



The Newport Board of Education held a special meeting on April 10, 2019 at 6:30 P.M. The meeting was held in the Board Room located at 30 W. 8th Street, Newport.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ramona Malone called the meeting to order and asked for a roll call. The following were present: Ramona Malone, Dr. Julie Smith-Morrow, Melissa Sheffel, Theresa Miller, & Sylvia Covington.

Also in attendance: Superintendent Kelly Middleton, other district leaders, and guests.

Ms. Malone asked those in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance and pause for a Moment of Reflection.

LEASE AGREEMENT FOR OFFICE SPACE AT 706 PARK STREET, NEWPORT, KY

After discussion and several questions on personnel, additional costs, and savings on construction, Dr. SMITH-MORROW MOTIONED SECONDED BY SHEFFEL, to approve a one-year lease agreement with Brighton Properties. This space will be used to open the Newport School of Innovation in the fall of 2019.

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Roll call: Ms. Malone – yes
Dr. Smith-Morrow – yes
Ms. Sheffel – yes
Ms. Covington – no
Ms. Miller - no

DISTRICT AdvancEd DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW REPORT

Mr. Middleton opened up the discussion on the report by introducing all the players involved in the audit and what he believes their connection is to the findings in the final report; the 4 diagnostic team members, the 4 employees involved in testing allegations, 2 former employees that the district is in current litigation with, and the 3 ERS team members assigned to Newport by KDE. He made it publicly known that he did not accept the audit and KDE was aware of his stance. During his initial discussion with Dr. Foster, Associate Commissioner, he laid out many disturbing facts regarding the audit so she declared the audit preliminary (not available for open records) while she looked into the concerns raised by the district. The district provided strong evidence that the report may not be accurate. However, on Friday, April 5th, Dr. Foster reached out to Mr. Middleton and said the report stands as is. Current legislation does not allow due process for districts regarding diagnostic audits.

Amy Gilkison, Asst. Superintendent, addressed the board on each of the handouts given to the board for review. The first handout was the training guidelines from AdvancEd for diagnostic review team members. This document covers roles and responsibilities of team members. Team members are told to review documents in team workspace and school/system website. During the review, team members should collect and analyze data, examine the institutions' documents and diagnostics, engage in deliberations, discussions and decision-making with other team members, document supportive evidence for improvement priorities and institution strengths, and collaborate with others to effectively communicate findings through the exit report and final written report.

Ms. Gilkison reviewed a 21-page rebuttal that was provided to KDE documenting concerns after reviewing the district's report. In short the district's concerns are:

- Lack of due process;
- Lack of triangulation of data from interviews, evidences, observations, and survey data;
- Lack of follow-up after interviews to investigate or truth finding of information gathered;
- Lack of accessing prepared evidences, documents, and artifacts for evaluation of district direction, strengths, leverages, or concerns;
- Lack of thorough examination and understanding of current processes and systems in place in the district;
- Very apparent discrepancies in tone and voice throughout the report;
- Inclusion of untrue, false statements in the final report (pages 5 & 8 in rebuttal);
- Interview questions and processes were inconsistent; i.e. wouldn't allow district leaders enough time to fully explain initiatives, questions asked to some district leaders inferred preconceived ideas about our district and programs;
- Biased, unsubstantiated hearsay statements within the report were void of verification through surveys, data, or other interviews;
- Data and statements included in the report are contradictory (page 9 in rebuttal);
- Improvement priorities were identified without reviewing evidences submitted.

The last handout was the evidence access documentation. Upon review of the report, it was apparent that the members of the audit team either ignored the evidence submitted or did not actually access it. Since the evidence was stored in Google Team Drive, leaders were able to run a report that displayed each person that had accessed the folders/files along with the date and time of the activity. The results confirm that the audit team did not thoroughly review the evidence and artifacts submitted by district leaders.

- Team member #1 and Lead accessed 15 documents and spent approx. 23 minutes, 38 seconds reviewing;
- Team member #2 accessed 2 documents and spent approx. 2 minutes, 19 seconds reviewing;
- Team member #3 accessed 22 documents and spent approx. 16 minutes, 30 seconds reviewing;
- Team member #4 accessed 30 documents and spent approx. 31 minutes, 30 seconds reviewing.

Total number of documents accessed by the team was 69 out of 767 documents provided; total time team spent reviewing evidence prior to the audit was 80 minutes.

Dr. Smith-Morrow asked about next steps. Ms. Gilkison said the district will work on the two improvement priorities outlined in the audit. Other concerns centered around protection on future audits.

Mr. Middleton is presenting this report to superintendents at NKCES and KEDC. Meetings have been held with districts designated as CSI and several high level educators throughout the state regarding the diagnostic audits. He will keep the board updated on the progress of their work in the coming months.

Mr. Middleton asked the board if they would like Dr. Foster to address this report with them. Both Ms. Malone and Dr. Smith-Morrow voiced their interest. They agreed to invite her to the May 22 regular monthly meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on MOTION BY SHEFFEL AND SECONDED BY SMITH-MORROW the meeting adjourned. Time: 7:40 PM

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Chairman

Secretary