North Cook
Intermediate Service Center

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

North Cook ISC
Leading • Learning • Together

Finding Our Purpose

Launching the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan

During the 2023 school year, North Cook Intermediate Service Center (NCISC) leaders solicited feedback from staff, Governing Board members, local superintendents and members of professional collaboratives. We also conducted interviews with Board members, staff and members of our leadership team asking their perceptions of NCISC today and what they wanted NCISC to be five years from now. The NCISC leadership team analyzed, sorted, and synthesized approximately 400 pieces of survey feedback and numerous points of data gleaned during interviews. In that process, we identified the building blocks of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. Below is NCISC's foundation.

Our Purpose

To be the epicenter for educational services, support, and influence in the region.

Our Beliefs

We believe each person is unique and can learn, grow, improve and succeed with support; to that end, we must be responsive to the needs of our students, educators, schools, districts and community.

We believe there is power in optimism and positive thinking and that perseverance and resilience are necessary to flourish in the world and essential to our services.

We believe we are better together.

Our Values

Service & Responsiveness:

- Kindness & Respect
- Belonging & Inclusivity
- Potential & Optimism
- Curiosity & Learning

Integrity & Professionalism:

- Continuous Improvement
- Visionary Thinking
- Investment in Opportunity
- Fiscal Responsibility

Our Areas of Focus

- Student Services
- Professional Learning & Support
- Organizational Systems & Capacity
- Communications
- Finance

Our Executive Director, Dr. April D. Jordan

Over the past year, NCISC has expanded its capacity and reach to better serve North Cook school districts, growing our team from 88 to 108 dedicated contributors aligned with our purpose of becoming the epicenter for educational services, support, and influence in the region. Driven by this momentum, we broadened our professional learning outreach and student services for all students in the North Cook area. Newly purchased property will enable NCISC and NCYAA to move to a centrally located campus in Mount Prospect for the 2026-2027 school year at the completion of renovations. The achievements highlighted throughout this annual report reflect the meaningful impact of our staff and our districts, reinforcing our commitment to building a brighter tomorrow—because we are better together.



Leadership Team



April D. Jordan, Ed.D.
Executive Director



Allison Slade, Ed.D.
Assistant Executive Director



Alina Morelli Baima
Senior Director of Education and Professional Learning



Cheryl Moore
Senior Director of Human Resources



Terrie Simmons, CSBO (Retired)
Business Manager

Who We Serve

129,816 Students
11,401 Teachers, &
1,062 Administrators in
41 Educational Organizations

32 Elementary School Districts

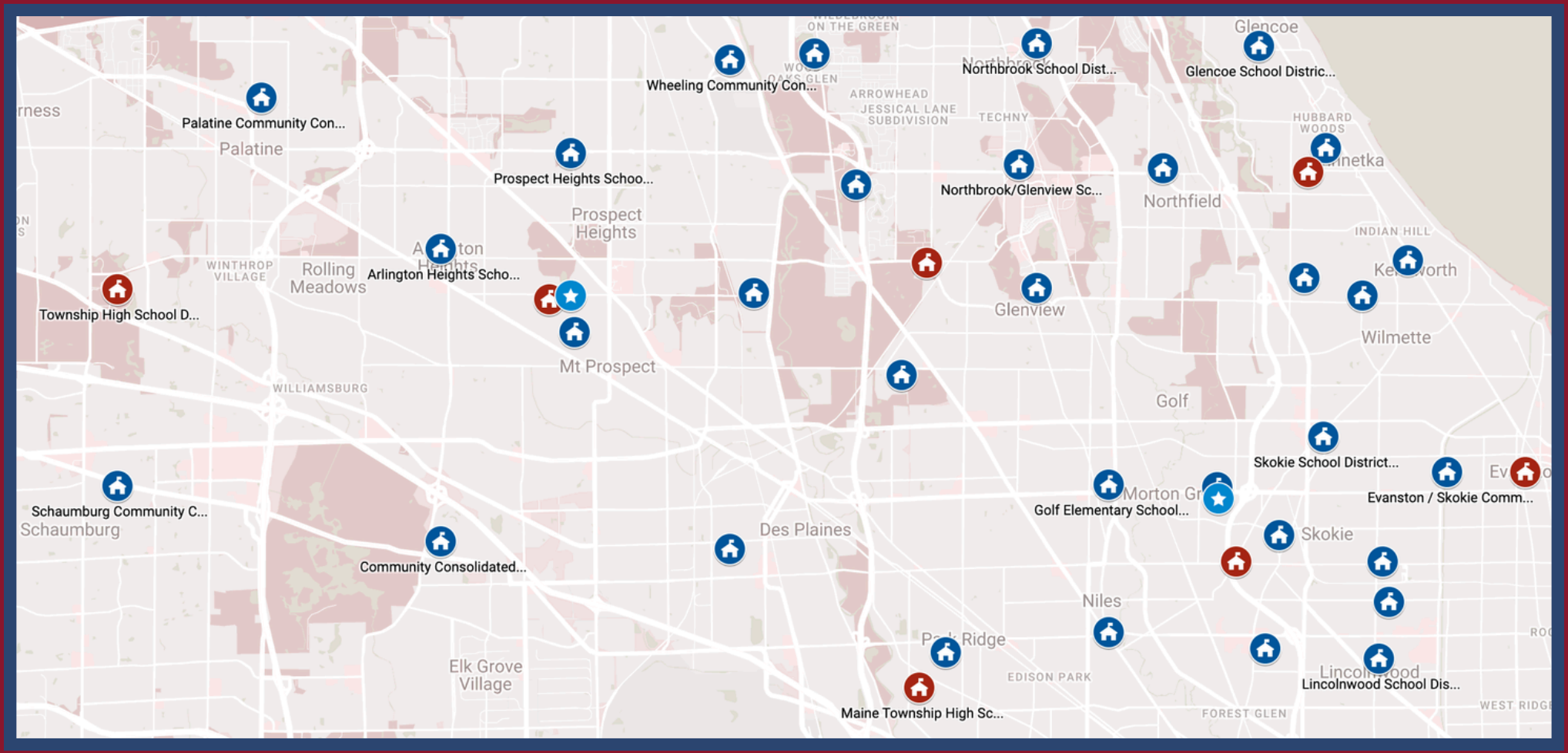
Palatine Community Consolidated School District 15
Wheeling Community Consolidated School District 21
Prospect Heights School District 23
Arlington Heights School District 25
River Trails School District 26
Northbrook School District 27
Northbrook School District 28
Sunset Ridge School District 29
Northbrook/Glenview School District 30
West Northfield School District 31
Glenview School District 34
Glencoe School District 35
Winnetka School District 36
Avoca School District 37
Kenilworth School District 38
Wilmette School District 39
Schaumburg School District 54
Mount Prospect School District 57
Community Consolidated School District 59
Des Plaines School District 62
East Maine School District 63
Park Ridge-Niles School District 64
Evanston/Skokie School District 65
Golf School District 67
Skokie School District 68
Skokie School District 69
Morton Grove School District 70
Niles School District 71
Fairview School District 72
East Prairie School District 73
Skokie School District 73.5
Lincolnwood School District 74

7 High School Districts

Evanston Township District 202
New Trier Township District 203
Maine Township District 207
Township High School District 211
Township High School District 214
Niles Township District 219
Glenbrook High School District 225

2 Special Education Organizations

Niles Township District for Special Education 807
Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization


Palatine Community Con...
Palatine
Wheeling Community Con...
Northbrook School Dist...
Glencoe School Distric...
Glencoe
Prospect Heights Schoo...
Northbrook/Glenview Sc...
Northfield
Prospect Heights
Arlington Heights Scho...
Township High School D...
Rolling Meadows
WINTHROP VILLAGE
Mt Prospect
Glenview
Wilmette
WILLIAMSBURG
Golf
Skokie School District...
Evanston / Skokie Comm...
Schaumburg Community C...
Schaumburg
Golf Elementary School...
Skokie
Community Consolidated...
Des Plaines
Niles
Park Ridge
Elk Grove Village
EDISON PARK
Maine Township High Sc...
Lincolnwood School Dis...
FOREST GLEN
ARROWHEAD
JESSICAL LANE SUBDIVISION
TECHNY
HUBBARD WOODS
INDIAN HILL

How We Serve

North Cook Intermediate Service Center Area 1 was designated by the Illinois legislature in 2010 to serve in the same capacity as a Regional Office of Education for north suburban Cook County Region 5. We act as the liaison between the Illinois State Board of Education and the 39 local school districts and two Special Education Cooperatives located in our region.

We serve and support our districts in the following areas:

- Professional Learning
- Mentorship
- Leadership Coaching
- Alternative Programs
- Attendance Support
- Licensure
- McKinney-Vento for Homeless Students
- Health & Life Safety
- Compliance
- Transportation

NCISC Staff is Growing to Support Districts

25 NCISC Staff Members

15 NCYAA Staff Members (up 2 from 2024-2025)

68 ALOP Student Advocates (up 13 from 2024-2025)

Professional Learning

90 **Total Administrator Academies (AAs)**

73 NCISC AA Sessions

7 In-District AAs

2 On-Campus AAs

7 Third-Party AAs

1 New ISBE-Pending AAs

25 Educator Workshops

6 In-District PL Contracts

39 In-District Coordinator Contracts

7 Third-Party PL Event

8 Collaborative Series

5 Informational Sessions

14 Professional Partnerships

Leadership Coaching

The Leadership Coaching program helps educational leaders (superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, coordinators and experienced principals) grow to increase their impact on staff effectiveness, student growth and organizational success. We employ the co-active coaching model in which the coach stretches the client out of their comfort zone and helps them grow both professionally and personally. Clients may seek to better integrate work and life, address change, create stronger work and team relationships, and/or set achievable goals.

All NCISC coaches are trained and hold a coaching certificate.

17 Clients participated in Leadership Coaching

Mentor Program for Administrators

17 Mentors

supported:

49 First-Year Administrators

and

15 Second-Year Administrators

NCISC utilizes experienced, professional mentors to help North Cook districts support, train, and retain quality administrative leaders. The NCISC Mentor Program for Administrators is a valuable investment in the success of both new and seasoned administrators.

Mentors meet regularly with their mentees on-site within districts, via Zoom, phone, email, and at NCISC for professional development sessions offering motivation and inspiring growth.

Educator Licensure

The NCISC Licensure Department assists administrators and educators required to hold a valid license by the Illinois State Board of Education with all aspects of their education-related credentials. This includes how to apply for licenses and endorsements, how to register and renew licenses, how to use the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) and more. Our Licensure Department also assists with needed requirements and qualifications for assignments. They answer current and prospective educators' questions via phone, email, and in person at the North Cook office. NCISC assists with PELs for the employees of our 39 school district and 2 Special Education Cooperatives including but not limited to:

School District Administration
Superintendents
Assistant Superintendents
Directors
Coordinators

School Building Administration
Principals
Assistant Principals
Deans of Students

Teachers
Core Academics
Fine Arts
Enrichments
Bilingual/ESL
Academic Coaches
Substitute Teachers

School Support
Nurses
Paraprofessionals
Psychologists
School Counselors
Social Workers
Speech Language Pathologists

NCISC also provides fingerprint-based Criminal History Records Information (CHRI) checks through the Illinois State Police and the FBI for educators who work in our schools. These efforts are supported by two full-time Licensure Specialists.

Educators are able to create an online appointment through the NCISC website for their fingerprinting and background check.

NCISC Regional Safe School Program (RSSP)

The North Cook Young Adult Academy (NCYAA) provides alternative education services to the middle and high schools of the North Cook region. The RSSP serves students from grades 6-12 who have had multiple suspensions or when expulsion is held in abeyance at their home school. NCYAA provides a positive, safe, and inclusive learning environment for all students. Goals of these programs are to increase graduation rates, as well as student attendance and participation, increase credit attainment and job-related skills, and improve family engagement and student coping strategies.

NCYAA also provides resources and services, including but not limited to planning and goal-setting, counseling, job-related services, social-emotional learning, along with individual and group support. A team approach is used and regular, ongoing communication between staff, parents/guardians, the student, and the home school are crucial.

All credits earned by students at NCYAA are transferred to their home school district.

57 RSSP Students Served in FY26

46 high school students • 11 middle school students
95% of students had a successful or neutral outcome vs. 60% state-wide

On-Site, High Needs Alternative Learning Opportunities Program

The on-site, high-needs ALOP here NCYAA offers flexible educational programs and services to meet the complex needs of students with additional tiered support that follows a school's continuum of services in an environment that is more flexible and adaptable for students.

17 On-Site ALOP Students Served in FY26

Both the RSSP and the on-site ALOP are regular education programs that follow a comprehensive curriculum similar to the home school district, with differentiated instruction centered around a student's individual differences and learning styles. Social-emotional growth is an important aspect of each program.

Alternative Programs

REGIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM (RSSP) & ON-SITE ALOP

Alternative Programs

STUDENT ADVOCACY (ALOP)

SA ALOP Served 39 North Cook ISC Schools
63 Advocates Served 1,836 students

The Student Advocacy Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) is designed to support students who are at-risk of academic failure despite school-based intervention. Student Advocates maintain a caseload of between 25-32 students annually. Each Advocate works in a student's home school and creates an individualized Student Success Plan which contains goals in at least one of four areas of focus (academic, behavior, SEL and/or attendance).

More than 2,500+ goals were set with students; approximately 70% of those goals were met. In addition:

- Student Advocacy Retention Rate: **75%** of advocates who completed FY25 continued with North Cook to FY26
- Districts interested in ALOP expansion: 6 wanted ALOP in additional schools

Parent Contacts

STUDENTS	PHONE CALLS	HOME VISITS
1,836	5,381	432

Program Graduates

STUDENTS	GRAD ELIGIBLE	GRADUATED	PERCENTAGE
Middle School	278	278	100%
High School	208	173	83.17%

Student Attendance Liaisons

To support students who are struggling with attendance issues, NCISC has grown its Student Attendance Liaison (SAL) team. We have grown the team to three SALs.

NCISC's Attendance Support Team aims to identify ways to remove or lessen attendance barriers, provide resources and serve as a liaison between the school and families. The SALs provide Tier 1 and 2 tools to schools through attendance consultations with the school administrative team to augment their attendance MTSS framework. Additionally, SALs work directly with Tier 3 truant students and families and create individualized plans for improved attendance.

26% Average student attendance growth of chronic truants after a program referral

DISTRICTS SERVED	SCHOOLS SERVED	STUDENTS SERVED
28	83	210
HOME VISITS	**PARENT CONTACTS**	**STUDENT ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLANS**
130	200+	170

13 Languages accommodated

93 Families served with a home language other than English

Attendance Support

McKinney-Vento Unhoused Student Services

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act ensures the educational rights and protections of homeless children so that they may enroll in school, attend regularly and be successful. The legislation requires a local homeless education liaison in every school district. NCISC's Regional McKinney-Vento Liaison coordinates efforts with its district liaisons.

McKinney-Vento guarantees homeless children the right to:

- Enroll in school with or without necessary paperwork
- Attend school in the area where the family or youth currently resides
- Transportation to school
- Services comparable to other students

2,431 Homeless students/families were identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento services

496 Backpacks purchased and distributed to school districts and homeless agencies throughout the North Cook region

250 Personal hygiene kits purchased and distributed to school districts and homeless agencies throughout the region

23 Student truancy cases addressed through McKinney-Vento

All NCISC Districts Offered clothing, bicycles, psychological and counseling services, summer camp and pool passes for McKinney-Vento students

Health/Life Safety & Compliance Visits

Annually, NCISC Health/Life Safety inspectors systematically visit school buildings to verify they are in compliance with safety regulations. This includes inspecting classrooms, cafeterias, boiler rooms, exits, elevators, stages and much more.

Additionally, every four years NCISC districts also engage in a Compliance Review and Professional Development Audit to ensure they are in compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in the areas of student well-being; staff/personnel; policy/governance; health/life safety; and instructional programs.

NCISC is also responsible for compliance with established standards in the construction, remodeling, and demolition of public school buildings in our region. By law, every 10 years, each public school building or buildings intended for occupancy by students must be surveyed for continued compliance by a licensed State of Illinois architect or engineer.

237 Annual Building Inspections

162 Building Permits
151 Occupancy Permits
36 Partial occupancy Permits
7 Modular classrooms, temporary Permits
1 Demolition Permits
10 Public School Compliance Visits
9 Non-public School Compliance Visits

Transportation

NCISC is authorized by the Illinois State Board of Education to manage School Bus Driver training for all of Cook County, including Chicago.

All new school bus or cab drivers who transport students to and from school must complete an eight-hour, in-person, Initial Training Course before applying for their school bus/cab driver permit. A two-hour Refresher Training Course is required in the 12-month period prior to renewal of a school bus/cab permit. Rolled out in FY24, was a First Division in-person Initial Training Course. This course is for drivers who would transport ten passengers or fewer (nine passengers plus driver) on regular routes for all school-sponsored activities, including curriculum-related trips.

8,419
Participants in Bus Driver Training Sessions

130
Initial Bus Driver Training Classes Conducted

245
Refresher Bus Driver Training Classes Conducted

To help alleviate the bus driver shortage, NCISC provides links on its website to job opportunities available at Cook County school districts and transportation companies seeking bus drivers.

Communications

The North Cook Better Together PK-8 Job Fair has become an annual event hosted by North Cook. It is co-sponsored by NCISC and IASA-North Cook Region. The event is marketed to local college and university students, NCISC district communities, and through digital and print news in the Cook County area.

30 Districts participated in the Better Together PK-8 Job Fair

348 Attendees participated in the Better Together PK-8 Job Fair

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