



COVID-19 Education Continuation Plan

April 20, 2020

Summary:

The following plan is designed to maximize instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic while using non-traditional instruction (NTI) to reach 1,062 hours of instruction in all Kentucky school districts prior to May 29, 2020. This plan assumes school closure for in-person classes for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year (through June 30, 2020).

This plan facilitates districts reaching 1,062 hours as called for by SB 177 (2020); however, the plan enables districts to end the 2019-2020 school year two weeks earlier than envisioned by SB 177. The plan relies upon districts continuing to provide NTI instruction and permits each NTI day utilized during the 2019-2020 school year to count as the equivalent of seven hours of daily instruction.

Assumptions:

Under the Seven Benchmark Criteria approach announced on April 17, 2020, by Gov. Andy Beshear, a return to in-person classes on or before June 1, 2020, is very unlikely and not feasible in the first stage of reopening Kentucky.

Without an education continuation plan, districts are unclear as to expectations and are on various differing schedules to reach 1,062 hours of instruction – some as early as April 24 and some as late as June 3 or later. SB 177 envisions districts taking until June 12, 2020, to complete 1,062 hours of instruction.

Districts need to be able to plan for end-of-year activities, end-of-year closeout and utilize remaining teacher contract days to plan for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. Announcement of school closure to in-person classes for the remainder of the year is necessary now to enable planning and preparation of alternatives using social distancing, virtual events and teacher/staff professional development using technology/virtual meetings.

In order to provide equity across the state and ensure that all students receive at least 1,062 hours of equivalent instruction, districts must continue to provide instruction under the NTI program for the remainder of the year.

Kentucky is “the” national leader in cloud-based computing services for K-12 schools. While we are far from 100% perfect, all of this experience has made Kentucky’s public school districts better positioned than most states for the current increased interest and focus on virtual administrative and learning operations/services. Additionally, Kentucky’s NTI Program has been in effect since 2011, affording regional educational cooperatives and many districts great experience in NTI-based instruction.

Even though almost half of Kentucky’s districts are new to NTI this year, assistance from the eight educational cooperatives and other partners, such as Kentucky Educational Television (KET), will allow all of our school districts to continue using NTI for the remainder of the school year and reach at least 1,062 hours of equivalent instruction for every student. Districts may



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choose to continue NTI engagement beyond the 1,062 hours, even if only intermittently, to keep students connected during school closure.

At this time, there are no known public health reasons that would discourage the continued use of NTI through the end of the school year to reach 1,062 hours in all districts, assuming districts continue to maintain social distancing and follow other protocols around the delivery of instructional packets, etc.

While NTI fatigue is being reported across the state from students, teachers and parents, our students require continued instruction using the only operable education delivery platform available to us at this time, which is NTI. Students, teachers and parents also are reporting learning success using NTI via social media. Districts still maintain the flexibility to amend their district calendars to add closure days to help address fatigue.

Education Continuation Plan:

All districts shall be closed to in-person classes and activities through the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

All districts shall continue using NTI to deliver instruction for the remainder of the school year.

Unless extraordinary circumstances, logistical hardships or intervening public health concerns exist (these exceptions are explained below), all districts are required to achieve 1,062 hours of instruction for the 2019-2020 school year.

The commissioner will grant all districts the ability to count every NTI day utilized during the 2019-2020 school year as a seven-hour day in the calculation to reach 1,062 hours of instruction. Some districts already are permitted to count up to seven hours as a result of regular instructional days being seven hours in length in those districts. Because NTI relies not upon seat time but upon project and competency-based learning, a seven-hour equivalent day will be recognized by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) for all NTI days for the 2019-2020 school year. Use of a seven-hour day equivalent for NTI will result in all districts achieving 1,062 hours of instruction on or before May 29, 2020, with most districts likely to finish in mid-May.

Exceptions:

If a school or district encounters extraordinary circumstances, logistical hardships or the governor determines that public health reasons require that a district can no longer continue using NTI, and a failure to reach 1,062 hours will result, the following options will be utilized:

Option 1:

SB 177 provides that districts should be “maximizing instructional time” prior to seeking relief from the commissioner for waiver of the 1,062 instructional hour requirement. Specifically, if a district is “unable to under its current school calendar, the district shall request assistance from the commissioner of education by May 1, 2020, to determine a plan for maximizing instructional time to complete 1,062 instructional hours by June 12, 2020. If the district presents compelling



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rationale that adding instructional time to the day would create logistical hardships, the commissioner shall not require adding time to the day as part of the district's plan. If, after providing planning assistance to the school district, the commissioner of education determines the school district has maximized instructional time but cannot complete 1,062 hours by June 12, 2020, the commissioner shall waive the remaining instructional hours required.”

Option 2:

If the governor determines that there are extraordinary circumstances, logistical reasons or public health reasons that some or all Kentucky school districts should cease NTI prior to reaching 1,062 hours, the governor’s executive authority under the state of emergency may be utilized to waive the 1,062 hour requirement for the 2019-2020 school year, notwithstanding the requirements of SB 177.

Recommended Next Steps:

The governor, lieutenant governor and commissioner held a call with superintendents on April 20, 2020, to explain the plan.

The KDE and education partners will continue to provide guidance to districts to educate, feed and support.

The KDE will hold additional webcasts specifically aimed at districts new to NTI to provide additional guidance and support.

The KDE will participate in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)’s K-12 Education Recovery Task Force to inform the KDE and education partners, including the Commissioner’s Education Continuation Task Force, on current research and practice in reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

The KDE and education partners will begin providing guidance to districts on how resources will be deployed over the summer to assist students with feeding, academic support and remediation.

The KDE and education partners will begin providing assistance to districts in planning for the 2020-2021 school year, including guidance on how to diagnose gaps in content knowledge and move forward with current year learning, and how the seven benchmark criteria/phases may affect the upcoming school year.

For more information about Non-Traditional Instruction Program as it relates to COVID-19, visit the KDE’s [“Emergency Non-Traditional Instruction Guidance and Resources”](#) webpage. For more information about COVID-19, visit the [Kentucky Department for Public Health’s COVID-19 webpage](#) or [KDE’s COVID-19 webpage](#).