



Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky for High School Teams of Educators, Students, and Partners October 21-24, 2024

***At-Home Activities Begin September 16, 2024**

See innovative learning in person, exchange strategies to equitably transform learning, and apply what you learn to transform teaching and learning within your own school/district.



Eminence Independent School District



STEAM Academy, Fayette County Public Schools



Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative

[Complete the Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion Application](#)

Apply by April 30, 2024. The program is capped at 68 participants, and NGLC is committed to an inclusive and equitable selection process based on a set of criteria. Mini-grants of \$1,500 per team member are provided to defray costs for travel and support collaboration, planning, and implementation of learning.

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

Table of Contents

[Overview](#) [Learning Goals and Activities](#) [Application and Eligibility](#) [Selection Process](#) [Mini-Grants and Commitments](#)
[Travel Costs](#) [COVID-Related Precautions for Travel](#) [Draft Agenda](#) [About the Host Sites](#)

Overview

The national nonprofit [Next Generation Learning Challenges](#) (NGLC), with funding from the [Barr Foundation](#), is excited to announce the Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky, October 21-24, 2024! We invite applications from New England-based high school-focused teams of 6-9 educators, students, and key partners that are interested in redesigning the high school experience and are ready to work together to apply new strategies in their own schools.

Seeing is believing. The Innovative Schools Learning Excursions are more than a school tour, they are a learning experience. Facilitators will help every participant learn with and from the host sites. The excursions are designed to deepen participants' knowledge of "next generation learning" (see below) approaches in use at the host sites and will provide teams a foundation for applying what they learn to their own vision for teaching and learning in their school/district.

Next generation learning. Learning approaches that develop students in well-rounded ways share some common characteristics: They respond to the strengths, needs, and cultural backgrounds of each individual student. They make sure students successfully acquire skills and knowledge before moving on. They connect academic knowledge and skills to on-the-job work experiences and real problems in our communities, adapted for even our youngest learners. They use the most advanced tools available in our society, including technology but also what is known in education as "learning science." Educators often refer to these learning approaches as student-centered, personalized, competency-based, equitable, experiential, authentic, and/or technology-enabled. At NGLC, we use the term [next generation learning](#) to capture all of these learning approaches.

Inclusive community engagement. A key takeaway from NGLC's work with schools and districts that have had success in transforming teaching and learning is this: "If young people are going to graduate from U.S. public schools with the skills and mindsets needed to address 21st century challenges, we who serve them—and the schools and organizations we are a part of—must develop and use those same skills and mindsets ourselves." Most importantly, the change process should be owned by educators, students, parents, and community members, with care taken to be inclusive and equitable. A diverse team of partners doing work that matters for their community and for their students is truly transformational. It's exactly what needs to happen for real and lasting change to take root. It's what all our students deserve. (For more, see our research at www.transformation-design.org.)

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

Learning Goals and Activities

Innovative Schools Learning Excursions are first and foremost learning experiences for participants and their teams. The experiences are designed to support your team’s vision for transformed learning and shared purpose for the excursion—this shared purpose is expressed as a “Brave Question.” Your team will begin to identify these guiding ideas in your application and clarify them through use of a [learning log](#). The learning log is our primary tool to organize and support your team’s learning.

Goals

- See high schools in the midst of transforming learning, focusing on next gen learning approaches.
- Notice the school culture, the ways that adults and youth work together, and school and district policies; explore how these conditions support innovative teaching and learning.
- Connect with others in similar roles—educator, student, parent, community partner—to understand how each role is involved in the work of transforming learning at the host school(s) and consider ways your role can be involved in redesigning the high school experience in your own community.
- Develop strategies for applying what you learn during the learning excursion to your school/district and create an artifact to share what you learn with a wider group of colleagues and partners in your school/district community.

Activities

- *Before the trip:* To develop team goals for the learning excursion based on a shared vision for teaching and learning, attend a virtual session with NGLC, the host schools, and other participating teams; complete sections of your team learning log; go on a “learning walk” to observe learning in one of your own high schools; join a virtual team coaching session with an NGLC facilitator; and independently review the materials and resources we provide in advance.
- *During the trip:* Tour the host schools to observe their approach to next gen learning; meet with students, teachers, and administrators to discuss their high school learning redesign; meet with partners who have been involved in the learning redesign; participate in team work sessions; participate in work and social sessions with other teams attending the learning excursion and the host schools; and create an artifact of your team’s experience to share with a wider group of partners in your school and community.
- *After the trip:* To make the team’s learning visible to your school community, to inspire action to redesign the high school learning experience, and to apply what you learn from this program, finalize a set of ideas or actions to try and complete your learning log, join a virtual team coaching session with an NGLC facilitator, and share your experience with partners in your school/district community.
- See the [draft agenda](#) below for dates and times of all activities.

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

NGLC will organize and share the agenda, materials to prepare for the event, and other essential information via email. All participants will be able to access all information and materials, including your team's learning log, from a participant agenda available as a Google doc. Participants are invited to access learning logs from other teams as well. This is one way to live out a shared commitment to making learning visible.

Application and Eligibility

Each team must submit the required [application form](#) by **11:59 p.m. ET on Tuesday, April 30, 2024**. Participation in this excursion is capped at 68 participants, approximately 7-11 teams. NGLC is committed to an inclusive and equitable selection process; applications will be reviewed on a set of criteria to make selections.

Eligibility

- The application is open to all public school governance types (traditional, innovation, charter) in New England.
- We require that teams be focused at the high school level.
- We require that teams include **at least one high school or district leader with decision-making authority** and **at least two students**. Teams may also include district and school teachers, counselors, non-instructional staff, and administrators as well as parents, school committee/school board members, workforce industry partners, nonprofit partners, local government officials, and other key partners.
- We recommend team size to be 6-9 members. *If your team is less than 6 or more than 9, please provide a rationale in the application. Please note that if selected, we may not be able to accommodate more than 9 members on your team, in order to provide inclusive access to the program.*
- We recommend teams balance *educator* and *partner* roles. This balance helps ensure that all voices and perspectives have an opportunity to contribute equitably and inclusively to team discussions and team work. An individual team member may represent multiple roles, such as a teacher who is also a parent.
- The lead applicant may represent an educator or partner role.

Application Details

The [application form](#) collects basic information about the lead applicant and your team's school/district. The application also asks for your team composition, vision for transformed learning, and goals for participating in the learning excursion. And as part of the application, you are asked to certify that you have secured assurances from the appropriate building and/or district leaders for your team to conduct a

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

learning walk at your team's high school. The learning walk is a required activity for the learning excursion; see the draft agenda below for when the learning walk needs to occur.

Selection Process

NGLC will review all applications once the application closes on April 30, 2024. Using information obtained from the applications, NGLC will make final selections with feedback from program officers at the Barr Foundation. If needed, NGLC may conduct calls with a set of finalist teams. NGLC will contact all teams that apply by the deadline with selection decisions no later than May 15, 2024. At that time, information about registration and travel will be distributed. *Please wait to make any travel plans until we have confirmed your selection.*

Selection Criteria

NGLC is committed to an inclusive and equitable selection process based on a set of criteria. The Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky is capped at 68 participants. We expect to select 7-11 teams of 6-9 members each.

- Teams will be selected based on the quality of the application responses and evidence of meeting the criteria set forth in the application, including team composition with required roles, vision for transformed learning, and goals for participating.
- Priority will be given to teams that are interested in redesigning the high school experience, meet the expectations for team size, and balance educator and partner roles.
- If NGLC conducts calls with a set of finalist teams, those calls will be used to determine the strength of foundational structures known to support effective change efforts, implementation, and long-term sustainability.

Mini-Grants and Commitments

To relieve costs for travel as well as to support learning, collaboration, engagement, planning, and implementation of learning, we offer each participating team a mini-grant of \$1,500 per team member. Mini-grant funds will be distributed in two equal payments: one at the time of the grant award and one upon completion of all commitments. In order to receive the full mini-grant, we kindly request the following commitments from **each team member**:

1. Engage as active members of the learning community by...
 - a. Completing all activities before and after the visit, including but not limited to readings, virtual sessions with NGLC, and a learning walk at your team's high school.

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

- b. Attending all segments of the Innovative Schools Learning Excursion programming while onsite at the host school(s). Start and end times are posted within the draft agenda below.
 - c. Sharing your thinking and learning visibly during in person and virtual sessions.
 - d. Creating an artifact of your team's experience to share with a wider group of partners in your school and community.
2. Complete the participant survey at the end of the learning excursion.
 3. Submit a completed [learning log](#) at the end of the learning excursion.

Following your school/district's policies, mini-grant funds may be used to cover costs of participating that are not directly paid by NGLC, including but not limited to travel-related costs; associated costs such as substitutes, food for planning meetings, and stipends for working sessions pre/post event; and costs related to applying the learning and continuing the work following the visit.

Travel Costs

NGLC will provide lodging for all participants and meals during the excursion as described below. The excursion will have a designated headquarters hotel with buses to shuttle participants to the school sites.

- **Lodging:** NGLC will reserve and directly pay for up to four nights at a designated hotel.
- **Meals:** NGLC will provide dinner on October 21; breakfast, lunch, breaks, and dinner on October 22; breakfast, lunch, and breaks on October 23; and breakfast on October 24. You will be responsible for costs for dinner on October 23 and any meals during travel.

Teams need to pay for all other travel-related expenses (car rental, train, airfare, taxi or shared ride services, any non-hosted meals, incidentals, etc.) up front with their own funds; costs may be supported by mini-grant funds. *Please wait to make any travel arrangements until we have confirmed your selection.*

COVID-Related Precautions for Travel

NGLC is taking specific steps to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 for participants, hosts, and staff, consistent with regulations and guidelines from NGLC's fiscal sponsor (Tides Center), the CDC, and state and local authorities. If you have any questions or concerns about safety precautions related to travel or onsite programming, please contact Kristen Vogt at NGLC, kvogt@nextgenlearning.org or 215-668-8507. *Please note that these requirements are subject to change as COVID conditions change.*

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

Requirements:

- If, in the 10 days prior to the event, you have experienced symptoms of COVID-19 and/or had exposure to any person who has COVID-19, take a COVID test the day of travel. If you test positive, stay home and contact Kristen Vogt at NGLC, kvogt@nextgenlearning.org or 215-668-8507, as soon as possible.
- Unless required by local regulations, masking and social distancing are optional. Programming will accommodate participants who choose to wear a mask and observe social distancing.
- Follow [CDC guidance and recommendations](#) for domestic travel.

Recommendations:

- Bring a personal supply of masks, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes.
- Bring at least one COVID test for personal use in the event you develop symptoms during the program.

Draft Agenda

At Home Sessions	
Monday, September 16, 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Virtual Workshop with NGLC and Kentucky hosts for all teams
Between September 16 and October 11	Learning Walk in one of your own high schools, scheduled by your team
Between October 7 and October 18	1 Hour Virtual Team Coaching Session with NGLC, scheduled by your team with NGLC
Programming in Kentucky	
October 21, 2024: Travel & Networking Dinner	
6:30 pm - 9:00 pm	Registration and Networking Reception and Dinner, provided by NGLC
October 22, 2024	
7:00 am - 7:45 am	Breakfast provided by NGLC

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

7:45 am - 5:00 pm	STEAM Academy Visit and Day One Programming <i>includes lunch and breaks provided by NGLC</i>
5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Personal rejuvenation and dinner on your own
October 23, 2024	
6:00 am - 7:00 am	Breakfast, provided by NGLC
7:00 am - 5:00 pm	Eminence K-12 Visit and Day Two Programming <i>includes lunch and breaks provided by NGLC</i>
5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Personal rejuvenation
6:30 pm - 9:30 pm	Cohort Dinner, hosted by NGLC
October 24, 2024	
7:00 am - 8:00 am	Breakfast, provided by NGLC
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Day Three Programming
11:00 am	Departure

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky

About the Host Sites



Eminence Independent School District

Website: <https://www.eminence.kyschools.us/>

School Demographics:

- Grades Served: PK-12
- Enrollment:
 - PK-12: 920
 - Grades 6-12: 496
- Race/Ethnicity: 77% White, 10% Hispanic/Latino, 7% Two or more races, 6% Other
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 56%
- Homeless: 6%
- English Learners: 2%
- Students with Disabilities: 15%

Watch: [Sustaining a Schoolwide Culture of Playful Learning](#) (4:19)

Read: [2023 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Visits Eminence Independent, the land of learning, creation and innovation](#)

In 2012 Eminence Independent School District ignited its [School on FIRE](#) model, from PK to 12. Envisioning the DisneyWorld of schools, the School on FIRE model is designed to develop world-class students and empower them to be risk-takers, collaborators, communicators, leaders, and visionaries. These outcomes are expressed in the [Eminence Exemplars](#), the district's version of a graduate portrait, which have been built out into grade-level standards across all grades, PK-12. With a STEAM approach, their learning model embraces experiential learning using advanced science, emerging technologies, applied engineering skills, and artistic design. Classroom experiences are designed to capture the heart and imagination of students, driven by the tenets of 'Surprise & Delight' and 'Yes, And' thinking! The [Edhub](#) is a multimedia, tech-enabled, play-based learning space in the school building shared by elementary, middle, and high school students and staff. Learning Excursion participants will see students actively engaged in learning by moving, creating, and doing; they will see student work everywhere they look; and they will see teachers creating meaningful moments of both joy and productive struggle. Participants will also explore the school's personalized, passion-based approach through elements like standards-based grading and [micro-credentials](#); panel defenses in 5th, 8th, and 12th grade; seasonal rites of passage; a design thinking curriculum; and the role of dispositional hiring.

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky



STEAM Academy, Fayette County Public Schools

Website: <https://steam.fcps.net/>

School Demographics:

- Grades Served: 9-12
- Enrollment: 440
- Race/Ethnicity: 53% White, 28% African American, 12% Hispanic/Latino, 8% Other
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 36%
- English Learners: 1%
- Students with Disabilities: 3%

Watch: [What Is STEAM Academy?](#) video produced by students (6:17)

Located in Lexington, Kentucky, STEAM Academy is reimagining what high school can be. A lottery-driven open enrollment school within Fayette County Public Schools, STEAM Academy is an environment of opportunity and innovation where creativity, student voice, internships, and inquiry are at the center of teaching and learning. The most important element of the school's model is its culture of collaboration, inclusion, risk-taking, and high expectations—and that's for teachers and students both. Grounded in [project-based learning](#) emphasizing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math), teachers design projects that not only address course content but also foster the school's [STEAM Habits](#), a set of six skills similar to those in a graduate portrait. The school embraces a mastery-based approach within a semester-based course schedule and a traditional grading structure. This allows students to move at a pace that works best for them while also creating space for them to complete [internships](#) and dual credit opportunities. Sophomore [defenses of learning](#), framed around the STEAM Habits, serve as a gateway to that real-world learning that includes research- and work-based internships and dual credit coursework with the University of Kentucky and Bluegrass Community & Technical College. Learning Excursion participants will see student engagement in classes, explore the interdisciplinary nature of STEAM projects, and learn about student-centered practices like J-term—a week of experiential courses—and the role (but not the requirement) of makerspaces, a recording studio, and collaboration spaces that support the learning model. Participants will also learn how the school builds a master schedule in service of individual students' learning goals and needs.

Fall 2024 Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Kentucky



Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative

Website: <https://www.ovec.org/about>

The Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) is a consortium of 14 school districts serving over 150,000 students in north central Kentucky. The mission of the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative is to provide professional learning, advocacy, and services that support, lead and inspire. Established in 1976, the cooperative provides a vehicle for conducting regional planning, development, and implementation of educational programs on a continuing basis. OVEC offers programs that serve member school districts, their student populations and families. Learning Excursion participants will learn about the [state's deeper learning initiatives](#), how OVEC is contributing to an [ecosystem of deeper learning support](#) for innovative systems-level change, and [lessons learned](#) from across OVEC districts' efforts to provide deeper learning experiences and outcomes for students.