



The Newport Board of Education held a work session on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 6:30 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8th Street, Newport.

CALL TO ORDER

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

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

NHS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mike Hunter, Principal at NHS, and Todd Bertsch, member of the high school advisory council, were present. Robin Jones, Taliyah Jefferson, and Holly Hart joined the meeting virtually. Ms. Malone welcomed the council and thanked them for their time. She explained the purpose of inviting the advisory council to attend the work session is to build a strong partnership between the two entities and find out how we can support each other toward our common goals.

The advisory council was present to give the board a senior class update. Currently there are 78 seniors in the Class of 2022. 25 of the 78 are currently academic or career ready. Every senior will be eligible to participate in the end of program assessments or industry certifications to earn career readiness. A student who is marked as active in a Pathway is eligible to take an industry certification to earn career readiness. Most seniors are in RTI groups receiving practice and standards work to be successful on that assessment. Seven seniors are in jeopardy of not earning 24 credits. These students are all virtual.

There are approximately 50 seniors enrolled in co-op program. Most all are working in school-based experiences. Ms. Covington complimented the students she has seen around the businesses in Newport. They have been helpful and well-mannered in her interactions with them. Mr. Sutherland asked if the co-op program ever reaches out to the many retail businesses in Newport. There are also many construction projects in the city, especially in the historic preservation field. He also mentioned that it would be ideal to reach out to secure jobs thru union apprenticeships such as electricians and plumbers. These are well paying jobs for students to consider. He also mentioned what a good experience it would be for students to help with social media/tech work for the district. Mr. Hunter admitted the program needed to expand so students would have more experience in the work place.

Mike reviewed the pillar work the high school is involved in for the second semester of the year. Pillar One – Teaching and Student Achievement – Pillar Two – Cultivate a culture of growth and capacity – Pillar Three – Integrating systems of support and activating partnerships.

Mr. Hunter reported truancy is the worst it has been since COVID. There are more students and families attending truancy diversion this year than in the past. Ms. Covington asked if the new Dean of Students position would help with any of the issues the high school is experiencing with truancy and behavior.

Ms. Covington asked if the district still has a “move up day” for all students. Would more than one day be helpful to help student acclimate to new buildings? Mr. Hunter felt orientation over the summer might be beneficial or perhaps some type of summer camp for incoming 7th graders might provide a more valuable experience.

Mr. Hunter presented winter MAP data. Overall, reading data for the 7th and 8th grade students was better than math when comparing the same students from one test subject to the next. The opposite was true for grades 9 and 10. Ms. Malone asked if they ever looked at MAP data and compared it to classroom grades. Do those scores line up? Mr. Hunter said they do not do that but it might be helpful.

Mr. Hunter said students are in ESS to master the core standards. Interventions are also in place to help students that are behind. Mr. Watts said we have to remember some students just do not test well. However, since these are the same students taking the math and reading assessment perhaps the way we integrate intervention into schedules is ineffective. Research shows 35% of the time, students are not given grade level assignments. We have to start teaching at grade level plus incorporate the necessary interventions simultaneously in order for students to be successful. Once we master this, students should start showing growth.

Dr. Smith-Morrow said she was encouraged with the projected growth numbers.

STAFFING ALLOCATIONS

Mr. Watts shared the staffing allocations for SY 22/23. He will be asking the board to approve these allocations at the regular meeting this month. He went on to explain that the allocations include all the positions the district is allowing for each location minus any Title 1 positions. In the past, the board has approved minimum state allocations and then the principals return the next month to ask for approval of Section 7 requests (additional staff). Approving the allocations as presented, prevents that additional step.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Ms. Hoover updated the board on recent developments regarding this program. After consulting with a tax attorney about the tuition reimbursement program, this cannot be considered an employee fringe benefit program because not employees benefit. This is an education assistance program which means any reimbursement over \$5,250 within a tax year is taxable income to the employee. We are in the process of meeting with current participants and providing them with amended W-2s if necessary for tax years 20 and 21.

Language changes have been recommended by the tax attorney; details will be provided once we receive her final letter. This might be a good time to decide the intended goal of the program. Is it employee retention, improvement of instruction, or both?

Ms. Malone agreed and said the board should set criteria moving forward. Should there be a waiting period before someone enters the program? Should we limit the reimbursement to only those teachers who enter the BloomBoard program. The BloomBoard program focuses directly on the 10 teaching standards developed by KDE that directly impacts the classroom. Not only does this program impact classroom instruction but it would save the district a considerable amount of money. To date, the board has spent upwards of \$200,000 for this program without any expectations other than retainment.

Dr. Smith-Morrow agreed with Ms. Malone but was not confident we should limit the program to the BloomBoard program. Ms. Sheffel agreed. In their opinion, someone achieving administration certification could have a positive impact on classroom teaching. She added retention was a given when the program was created but other goals need to be addressed now that we’ve had some time to think about what

benefits the district would like gain from this investment. Measuring the positive impact of this program might be hard to do but we need to raise our expectations in some tangible ways.

Ms. Hoover also mentioned the language in the National Board Certification agreement would need to be updated to reflect the actual price of the program. Otherwise, the entire \$5,000 that is currently reimbursable will be considered taxable income to the employee.

KYDA DESIGN PROPOSAL

Mr. Watts presented the proposal from KYDA to create the literature we would use to roll out the strategic plan to the community and stakeholders.

Scope A would entail designing and developing a multi-page document to deliver the complete results and details of the committee efforts. The goal would be to create an impactful story that brings historic context, engaging imagery, impressive content layout, and content that owns how the story is framed. The cost of this would be \$9,000.

Scope B would be a two-page, trifold, with minimal delivery of the plan. This cost would be \$3,000 or \$1,500 if combined with Scope A.

Scope C would be reformatting the plan and summary version of the action committee results. This cost would be \$4,500 or \$2,000 with Scope A & B.

Optional enhancements could include a short video triggered by a QR code. This would boost the personal connection and engagement. This enhancement would cost between \$14,500 and \$16,000.

Mr. Watts is recommending Scope A, Scope B, and the optional enhancement video making the total package cost approx. \$25,000.

Mr. Sutherland expressed his concern about accepting the proposal at this time. After researching on how this works, he would like to see the working portfolio from this firm. Should we look at other options with other firms? This is a big endeavor for the district and we want to make sure we hire someone who does what we want them to do.

Mr. Watts said he would request samples of work from KYDA to share with the board.

Dr. Smith-Morrow said she has concerns about the strategic plan in general and some of the elements in the action plan. She said she is not ready to approve the plan nor the mission and vision statements at this time. Mr. Watts said he will set up a meeting to discuss her concerns.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Chairman

Secretary