# THE NON-TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Kentucky Department of Education

Division of Innovation and Partner Engagement

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# Table of Contents

# 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, 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, then-commissioner Dr. Terry Holiday 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 2011 *Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot*, also known as the *Snow Bound Pilot*. In this pilot, 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 show evidence of student participation and student learning and would submit a request to the Kentucky Education Commissioner to approve 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 even submit an application for the *Snow Bound Pilot* was to have missed an average of 20 school days the previous three years (a total of at least 60 days).  Due to the mild winters in the two previous winters (2011-12 and 2012-13), most districts could not apply because they had not missed enough days.  There were 2-3 school districts that were able to participate in the *Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot* program that lasted three years.

In 2014, the *Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot* program was revised and expanded. During the 2014 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly, House Bill 211 was passed and signed into law by Gov. Steve Beshear.  Among other things, House Bill 211 modified and expanded legislation of the *Non-Traditional Instruction Pilot*.  HB 211 removed the language requiring school districts to miss 20 or more school days in order to participate in the program.  Removing this requirement opened eligibility all 173 Kentucky school districts to apply to conduct "non-traditional" student attendance days.  The program also graduated from a pilot program to a full-time program called the *Non-Traditional Instruction Program*.

Since 2014, the *Non-Traditional Instruction Program* has grown significantly in the number of districts participating in the program.  In the first year of state-wide eligibility (2014-2015), 13 school districts participated in the *Non-Traditional Instruction* program.  In the second year, 2015-2016, 44 school districts participated.  Now in the third year of state-wide eligibility, 2016-2017, there are 72 school districts approved to participate in the program.

## Legislative Statute

The current statute outlining the Non-Traditional Instruction program is as follows:

KRS 158.070 Section 9:

*Notwithstanding any other statute, each school term shall include no less than the equivalent of the student instructional year in subsection (1)(d) 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 an alternative instruction plan approved by the commissioner of education for the use of alternative methods of instruction, including virtual learning, on days when the school district is closed for health or safety reasons, on nontraditional days, or on nontraditional time. The district's plan shall demonstrate how teaching and learning in the district will not be negatively impacted. 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.*

## Program Changes for 2016-2017

There have been no major program changes to the 2016-2017 Non-Traditional Instruction program. However, there are some differences in this year's program as compared to past years:

### Change in Method of Submitting Documentation in the Spring

Perhaps the only noticeable change will be the submission of documentation in the spring.  We have not determined the procedural details yet, but due to the large number of districts participating in the program, we will be collecting documentation in a digital format only.  We are working on a method that will be easy, efficient, and less time-consuming than submitting documentation in previous years. Details about electronically submitting documentation will be distributed as soon as the method is determined.   It is anticipated that the same documentation will be required: student participation rates, teacher participation rates, and evidence of learning for each NTI day.

### Increase in Project-Based Instruction

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of district plans that use project-based learning as the base of their NTI program.  Some district plans indicate digitally-based projects, such as an intersession or specialized online course.  Other district plans indicate a project-based approach that is not digitally based, which may include interviews, research, community service, or other activities that don't involve a computer.  Some district plans use a combination of both digital and non-digital methods in a project-based learning approach.

### Diversity in Learning Management Systems

There has also been an increase in variety of Learning Management Systems districts choose to use.  In previous years, Google Classroom and Edmodo were the two most widely-used LMSs, however this year there are other platforms that are represented on a larger scale.  These Learning Management Systems include Edgenuity, Canvas, Blackboard, and D2L.

## Data from Years One and Two

### Year One (2014-2015)

- Number of participating school districts: **13**
- School district size range: **724- 8,982**
- Average school district size: **3,229**
- 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**
- Average school district size: **3,367**
- Average number of NTI days used per school district: **5.7**
- Participation rates across all participating districts:
  - Student participation: **94%**
  - 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 relating to:

- delivery method of instruction
- student access to the internet and/or devices
- meeting student-specific plans, such as IEPs, 504s, GSSPs, and PSPs
- how student and teacher participation will be gathered
- how evidence of learning will be gathered
- professional learning for staff
- duties of certified and classified staff
- shared service agreements with other districts
- stakeholder involvement
- community partner engagement
- informing the public about the program

After applications are submitted, a review committee reviews the applications based on thoroughness and thoughtfulness of answers.  Since each application describes a district-specific plan, the plan itself is not is critiqued as much as the planning and details contained within the desired plan.  The application period for the next year's NTI program usually opens in March and applications are due in May. Acceptance into the next year's NTI program is usually granted before the end of the current school year.

### Application for Returning Districts

School districts interested in participating in the Non-Traditional Instruction program for another year must re-apply to the program.  The application for returning districts is considerably shorter than the application for new districts.  The returning districts are asked to reflect on the effectiveness of their NTI program and describe changes for the next year's plan in order for the program to grow in rigor and efficacy.  There are occasionally additional questions added to the application based on areas not addressed when initially applying.  The application period for returning districts opens at the same time as new districts, and is generally due later than new districts, usually in the middle of May. Acceptance into the next year's NTI program is usually granted before the end of the current school year.

### 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 at the same time as the

program applications in order for districts to better understand how their application will be assessed.

### Notification of Participation

Once the review committee scores all new and returning district applications, the applications that earn a *Proficient* score are sent to the Commissioner for approval to participate in the Non-Traditional Instruction program. After formal approval is granted, districts are notified of acceptance into the program. Districts whose applications did not gain approval are also notified of the status and feedback is given on the application in order to aid in re-applying for the program the next year. Notification is typically given in early to mid-June.

### Amendments to the Initial Application

Districts that have been granted approval to participate in the Non-Traditional Instruction program may make minor changes to their NTI plan as the year progresses. Resubmission or re-approval of the application is not necessary. Minor changes include using a different 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 of Education 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. Documentation includes student and teacher participation rates for each NTI day along with evidence of student learning for each NTI day. Once district documentation is submitted to and reviewed and deemed sufficient by KDE, recommendation of approval of days is given to the Commissioner of Education. After his formal approval of the days, the districts will be notified that their NTI days can be counted as instructional days. Each district must then change the attendance code in Infinite Campus for each approved day from "Weather" to "Non-Traditional Instruction". Documentation is generally due to KDE at the beginning of April and approval is granted for NTI days by the middle of 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 are participating in NTI days, 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 their 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 set percentage of student participation that is necessary for a Non-Traditional Instruction day to be approved. When the original pilot began in 2011, 80% student participation for each NTI day was required. The revised statue in 2014 removed the required participation threshold.

### Teacher Participation

Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered teacher work days and count toward 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 percent of teachers working on Non-Traditional Instruction days. There is no threshold of teacher participation required for a Non-Traditional Instruction day to be approved.

### Staff Participation

It is each district's prerogative if classified staff are working on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Classified staff (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 their contracted work 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 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 other severe reason, it is not recommended for students to gather for extra-curricular activities after school hours.

## Attendance Codes in Infinite Campus

Non-Traditional Instruction days should be coded in Infinite Campus as "weather days" until after the Commissioner approves the NTI days as instructional days. After receiving the approval, the district should change each NTI day from "weather" to "N" for Non-Traditional Instruction day. N days must have the School Day and Instructional checkboxes check. For help with coding, Infinite Campus, or attendance-related questions, it is recommended to contact your district's attendance field staff representative: http://education.ky.gov/districts/enrol/Documents/FieldStaffFinDOPT201415.pdf

## 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

Like other certified staff, related services staff such as speech and language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, etc. 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

### Instructional Assistants

Classified staff are not required by the state to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is the discretion of the district if classified personnel are working, the location of the work, and the work duties. 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 PLC, or 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

Classified staff are not required by the state to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is the discretion of the district if classified personnel are working, the location of the work, and the work duties. 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

Classified staff are not required by the state to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is the discretion of the district if classified personnel are working, the location of the work, and the work duties. 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 transportation personnel is not working on Non-Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for these employees to meet the contracted work day agreement.

### Food Service Personnel

Classified staff are not required by the state to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is the discretion of the district if classified personnel are working, the location of the work, and the work duties. 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 food service personnel is not working on Non-Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for these employees to meet the contracted work day agreement.

### Custodial Staff

Classified staff are not required by the state to work on Non-Traditional Instruction days. It is the discretion of the district if classified personnel are working, the location of the work, and the work duties. If working, custodial staff may conduct regular work activities or special assignments from the building administrators. If custodial staff is not working on Non-Traditional Instruction days, school districts should have a plan for these employees 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.

## Documentation

### Documentation Submitted to KDE

Districts submit documentation to KDE after using Non-Traditional Instruction days. This documentation includes district-wide student participation rates for each NTI day, district-wide teacher participation rates for each NTI day, and sample lessons and/or student work samples from all grade levels (elementary, middle, high) for each NTI day. It is encouraged that school districts retain other forms of documentation, such as staff sign-in sheets, student contact logs, PLC agendas, etc. relevant to Non-Traditional Instruction days, however this documentation is not required to be submitted to KDE. KDE staff review the documentation and use this evidence of learning as a basis for recommending the approval of NTI days to the Commissioner.

### CIITS

Districts can use CIITS to gather documentation for Non-Traditional Instruction days. A Quick Reference Guide to using CIITS to gather documentation for NTI can be found on the NTI website http://education.ky.gov/school/innov/Pages/Non-Traditional-Instruction.aspx or on the CIITS Initiative page http://education.ky.gov/districts/tech/ciits/Pages/CIITS-Initiatives.aspx

### Infinite Campus

Infinite Campus can be used to collect documentation for Non-Traditional Instruction days. Some districts have found it convenient to create new tabs in IC to fit the documentation needs. Infinite Campus is necessary for attendance coding for NTI days. When an NTI day is used, it should be recorded in IC as a "weather" day until formal approval of the NTI day has been granted. After approval, the "weather" days should be changed to "N" for Non-Traditional Instruction day. For questions about attendance coding in IC, please contact your attendance field staff representative:
http://education.ky.gov/districts/enrol/Documents/FieldStaffFinDOPT201415.pdf

## 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 is not a "free day" for teachers and students, but an instructional day where teaching and learning is in process.

## 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 their 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 toward 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 to use the packets 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.  Introducing new material on NTI days can be frustrating for the students and give the perception to parents that they are being asked to teach content to their child.  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:
- Students can "check-out" device
- Pre-load content onto device or jump drive
- Park a Wi-Fi bus in the community
- 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
- Agreement with local utility company/internet service provider
- Project-based work
- Alternate 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 is 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

In the cases 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.  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

### Special Education Students

School districts need to have plans to educate all students on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Accommodations for students with Individual Education Plans (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 recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded in the *conference summary* section of the IEP. Plans could include 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.  The regular education and special education teachers should be available to students on NTI days.

### FMD Students

School districts need to have plans to educate all students on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Accommodations for students with Individual Education Plans (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 snow 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. Plans could include 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. Special education teachers should be available to students on NTI days.

### Speech and Occupational Therapy

School districts need to have plans to educate all students on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Accommodations for students with Individual Education Plans (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 recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded in the *conference summary* section of the IEP. Plans could include 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.

### Gifted Students

School districts need to have plans to educate all students on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Implementation of Gifted Student Service Plans (GSSPs) should continue on NTI days.  In each student's Admission and Release Committee (ARC) meeting, a plan should be created relating specifically to how implementation of the GSSP will be continued 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.  Plans could include the gifted and talented teacher creating enrichment lessons or activities or the creation of a long-term project related to the goals in the GSSP. Gifted and talented teachers should be available to students on NTI days.

### Migrant Students

School districts need to have plans to educate all students on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Districts should be cognizant of the specialized needs of migrant students, especially if those students are also considered English Language Learners and have a Program Services Plan. Implementation of Program Services Plans (PSPs) should continue on NTI days.  In each student's Admission and Release Committee (ARC) meeting, a plan should be created relating specifically to how implementation of the PSP will be continued on NTI days.  If your district's PSP has a *conference summary* section, it is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded there.  Plans could include 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 should be available to students on NTI days.

### English Language Learners

School districts need to have plans to educate all students on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Implementation of Program Services Plans (PSPs) should continue on NTI days.  In each student's Admission and Release Committee (ARC) meeting, a plan should be created relating specifically to how implementation of the PSP will be continued on NTI days. If your district's PSP has a *conference summary* section, it is recommended that the NTI day procedures be recorded there.  Plans could include 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 Language Learner teachers should be available to students on NTI days.

## Suspended Students

As Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days, an NTI day counts in the total days out of school.  Regular snow days do not count towards the total days out of school, but NTI days are included in the day out count.  For specific information about coding a suspension on an NTI day in Infinite Campus, please contact the district's attendance field staff representative: http://education.ky.gov/districts/enrol/Documents/FieldStaffFinDOPT201415.pdf


## Testing Window

As Non-Traditional Instruction days are considered instructional days, 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

The application period for the Non-Traditional Instruction program is the spring before the school year of implementation.  For example, if a district would like to implement NTI in 2017-2018, an application would need to be submitted during the spring of 2017.  The application period generally open around the beginning of March and closes in May.  There are two types of applications: Districts New to the Program and Districts Returning to the Program.  After applications are submitted, they are scored by a review committee and approval status is generally announced in June.

### 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 of Education 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 of Education to grant each school district the requested Non-Traditional Day(s).  Once the Commissioner approves the days, school districts will be notified and attendance codes in Infinite Campus should be changed for each approved NTI day from "weather" to "N".  KDE attendance personnel will make the appropriate changes in official records at this time as well.

## When to Use NTI Day

### Weather

Non-Traditional Instruction days may be used "*on days when the school district is closed for health or safety reasons, on nontraditional days, or on nontraditional time.*" The most common use of NTI days is for school closings related to snow. 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 chose 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.

### Changes to Calendar

There have been instances when it has been necessary for the school calendar to change after it has been formally approved by the local school board and by KDE. An example of this type of change to the school calendar would be for a pop-up election. In this case, it was not anticipated that school would be closed when the calendar was created, but after calendar approval, district officials were informed school would need to be closed. Using an NTI day in this instance is permissible. It is best to check with KDE before using an NTI day for any reason other than weather or illness.

### District Wide Closings

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. At this time, individual school closings within the district do not warrant an NTI day.

The use 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 to NOT hold extra-curricular activities on Non-Traditional Instruction days. Such activities would include sports practices, games, or tournaments, club meetings, or other instances where students would gather. There tends to be a perception that if conditions are bad enough to cancel school, then students should not be on the roads traveling to school activities or in the case of illness, congregating with other students.

## Submitting Documentation

## Documentation Methods

The documentation sent to KDE can be in many forms.  The information needed for each NTI day is student participation rate, teacher participation rate, and evidence of learning.  Evidence of learning can be shown through lesson plans or work samples. For the past two years, one lesson plan or work sample per NTI day from each level (one elementary, one middle school, and one high school) has been acceptable.  Should this change for the 2016-2017 school year, we will communicate the change to districts staff as soon as it is determined.

Generally reports of student and teacher participation rates looks something like this:

**District: _____**

| Date of NTI Day | Student Participation Rate | Teacher Participation Rate |
|---|---|---|
| January 12, 2016 | 95.6% | 98.4% |
| January 13, 2016 | 95.3% | 99% |
| January 20. 2016 | 94.8% | 97.9% |
| January 29, 2016 | 96% | 98.2% |
| February 9, 2016 | 95.3% | 99% |
| February 12, 2016 | 96.2% | 98.7% |
| February 16, 2016 | 94.7% | 100% |
| February 25, 2016 | 93.9% | 97.3% |
| March 9, 2016 | 94.2% | 99.4% |
| March 22, 2016 | 95% | 100% |

Submitting evidence of learning has been done in multiple ways.  Possible methods include:
- Attached folder with scanned lesson plans
- Link to data collected in Google Drive or Google Doc
- Attached zipped CIITS folder with lesson plans
- Link to documentation stored in LMS
- Mailing hard copies of lesson plans or student work

**The information needed will not likely change, but once the submission method for the 2016-2017 NTI program has been determined, information will be distributed as quickly as possible.  Unlike in past years, only digital submission of documentation will be accepted due to the large number of participating school districts.**

Please keep in mind that no student identifiers should be included in the documentation; please redact student names.

For sample documents created by participating districts, please see:
http://education.ky.gov/school/innov/Pages/Sample-Documents-from-the-Districts.aspx

Documents on the webpage include examples of:
- Parent and staff communication
- How-to documents for specific LMSs
- Data collection forms
- Staff duty options
- Sample timesheets
- District NTI websites

## Contacts for Additional Information

### District Contacts

| District | Contact Name | Email |
|---|---|---|
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## KDE Contacts

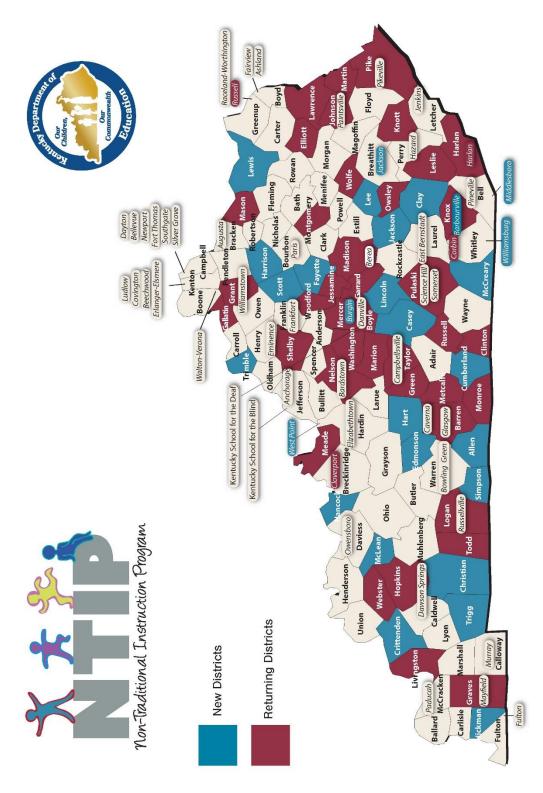| NTI Program | | |
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## Map: Average Number of Snow Days across the State



Average Number of Snow Days per School District 2009-2015

## Map: Districts Participating in the 2016-2017 NTI Program



Districts Participating in the 2016-2017 Non-Traditional Instruction Program