



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Nontraditional Instruction (NTI) Guidance Document

Kentucky Department of Education
Office of Continuous Improvement and Support
Division of Innovation
Updated October 2025

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General Information about the Nontraditional Instruction (NTI) Program

History of the Nontraditional Instruction Program

Before 2011, many Kentucky school districts lost over a month of instructional time each year due to health or safety-related closures, leading to significant learning disruption. As a solution, former Education Commissioner Dr. Terry Holliday introduced the Nontraditional Instruction (NTI) Pilot in 2011, allowing districts to conduct instruction virtually or by other Nontraditional means on closure days, eliminating the need to make up missed days if approved by the Commissioner. Initially, only districts with an average of 20 missed days over three years qualified. In 2014, the NTI Pilot expanded to all 173 districts under House Bill 211, with further revisions in 2018 to standardize regulations. By 2020, all Kentucky districts were granted NTI access due to COVID-19, a status that lasted until June 2021.

Today, NTI days align with Kentucky's [United We Learn](#) initiative, encouraging hands-on, real-world learning, innovative assessments, and community engagement. Districts can design NTI experiences that connect students with their interests, such as solving local issues, and use performance assessments to showcase skills authentically. This approach promotes deeper learning and meaningful family and community connections, turning NTI days into dynamic learning extensions.

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.

Regulatory Authority

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

Specific Information about the Nontraditional Instruction Program

District Nontraditional Instruction (NTI) Contacts

KDE communicates to district Nontraditional Instruction (NTI) Contacts using the web application, [Person Role Manager](#). District WAAPOCs (Web Apps Admin Point of Contact) should update and maintain the contact for the district. Person Role Manager should be updated and maintained at least quarterly from the district side. Contacts should be designated active or inactive depending on district need. Current District Nontraditional Instruction (NTI) Contacts can be viewed through [Open House - District and School Directory](#).

Application Process

To have an application considered for implementation at the beginning of the upcoming school year, 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.

Continuation of Learning Plan (CDIP Diagnostic)

The NTI application process is handled as a diagnostic referred to as *Nontraditional Instruction Continuation of Learning Plan for Districts* within the [Continuous Improvement Platform](#). This diagnostic is completed in PHASE FOUR (4) of your

Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CDIP). The diagnostic is due by **May 1** of the year prior to its implementation.

Review of the Application

A committee of cross-agency KDE personnel will review the diagnostic and make recommended changes back to the district. The diagnostic becomes a part of the district's approved *Comprehensive District Improvement Plan* (CDIP).

Acceptable Uses for NTI Days

KRS 158.070(8) 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.

Examples of health and safety reasons are weather related closures, city/state emergency service advisory, and illness. Closures for extracurricular activities are not considered health or safety reasons **and not a valid reason to utilize an NTI day**. A full attendance day must be used when utilizing NTI. No half-days are permitted.

If the district has a question about the acceptable use of NTI days, please call the Division of Innovation at 502-564-4201.

Approval of NTI Days

Districts whose plans have been approved may choose to participate in the NTI Program. For an NTI day to be approved as an instructional day, districts must document in Infinite Campus referencing the [Nontraditional Instruction \(NTI\) Data Standards](#), including reason for use, student and teacher participation rates for each NTI day. 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 April 1 and approval is granted for NTI days by the end of May. Final submission will occur at the end of the school year, June 30.

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 NTI 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.

Attendance

Student Participation

As NTI days are considered instructional days, all K-12 students are expected to participate. Districts may determine what participation is for students, but should include at least one of the following methods:

- One-on-one video communication or phone calls between teacher and student (or teacher and parent with smaller children or students with special needs).
- Group video communication or phone calls between the teacher and a whole class or between a teacher and smaller groups of students within a class.
- Student's time logged into a learning management software system completing assignments.
- Submission of paper-based assignments for students in a non-digital, Nontraditional setting.

Districts track and report the overall district student participation rate for each NTI day. There is no minimum percentage of student participation that is necessary for an NTI day to be approved by the

Commissioner; however, a low student participation number may result in an NTI day not being approved.

Reference Section A of the [Nontraditional Instruction \(NTI\) Data Standard](#) for documenting Student Participation Rate.

Teacher Participation

NTI days are considered teacher workdays and count towards fulfilling the number of workdays 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 taken specifically for health or safety designated within their NTI Continuation of Learning Plan within the CDIP.

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. Substitute teachers can count positively in the district's teacher participation rate. Districts track the percentage of teachers working on NTI days. There is no minimum percentage of teacher participation that is necessary for an NTI day to be approved; however, a low teacher participation number may result in an NTI day not being approved.

Reference Section A of the [Nontraditional Instruction \(NTI\) Data Standard](#) for documenting Teacher Participation Rate.

ADA for NTI Days

After the NTI 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 to ensure receipt of ADA allocation.

Reference Section C of the [Nontraditional Instruction \(NTI\) Data Standard](#) for documenting NTI Day Events.

Extra-Curricular Activities

It is advised not to hold extra-curricular activities on NTI 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.

Suspension

NTI days can be counted toward student suspension days, or the suspension days can be updated to reflect in-person instruction days. This is a local district decision.

Home and Hospital

As NTI days are considered instructional days, the schedule for home and hospital visits should be maintained as normal.

Attendance Codes in Infinite Campus

N: Nontraditional Instruction

If a district is **not** submitting a January Growth Factor report, please set up the Nontraditional Instruction (NTI) days as follows:

Day Event: N: Nontraditional Instruction

School Day: Checked

Instruction: Checked

Attendance: Unchecked

Reference [Amending the Calendar](#) guidance document for NTI calendar updates.

Reference Section C of the [Nontraditional Instruction \(NTI\) Data Standard](#) for documenting NTI Day Events.

January Growth Factor - NTI Day(s)

If a district has an NTI day(s) in month 5 or 6 and plan to submit a January Growth Factor, please contact [Josh Whitlow](#) at 502-564-5279, Ext. 4450, for additional information on setting up these days. For assistance with attendance-related questions, it is recommended to contact the district's attendance [field staff representative](#).

NTI Day Documentation in Infinite Campus

Reference the [Nontraditional Instruction Data Standard](#) for documenting NTI days, student and teacher participation and reason for use of NTI day. The data standard also provides guidance required for documenting NTI on the school calendar.

Districts are required to maintain lesson plans or assignments with accompanying student work samples for each grade level (K-12). Districts must hold individual records for each grade K-12 and encompass various content areas (Math, Language/Arts, Science, Social Studies, districts' electives) for each Nontraditional Instruction Day utilized during a school year. **Please note that grade books, roster completion sheets, and summary grade pages do not qualify as acceptable student work samples or lesson plans.**

The student work samples that districts retain should have any identifying information redacted, including student names, faces, and personal details. These measures are crucial for safeguarding student privacy.

Furthermore, the updated statement regarding the submission of samples to KDE (Kentucky Department of Education) should indicate that these samples will need to be made available to KDE for Nontraditional Instruction End-of-Year Monitoring upon request. Districts are responsible for retaining these samples on site for a minimum of two years.

Certified Staff Duties

Teachers

Teachers are required to work on NTI 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 as detailed in their Continuation of Learning Plan within CDIP. 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

School counselors are required to work on NTI 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 NTI days. Work location and duties are at the discretion of the district.

Administrators

Administrators are required to work on NTI 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 NTI days. It is at the discretion of the district to determine whether classified personnel or certain categories of classified personnel, including those that offer instructional support, work on NTI days and, if so, the location of the work as well as the work duties.

Community Partners

It is recommended to involve community partners in the NTI 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 publicly-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

Nontraditional Instruction days are considered instructional days and should be included when counting school days for NTI-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.

Monitoring of NTI

KDE will monitor districts on a rotating cycle designed to ensure all districts participating in the NTI program are monitored every five years as allowed by NTI usage. This monitoring may involve a desk audit as well as visits to districts to review evidence, data collection, reflection of plan usage and update, and interview stakeholders. Districts are encouraged to develop a system to collect student and teacher participation data. The system should also collect required student work samples and corresponding teacher assignments, or lesson plans used for each NTI day. If a district is selected for end-of-year monitoring, this documentation will be required to be submitted as part of monitoring.

Funding

Federal Food Reimbursement

There is no federal food reimbursement on NTI 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 NTI 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.

Informing the Community

Before the Snow Falls

It is recommended that school districts begin informing parents about the NTI program in the fall before the snow even begins to fall. Start of 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 understanding when NTI days are implemented. Schools are also encouraged to provide Professional Development to educators on continuation of learning instruction and use of virtual teaching methods.

During Nontraditional Instruction Days

Social media is a valuable resource for informing parents and the community about the instruction that is occurring on NTI days. Administrators and teachers can use social media platforms to communicate with parents and teachers as well as highlight valuable instruction that is occurring. Social media campaigns promoting the NTI 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.

Internet Accessibility

What about the students without internet?

Districts should have a plan for students who do not have access to the internet or a device. Methods that districts have implemented 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” that 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 an NTI day on a day when there are 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.

Preschool

It is not required for preschool students and teachers to participate in the NTI program. However, districts are welcome to include preschool in the 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

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 NTI program, and the private institution has reciprocal agreements with the county district, please see “Agreement with Public District” section in the next paragraph. 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 NTI 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 NTI 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.

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. Involving all stakeholders in the planning process increases buy-in, and a more comprehensive Continuation of Learning Plan within CDIP 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 NTI days. This section provides guidance on meeting the educational needs of students with student-specific plans on NTI days.

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. NTI 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.

Related Services

In addition to the information in the section dedicated to "Special Education Students" above, please note that NTI 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

NTI 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. NTI 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. NTI 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 (PSP). NTI day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs.

English Learners

Implementation of Program Service Plans (PSPs) should continue on NTI days. It is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded there. NTI day procedures would vary depending on a student's individual needs. 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.

KDE Contacts

Name and Role	Description	Email Address
Steven Kissinger, Consultant	Nontraditional Instruction (NTI)	Steven.Kissinger@education.ky.gov
Windy Spalding, Data Manager	Infinite Campus/NTI Data	Windy.Spalding@education.ky.gov