is a closed site accessible to the district NTI contact. Please contact Steven Kissinger for access or click the "request access" button on the site.

### Submitting Documentation

Below are step-by-step directions about submitting documentation of NTI days. There is a recorded webinar on the NTI SharePoint site that also explains the process. For questions or problems, please contact Steven Kissinger.

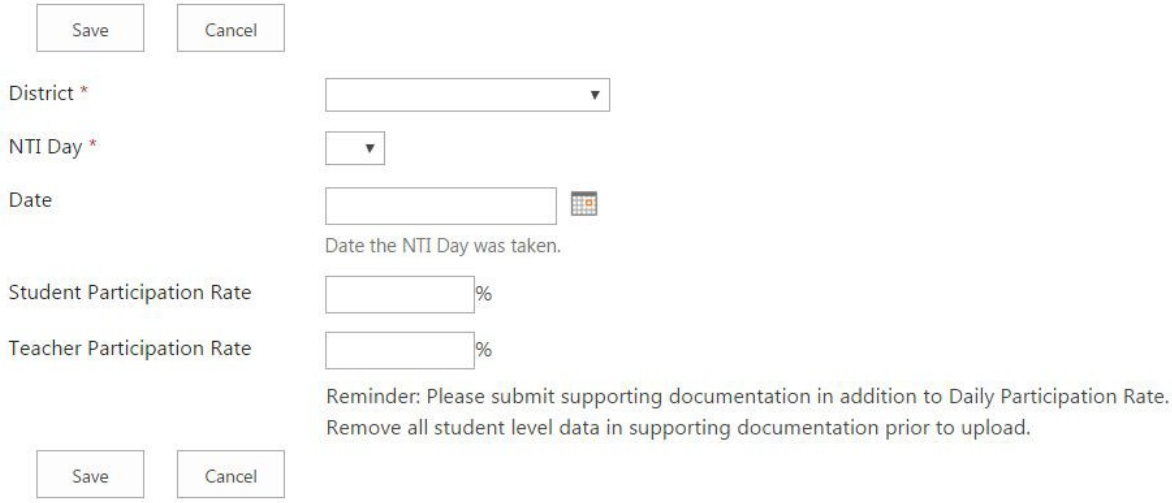
1. Click “Daily Participation Rate” in the pane on the left side of the screen.

2. On the next screen, click “New” located along the top menu bar.



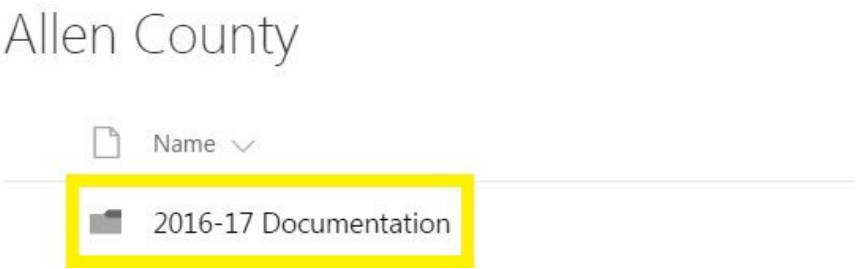

3. On the next screen, enter the requested information for one NTI day at a time. Then, hit “Save.”

   To enter information for another NTI day, repeat the process above. Information for each NTI day must be entered separately.

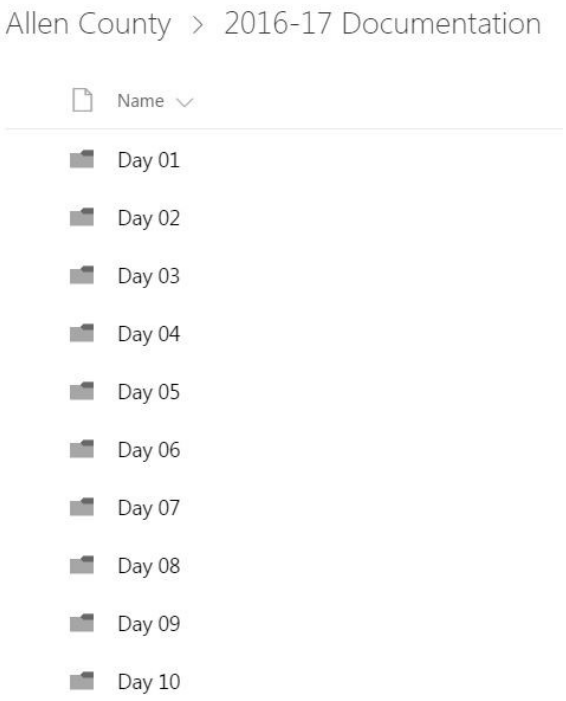


4. To upload the documentation for evidence of learning on NTI days, click on the district name located on the pane at the left-hand side of NTI SharePoint site home screen.

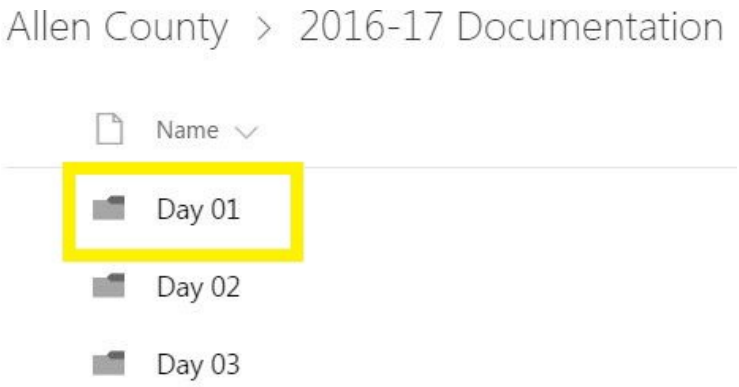
5. On the next screen, click on the folder for the current school year.



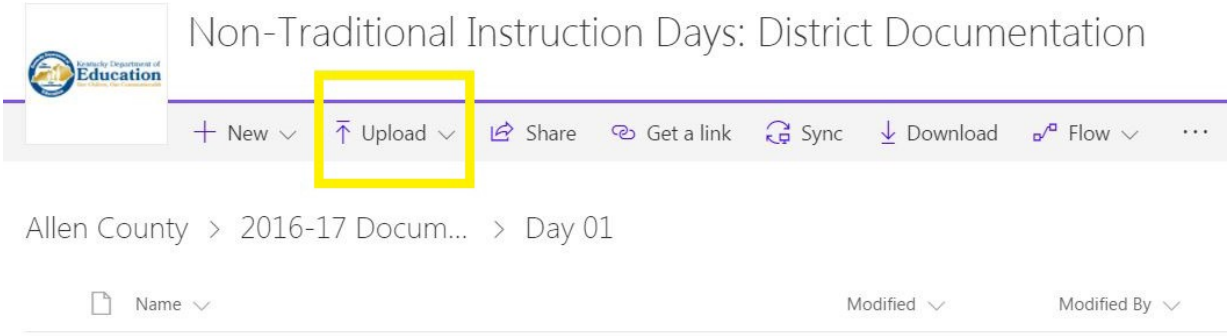
6. Inside that folder will be folders labeled “Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, etc.”



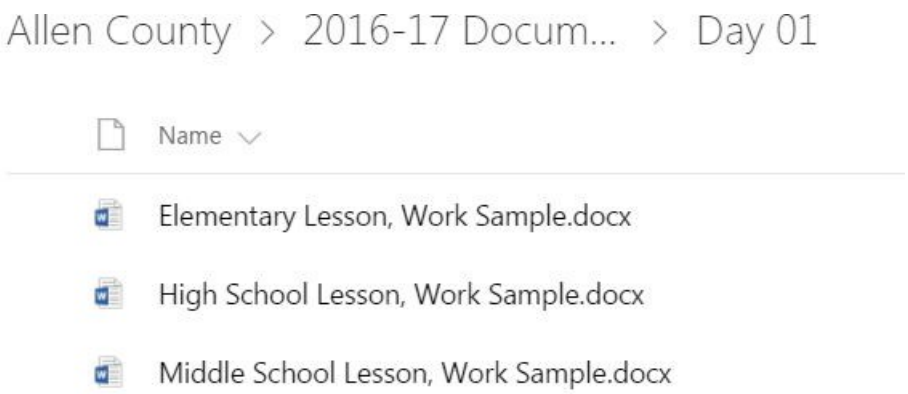

7. Click on the folder of the NTI day for which documentation is being submitted.



8. Once in a “Day” folder, either drag-and-drop evidence into the folder or click “Upload” in the menu bar. *Keep in mind that no student identifiers should be included in the documentation.* ***Please redact student names****.*




After clicking “Upload” select “Files” or “Folder” depending on that type of evidence being submitted. Select the document or documents being submitted and hit “Open.” The documents should appear in the folder.




9. Repeat the process of submitting documentation for each NTI day the district used. If the district used six NTI days, there should be documentation in the “Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4, Day 5, and Day 6” folders.

## Funding

### Federal Food Reimbursement

There is no federal food reimbursement on Non-Traditional Instruction days. If the district is requiring food service personnel to work on NTI days, it is recommended that the NTI planning committee from the district consult the food service director when developing the NTI plan, as no reimbursement will be received to cover personnel costs. The district should have a plan to cover any lost funds in the food service budget.

### Transportation Reimbursement

There is no transportation reimbursement on Non-Traditional Instruction days. If the district is requiring transportation personnel to work on NTI days, it is recommended that the NTI planning committee consult the transportation director when developing the NTI plan, as no reimbursement will be received to cover personnel costs. The district should have a plan to cover any lost funds in the transportation budget.

## Home and Hospital

As Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days, the schedule for home and hospital visits should be maintained as normal. Unless the district has received a waiver from the Kentucky Board of Education for the attendance regulation and the home and hospital regulation, districts should proceed as usual with home and hospital programs.

## Informing the Community

### Before the Snow Falls

It is recommended that school districts begin informing parents about the Non-Traditional Instruction program in the fall, before the snow even begins to fall. Beginning of the year open house sessions, parent-teacher conferences, and fall newsletters are excellent opportunities to introduce the program to parents and explain the process the students will complete on NTI days. Districts that inform parents and the community early and often tend to have better buy-in and understanding when NTI days are implemented.

### During Non-Traditional Instruction Days

Social media is a valuable resource for informing parents and the community about the instruction that is occurring on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Administrators and teachers can use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Remind 101, etc. to communicate with parents and teachers as well as highlight the valuable instruction that is occurring. Social media campaigns promoting the Non-Traditional Instruction Program allow the community to better understand that an NTI day is not a “free day” for teachers or students but, instead, is an instructional day where teaching and learning occurs.

## Instruction

### Approaches

School districts determine the method of instruction on Non-Traditional Instruction days. This flexibility allows districts to choose the instructional approach most appropriate for their

teachers and students. Below are the three most popular instructional delivery methods, but districts may mix-and-match approaches, depending on grade level or content matter, or may create another delivery method appropriate for students.

- Digital: Districts that use a digital approach tend to use a Learning Management System (LMS) to outline coursework for students. Examples of popular LMSs are Google Classroom, Edmodo, Blackboard, Edgenuity, and Canvas. Other educational sites, apps, or platforms can be incorporated into lessons posted in an LMS. Examples include Study Island, Khan Academy, ABC Mouse, YouTube, and Lexia. An LMS is not required for a digital approach; teachers could create classroom websites with posted lessons.

  Using a digital approach provides the most in-time content as digital lessons can be created, updated, and revised and shared with students instantaneously. If using a digital approach, it is recommended that teachers incorporate the platform into lessons before Non-Traditional Instruction days. The first NTI day should not be the first time a student logs into the online classroom.

- Project: A project approach can be done digitally or through physical materials. Some districts have used an LMS to create an online elective or intersession-type course in which the students complete lessons on snow days, resulting in completion of the course by the end of the winter. Other districts have created long-term projects for the students to work towards completing on snow days, with the components and final product either in digital or physical format.

- Packet: A packet approach uses physical copies of lessons that are sent home with students before Non-Traditional Instruction days. If using this approach, it is recommended that teachers use curriculum maps to determine relevant content for the winter months or that the packets be used to review essential skills or for enrichment activities. Packets should not be created too far in advance of the winter months, as the packets should contain relevant lessons and content.

### New Material

Unless the students are accustomed to using an online classroom (or other method) to learn material, it is not recommended that new material be introduced on Non-Traditional Instruction days. The exception for this recommendation is Advanced Placement courses, in which case the students are likely able to learn new material with little direct instruction. However, if the normal class routine is self-paced or individual learning, new material can be introduced.

## Internet Accessibility

### What about the students without internet?

If an electronic device or internet access is necessary for instruction, districts should have a plan for students who do not have these resources. Methods that districts have implemented in order to provide a device or internet access to students include:

- Allowing students to “check-out” a device;
- Pre-loading content onto a device or jump drive;
- Parking a Wi-Fi bus in the community;
- Using an internet “switch” than can be activated at the district;

- Opening school buildings for computer lab use;
- Sending staff to community locations that have internet/devices;
- Having agreements with a local utility company or internet service provider;
- Assigning project-based work; or
- Alternating assignments/paper packets.

### What if the internet or electricity goes out?

It is not recommended to implement a Non-Traditional Instruction day on a day when there is widespread power outages. If an NTI day is used and individual students do not have electricity or internet access, districts may allow students additional time or opportunities to complete assignments once school resumes.

## One Hundredth Day of School

As Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days, districts should include NTI days in the 100 day count.

## Preschool

It is not required for preschool students and teachers to participate in the Non-Traditional Instruction Program. However, districts are welcome to include preschool in NTI plans. One note of consideration: If including preschool in NTI plans, consider any reciprocal agreement with another district that includes sharing preschool students, teachers, or facilities. Districts should discuss plans for NTI days and agree on processes and procedures.

## Private Schools

### Can private schools participate in NTI?

Private schools may continue instruction on snow days or other days when school is cancelled. However, as the Kentucky Department of Education does not approve the calendar of private institutions, KDE does not have the authority to approve snow days as instructional days. If interested in pursuing the Non-Traditional Instruction Program, and the private institution has reciprocal agreements with the county district, please see “Agreement with Public District” below. If the private institution has no agreement or ties to the county district, the private institution’s governing board has the authority to set and amend the calendar and approve work on snow days as instructional days.

### Agreement with Public District

Where a private school has reciprocal agreements with the county district, the private school receives funding distributed by the county district, or the county district approves the calendar of the private school, private schools may be eligible to participate in the Non-Traditional Instruction Program. In these cases, the county district, rather than KDE, can approve the private school’s NTI days as instructional days. The private institution and the county district should reach an agreement on calendar requirements, amendments to the calendar, and approval of NTI days.

## Professional Development

School districts should provide professional development to teachers regarding the chosen method of instruction. For a digital instruction approach, training could include using an LMS, creating digital lessons, incorporating outside platforms and applications into lessons, and using social media as an instructional strategy. For a project-based approach, professional development could include research-based methods of project-based learning and creating engaging lessons to culminate in a final product.

## Social Media

School districts may consider using social media not only to notify parents and students of a Non-Traditional Instruction day but also as a method of promoting the teaching and learning that is occurring on NTI days. Several districts have held successful social media campaigns in which teachers send out pictures and messages of what they are doing on NTI days and parents and students reply with what they are doing. Other possibilities include: a website dedicated to NTI days with photos of students working or of student projects, a Twitter challenge to the community, or a trivia competition to engage all stakeholders in the local school district. Using more than one social media platform helps reach a wider audience. It is recommended that school districts review their Acceptable Use Policy and desired social media etiquette with teachers and other personnel before using social media tools for instructional purposes.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Any party interested in the local school district should be included in the NTI planning and implementation processes. These interested parties could include administrators, teachers, classified employees, students, parents, local businesses, and community members. By involving all stakeholders in the planning process, there is increased buy-in and a more comprehensive NTI plan can be developed. Involving all stakeholders in the implementation of NTI will lead to a smoother roll-out, a more engaged community, and amplified benefits for students.

## Student-Specific Plans

School districts need to have plans to educate all students on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Guidance on meeting the educational needs of students with student-specific plans on NTI days follows for your information and consideration.

### Special Education Students

Accommodations for students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) need to continue to be met on NTI days. In each student's Admission and Release Committee (ARC) meeting, a plan should be created relating specifically to how IEP accommodations will be met on NTI days. It is especially important to understand what type or level of parental support the student will have at home on NTI days before deciding on an educational plan for NTI days. It is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded in the *conference summary* section of the IEP. Non-Traditional Instruction day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs but could include, for example, the regular classroom teacher adjusting the lesson to meet accommodations, the special education teacher creating student specific lessons, or the regular education and special education teachers working together to adjust or create lessons. Procedures for NTI days could also include, for example, sending familiar manipulatives home with the students, downloading lessons or educational games onto a tablet and sending it home, creating lessons focusing on life skills, or using technology to create face-to-face learning

experiences. The regular education and special education teachers must be available to students on NTI days.

### FMD Students

For information related to FMD students, please consult the information in the section dedicated to "Special Education Students" above.

### Related Services

In addition to the information in the section dedicated to "Special Education Students" above, please note that Non-Traditional Instruction day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs but could include, for example, using technology to create face-to-face learning experiences, sending manipulatives or practice activities home, or calling students on the telephone to work through exercises. Therapists should be available to students to NTI days.

### Special Education Timelines

Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days and should be included when counting school days for purposes of determining and complying with legally required timelines, including those related to special education and outlined in 707 KAR 1:320 and 707 KAR 1:340. For example, a district is legally required to ensure that, within 60 school days following the receipt of parental consent, a child is evaluated for services and, if eligible, receives specially designed instruction and related services in accordance with the IEP. An NTI day occurring within this 60-day timeline would count as a school day for purposes of complying with this legal mandate.

## Students with 504 Plans

Implementation of a student's 504 Plan should continue on NTI days. If your district's 504 Plan form has a *conference summary* section, it is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded there. Non-Traditional Instruction day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs but could include, for example, adjusting the classroom teacher's lessons, creating student-specific lessons, downloading lessons or educational games onto a device and sending it home, using technology to create face-to-face learning experiences, or calling the students at home to work through lessons. Teachers must be available to students on NTI days.

## Gifted Students

Implementation of Gifted Student Service Plans (GSSPs) should continue on NTI days. If your district's GSSP form has a *conference summary* section, it is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded there. Non-Traditional Instruction day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs but could include, for example, the gifted and talented teacher creating enrichment lessons and activities or the creation of a long-term project related to the goals in the GSSP. Gifted and talented teachers must be available to students on NTI days.

### Migrant Students

Districts should be cognizant of the specialized needs of migrant students, especially if those students are also considered English Learners and have a Program Services Plan. Implementation of Program Services Plans (PSPs) should continue on NTI days. If your district's PSP has a *conference summary* section, it is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded there. Non-Traditional Instruction day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs but could include, for example, adjusting the classroom teacher's lessons, creating student-specific lessons, or downloading lessons or educational games onto a device and sending it home. Regardless of having a PSP, it is recommended that information relating to NTI days be sent home in the student's native or home language. Teachers who work with migrant students must be available to students on NTI days.

### English Learners

Implementation of Program Services Plans (PSPs) should continue on NTI days. If your district's PSP has a *conference summary* section, it is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded there. Non-Traditional Instruction day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs but could include, for example, adjusting the classroom teacher's lessons, creating student-specific lessons, downloading lessons or educational games onto a device and sending it home, using technology to create face-to- face learning experiences, or calling the students at home to work through lessons. It is recommended that information relating to NTI days be sent home in the student's native or home language. English Learner teachers must be available to students on NTI days.

## Suspended Students

With regard to suspended students, Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days and, accordingly, an NTI day counts in the total days out of school. For specific information about coding a suspension on an NTI day in Infinite Campus, please contact the district's attendance field staff representative.

## Testing Window

Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days and, accordingly, districts should include NTI days when determining the end-of-year testing window. It is permissible to use an NTI day after the testing window dates have been submitted, but please contact the Division of Innovation at (504) 564-4201 or the Division of Accountability Data and Analysis at (502) 564-9853 for details about any changes that may be necessary.

## Timeline

### Applying

To have an application considered for implementation at the beginning of the upcoming school term, the application must be submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) at least one hundred and twenty (120) days prior to the beginning of the school term. A review committee must score all new and returning district applications and make a recommendation of approval or denial to the Commissioner within 45 days of receipt. Thereafter, the Commissioner approves or denies each application within 30 days from receipt of the review committee's recommendation.

### Documentation

Participating districts must submit documentation of each NTI day used. *(See Documentation)* This documentation is generally due in April. The documentation is reviewed, and upon sufficient evidence of learning, district names and NTI dates are submitted to the Commissioner for approval of instructional days. Districts are generally notified of approval of NTI days by the middle of April. NTI days can be used after the initial documentation submission date, but approval of those later-submitted days is done on a case-by-case basis.

### NTI Day Approval

Upon review of the district documentation submitted to KDE, a recommendation will be made to the Commissioner to grant each school district the requested Non-Traditional Day(s). Once the Commissioner approves the days, school districts will be notified and, if necessary, attendance codes in Infinite Campus should be changed for each approved NTI day. KDE attendance personnel will make the appropriate changes in official records.

## When to Use NTI Days

### Weather Impacting Safety

Non-Traditional Instruction days may be used "*on days when the school district is closed for health or safety reasons."* The most common use of NTI days is for school closings related to snow. Once the Commissioner has approved a district's Non-Traditional Instruction Program, it is the discretion of the district superintendent to call an NTI day versus a regular snow day. It is also the discretion of the superintendent as to when NTI days are used. For example, some districts choose to use NTI days on the first instances of school closings, some districts wait to use NTI days until after the "built-in" snow days are used, and some school districts use NTI days for every other snow day. There have been reported benefits to each method, but it is ultimately the superintendent's decision if and when to use NTI days.

Non-Traditional Instruction days may also be used for other weather-related closings, such as incidences of flooding.

### Illness

Non-Traditional Instruction days may be used when wide-spread illness closes all schools in the school district.

### Other Closings

Please contact KDE before using an NTI day for any reason other than weather impacting safety or illness.

#### Individual School Closings

Individual school closings within the district do <u>not</u> warrant an NTI day. The Non-Traditional Instruction program statute indicates that in order to use NTI days, *"the school district is closed."* This means that the entire school district must be affected and closed in order for an NTI day to be used.

### Closings Not Related to Health and Safety

The use of NTI days for reasons other than *"health and safety,"* such as attending state sports tournaments or local fairs or festivals, is not permissible.

## No Extra-Curricular Activities

It is recommended extra-curricular activities not be held on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Such activities include sports practices, games, or tournaments; club meetings; or, other instances where students would gather. If conditions are bad enough to cancel school, students should not be on the roads traveling to school activities or, in the case of illness, congregating with other students.

## Non-Traditional Instruction District Profile

Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, schools will need to keep a district profile up to date for the NTI Program. This will help both sides keep up information for audits that periodically occur. The NTI District Profile Document will be hosted on the KDE Website. It is advised to fill this out at the beginning of each school year to have the most current information available to KDE.

## Contacts for Additional Information

### District Contacts

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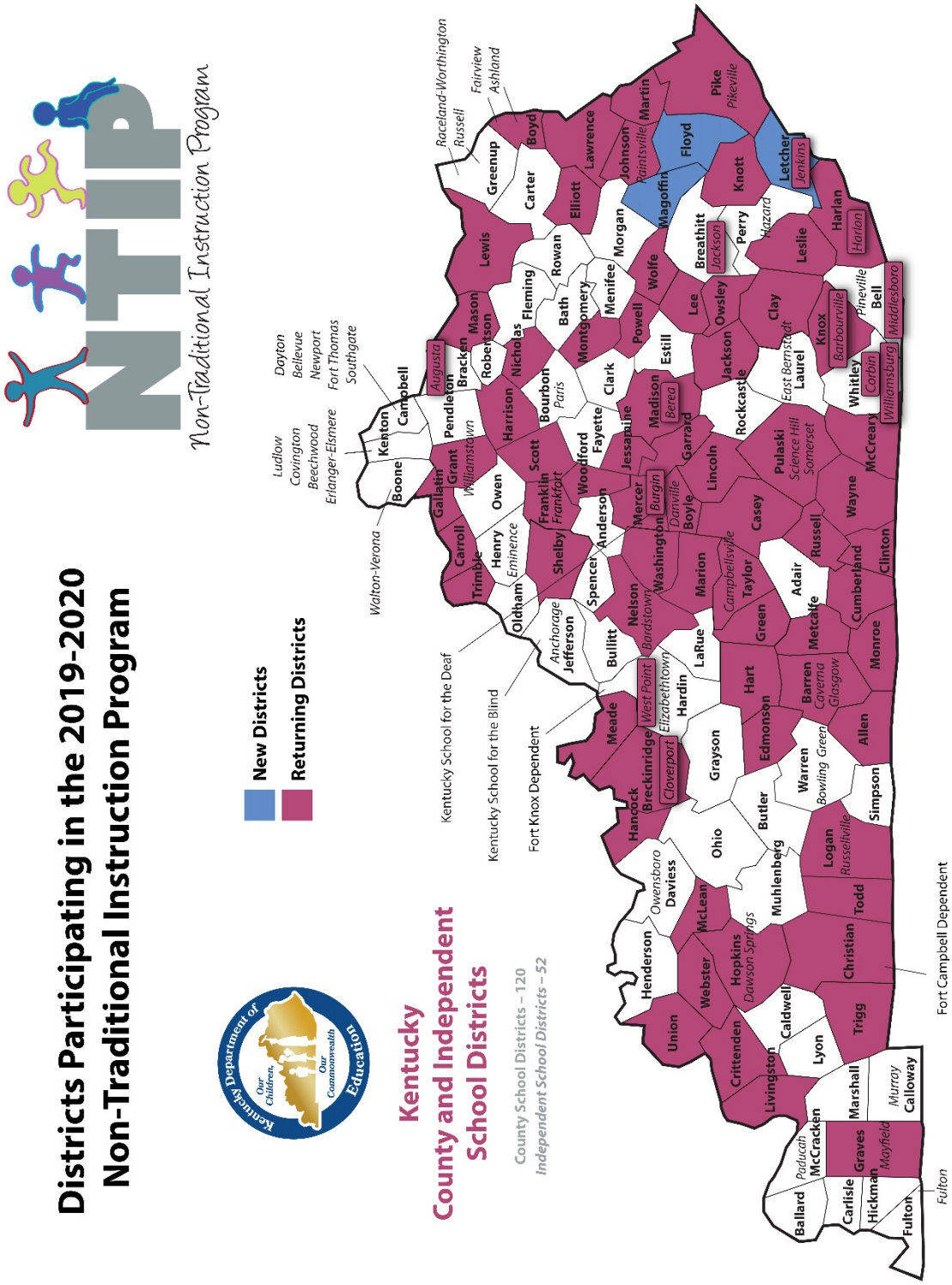
## Map: Districts Participating in the 2019-2020 NTI Program