Newport Education Task Force Report II (March 2022)

Executive Summary

In August 2019 The Newport Education Task Force (ETF), a Newport citizen's group, came together to support the Newport Independent School District (NISD) toward improved performance. As with the first report, ETF Report II, March 2022, analyzes relevant data from

1. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) including school report cards,
2. The Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (formerly the TELL Survey), a bi-annual survey of Kentucky school staff, and
3. Records from numerous school districts obtained through open records requests.

As with the first report, these data were analyzed to discern strengths and weaknesses in NISD's operations and outcomes. ETF Report II reveals that

- NISD continues to rank among the lowest performing school districts in Kentucky.
- Working conditions in Newport schools operate at a substantially low level.
- NISD continues to be well funded through local taxation and State and Federal allocations.
- NISD teacher salaries and salary scale fall short of most other local school districts.
- NISD central office staffing and salaries rank at the top among local districts, large and small.

Given these conditions in NISD, the Education Task Force recommends the following actions.

- Academic Achievement – Elevate Student Performance:
  - Recruit/develop school leaders with the proven ability to lead NISD through significant and positive change.
  - Provide robust, advanced academic program options for students.
  - Dramatically increase expectations and supervision for all employees, especially for leadership.
  - Hold all employees accountable, especially leadership, with precise measures of academic achievement.
- Working Conditions – Dramatically improve the work environment:
  - Increase teacher salaries to rank among the highest in the region.
  - Dramatically improve the quality of school climate, management of student behavior, and teacher-leader relationships.
  - Locate, recruit, and hire talented, resourceful educators to meet the needs of NISD students.
- Finances – Reduce administrative spending:
  - Reduce central office staff and salaries reflecting the size of the school district.
  - Invest the savings in teachers' salaries, training, and support at a high level.

The ETF believes that incremental or "continuous" improvement cannot produce the sweeping change needed to raise the culture and performance of the Newport schools. NISD must make substantial, statistically significant changes to begin to meet the needs of the citizens and families of Newport. NISD must do this, now.

The citizens of Newport must continue to demand improvement in their schools. NISD leaders must hold themselves accountable for significantly better results. If these results do not materialize by the year 2025, the ETF recommends consideration of merging with the Campbell County School System.

The Education Task Force hopes this new document will serve as a resource for leaders in the City of Newport, NISD and the citizens of Newport, Kentucky. *Comments: NewportEducationTaskForce@gmail.com.*

The March 2020 Executive Summary is included in Exhibit 5. A link to the full March 2020 report is here:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vnqkIGHenxJlB_iKEpevAF14u6pfChJW/view?usp=drivesdk)

Newport and NISD Demographics

The city's population is down 7.4 % from 15,281 in 2010 to 14,150 in 2022. Over the same period, NISD's population is down 23.5% from 1728 in 2010 to 1322 in 2022.

Figure 1

Demographic Profile of City of Newport, Kentucky	
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	14,150 (15,273 in April 2010)
Persons under 5 years	6.6% (934)
Persons under 18 years	18.6% (2,632)
Households, 2015-2019	6,402
Persons per household, 2015-2019	2.17
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years +, 2015-2019	80.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years +, 2015-2019	28.8%
Persons in poverty	32.4%

Source: 2010/2020 Census data

Figure two compares NISD to State averages on the school population and spending over the three most recent years. NISD has an enrollment of 1322 students, down 3% from one year ago and 10% from 2 years ago.

Figure 2

Newport Independent School District (NISD) Overview								
		20/21		19/20		18/19		
		NISD	State	NISD	State	NISD	State	
Enrollment		1322	638,236	1359	647,987	1458	646,766	
Free/Reduced Lunch		91.2%	60.5%	91.7%	60.8%	89.2%	60.7%	
Gifted & Talented		5.9%	13.6%	6.1%	14.9%	6.9%	14.6%	
Behavior Events		5.2%	2.7%	21.5%	11.0%	26.4%	13.0%	
Spending per Student		avail Spring 2022		$ 20,781	$ 14,496	$ 20,275	$ 14,063	

Source: KDE School Report cards

Figures 1&2 suggest that just short of 80% of the number of school-age children in Newport attend NISD schools. Families may home school or use private, parochial or other public schools to educate their children.

The next three sections of the report address the key topics of academic achievement, school working conditions and finances followed by the summary and conclusion.

Academic Achievement

The foundational purpose of all schools is to impart the skills and knowledge preparing community youth for life and work. As Figures 3a, b and c demonstrate, NISD schools continue to perform well below State averages in critical subject areas, most notably in Reading and Math. NISD schools also perform below nearly all other local school districts.

Figure 3a

KY State Assessment Testing: % Students scoring Proficient (goal) or Distinguished (highest)				
	NISD Reading	State Reading	NISD Math	State Math
Elementary	**21.7**	39.5	**11.4**	31.4
Middle School	**30.0**	44.4	**13.4**	27.8

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)

Figure 3a shows that 80% of NISD elementary students score below proficiency in Reading. The figure is 90% in Math. These scores indicate that students have not learned to read and do math on par with their peers throughout the state. This means that as students make their way through school, they are less able, less well equipped with the skills and knowledge to learn at a high level in all subject areas.

NISD middle school students score 70% below proficiency in Reading. In Math 87% score below proficiency. These scores indicate their readiness for high school studies falls far short of their peers throughout Kentucky.

Figure 3b

ACT Scores (measures a high school student's readiness for college, potential maximum score is 36)				
High School	NISD ACT Reading	State ACT Reading	NISD ACT Math	State ACT Math
	16.5	18.5	**16.1**	17.7

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)

Figure 3c

Percentage of High School Students Meeting State Benchmarks* Derived from ACT Scores			
	English	Reading	Math
NISD	**19.5**	**27.3**	**15.6**
State	42.3	39.9	29.9

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)
Benchmarks are a measure similar to "proficiency," the level at which competency is demonstrated.

While NISD posts strong, high school graduation numbers, Figures 3b and 3c show NISD high school students fail to meet state benchmarks in English at the rate of 80%. In Reading 70% of NISD students fall short; in Math the number is 84%. These scores indicate NISD students have little to show for their years in Newport schools.

Figure 4 compares complete ACT scores for NISD students with those of other local districts along with average scores for all Kentucky high school students.

Figure 4

	2020/21 ACT Scores - Northern KY								
	State Report Card (https://www.kyschoolreportcard.com/organization/5635/academic_performance/assessment_performance/act?year=2021)								
SCHOOL YEAR	**DISTRICT NAME**	**ACT English**	**ACT Reading**	**ACT Math**	**ACT Science**	**ACT Composite**	**% English Benchmark**	**% Reading Benchmark**	**% Math Benchmark**
2020-2021	State	17.1	18.5	17.7	18.3	18.0	42.3	39.9	29.9
2020-2021	Newport Independent	14.2	16.5	16.1	16.9	16.1	19.5	27.3	15.6
2020-2021	Fort Thomas Independent	21.6	23.2	21.8	21.8	22.2	73.6	68.1	69.7
2020-2021	Beechwood Independent	23.3	22.2	21.1	21.3	22.1	79.7	61.8	59.3
2020-2021	Walton-Verona Independent	19.0	21.0	18.7	19.9	19.8	58.2	59.6	42.5
2020-2021	Boone County	18.4	19.7	19.0	19.6	19.3	52.1	46.3	42.7
2020-2021	Bellevue Independent	18.5	19.9	18.1	19.1	19.1	55.3	52.6	44.7
2020-2021	Campbell County	18.2	19.6	18.8	19.5	19.1	49.7	46.1	38.7
2020-2021	Kenton County	18.4	19.5	18.7	19.1	19.0	50.3	45.9	39.6
2020-2021	Erlanger-Elsmere Independent	16.3	17.7	16.5	17.6	17.2	35.5	35.5	19.9
2020-2021	Dayton Independent	15.6	17.1	17.0	17.6	17.0	32.6	34.9	25.6
2020-2021	Pendleton County	15.6	17.7	16.6	17.5	17.0	31.9	34.0	21.3
2020-2021	Ludlow Independent	14.6	16.5	16.1	16.3	16.0	25.0	25.0	14.3
2020-2021	Covington Independent	13.3	14.9	15.3	15.7	14.9	18.1	18.1	10.6

Comments: Newport is behind State average in ALL ACT areas tested and SIGNIFICANTLY lower on Benchmark testing

Newport is lower than EVERY NKY school district except Covington (and Ludlow in 2 out of 8 data points)

Newport's ACT scores dropped in every subject (except Reading which increased +0.1 pts) compred to 2018/19 (2019/20 is not available). This trend was also seen at State level

Newport Independent 2018/19:	14.4	16.4	16.5	17.3	16.3

Above State
Below State

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)

NISD students score lower than the State average in all ACT sub tests and significantly lower on benchmarks. NISD scores lower than every other northern Kentucky district except for Covington (and Ludlow in two of eight sub tests). Newport's scores dropped in every subject except Reading compared to 2018-19. Reading improved by two tenths of one point. (Scores for 2019-20 were not published.)

The quality of academic programing clearly affects student achievement. NISD offers advanced course work in "dual credit," alone, as do Dayton and Bellevue; however, many fewer NISD students are served and many fewer successfully complete advanced coursework than students in other local districts as Figure 5 shows.

Figure 5

Dual Credit Courses				
District	All Enrollments (# Students)	Course Completers (# Students)	Qualifying Score (# Students)	Qualifying score (% of Enrollments)
NISD 2020-21	52	41	21	40.4%
2019-20	80	77	46	57.5%
2018-19	80	74	60	75%
Dayton 2020-21	114	95	85	75.4%
2019-20	113	105	66	58.4%
2018-19	204	82	80	39.2%
Bellevue 2020-21	208	202	186	89.4%
2019-20	162	148	139	85.8%
2018-19	172	156	151	87.8%
Ludlow 2020-21	212	204	174	82.1%
2019-20	201	195	166	82.6%
2018-19	145	142	131	90.3%

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)

NISD underperforms these smaller districts, each with hundreds fewer students. Figure 5 for 2020-21 shows Dayton, for instance, enrolls more than double the number of students, has more than double the number of students completing courses, and has four-times the percentage of students with qualifying scores. Differences are even more dramatic for Bellevue and Ludlow.

Figure 6 addressing gifted and talented enrollment highlights this deficit for NISD. The smaller districts identify and serve double the percentage of gifted and talented students in their districts. The ETF believes that there are likely many more gifted and talented students in Newport schools who have yet to be identified and served.

Figure 6 **Gifted and Talented enrollment/identification**

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
NISD	6.9%	6.1%	5.9%
Dayton	18.5%	16.4%	18.8%
Bellevue	9.1%	14.2%	11.1%
Ludlow	12.3%	13.1%	11.6%

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)

Figure 7 shows what appears a bright spot for NISD in enrollment of students for career and technical education. The percentage of NISD students completing programs outstrips other local districts, larger and smaller.

Figure 7 **Career and Technical Education**

School		Enrollment #'s	Exploring%	Concentrating%	Completing%
NISD	2020 – 2021	80	23	45	43
	2019 – 2020	89	11	27	62
STATE	2020 – 2021	41,001	25	43	32
	2019 – 2020	39,362	24	36	40
Dayton	2020 – 2021	42	38	52	10
	2019 – 2020	53	19	75	6
Bellevue	2020 – 2021	27	19	67	15
	2019 – 2020	20	0	70	30
Ludlow	2020 – 2021	-	-	-	-
	2019 – 2020	-	-	-	-
Covington	2020 – 2021	142	19	48	33
	2019 – 2020	140	15	50	35
Campbell Co.	2020 – 2021	292	50	41	8
	2019 – 2020	336	55	35	10
Ft. Thomas	2020 – 2021	192	54	43	3
	2019 – 2020	160	59	34	7
Erlanger	2020 – 2021	105	61	39	0
	2019 – 2020	107	36	64	0

Source: KDE School Report Cards

In summary, these most recent data on academic achievement show that NISD underperforms in nearly all areas in grades Kindergarten through 12, as measured against State averages and benchmarks and the performance of other local districts. The next section of the report addresses working conditions in NISD schools. The data reveal the context for teaching and learning (working conditions) in Newport schools falls far short of reasonable expectations.

School Working Conditions

Every two years, the State completes a school, working conditions survey in each district. The 2022 survey was completed between November 1st to December 17, 2021with 80% NISD participation. State average participation rate was 76%. The survey asks 70 questions which are laddered up to nine main topics.

NISD scores lower than the State average on 8 of the 9 topics. The 2022 survey findings for NISD are consistent with those from 2020. For the topics of "emotional wellbeing and belonging" and "educating all students," NISD deficits are slightly less substantial. For "Resources: help for students, technology and crowding" NISD scores slightly above State averages. NISD scores for the other topics are cause for serious concern.

Figure 8

NISD Teacher - Working Environment			
Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (Formerly TELL KY Survey) - Results			
Topic **Questions within the Topic**	**% Favorable**	**Diff vs**	**Diff vs**
Responses are favorable - a HIGH % is always preferred	**NISD 2022**	**2022 State**	**NISD 2020**
School Climate *(Overall social and learning climate of the school)*	34%	-26	-13
How positive are the attitudes of your colleagues	25%	-25	-25
Colleagues are supportive of new initiatives	31%	-23	-28
Optimistic that the School Will Improve in Future	45%	-21	-21
How positive is the working environment at your school	30%	-29	-19
Managing Student Behavior *(In the classroom and school)*	41%	-24	-6
How often does student misconduct disrupt learning	10%	-24	-3
How effective is Leadership at developing rules that facilitate learning	34%	-28	-15
School Leadership *(School leadership effectiveness)*	44%	-20	-11
When the school makes decisions, how much input do teachers have	22%	-27	-15
How positive is the tone school leaders set for the school	56%	-15	-8
Resources *(Adequacy of school's resources)*	53%	+4	-5
Help is available for students who need extra support	74%	+1	+2
How urgently does your school's technology need to be updated	84%	+22	-8
At your school, how crowded do the learning spaces feel	64%	+17	-8
Staff-Leadership Relationships *(Faculty & staff relationships with school leaders)*	60%	-16	-7
How much Trust exists between school leaders and faculty	43%	-22	-14
Educating all Students *(Readiness to address issues of diversity)*	65%	-2	-8
Professional Learning *(Amount & quality for growth & learning opportunities)*	40%	-17	-12
Feedback & Coaching *(Amount and quality that staff receives)*	38%	-17	-7
Emotional Well-Being and Belonging *(Educator well-being, efficacy & belonging)*	35%	-13	n/a
Note: NISD Response Rate: 80.1%, State Response Rate: 76%. Survey conducted by Panorama Education 11/1 - 12/17/21			
	Statistically worse than the State Average at the 95% confidence level		
	Marginally higher, lower or the same as the State Average		
	Statistically better than the State Average at the 95% confidence level		

Source: Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (https://www.impactky.org)

Figure 8 shows increasingly poor scores in eight of nine topics on working conditions. The array shows NISD in the red (substantially below State averages) on
- Managing student behavior
- School leadership
- Staff-Leadership relations
- Professional Learning
- Feedback and Coaching, and
- School climate

These results reveal below par working conditions in schools that are likely to lead to additional stress and isolation and perhaps higher turnover among teachers – with similar effects on students. Figure 9 compares

NISD to other local school districts, large and small, on these nine survey topics. NISD scores much lower than the State average scores as well as scores for other local districts.
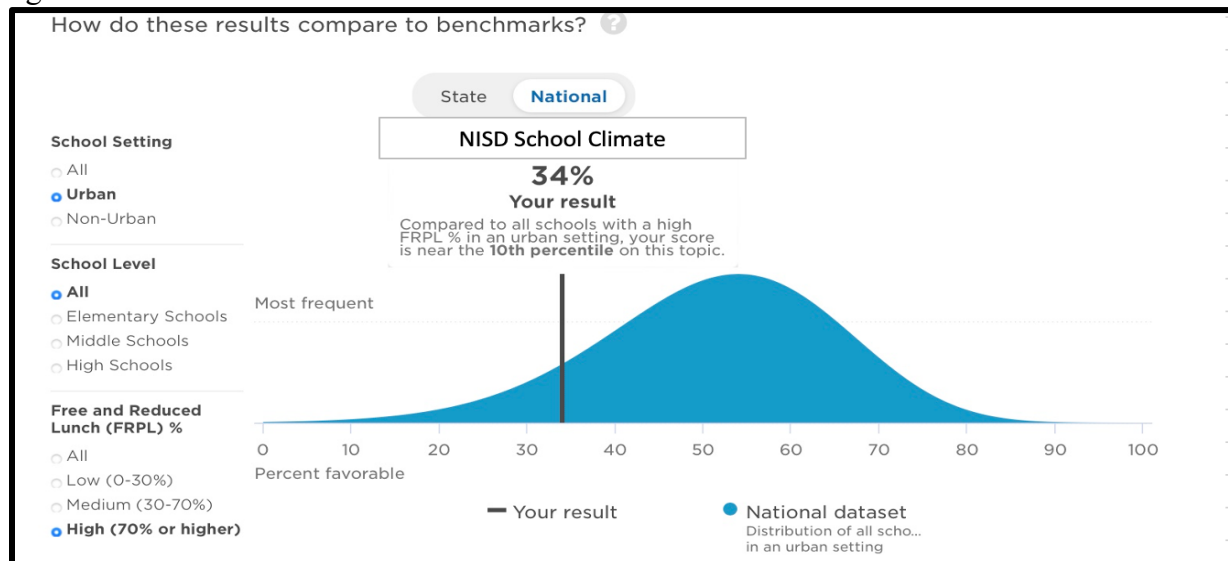
Figure 9

NISD Teacher - Working Environment compared to other NKY Districts							
Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (Formerly TELL KY Survey) - Results							
Topic	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable
Responses are favorable - a HIGH % is always preferred	State	NISD	Ludlow	Covington	Ft Thomas	Dayton	Bellevue
Educating all Students (Readiness to address issues of diversity)	67%	65%	61%	64%	63%	62%	66%
Staff-Leadership Relationships (Faculty & staff relationships with school leaders)	76%	60%	79%	62%	70%	61%	83%
Resources (Adequacy of school's resources)	49%	53%	51%	37%	65%	54%	55%
School Leadership (School leadership effectiveness)	64%	44%	63%	48%	59%	44%	67%
Managing Student Behavior (In the classroom and school)	65%	41%	70%	47%	73%	40%	58%
Professional Learning (Amount & quality for growth & learning opportunities)	57%	40%	49%	43%	55%	47%	66%
Feedback & Coaching (Amount and quality that staff receives)	55%	38%	47%	46%	42%	43%	57%
Emotional Well-Being and Belonging (Educator well-being, efficacy & belonging)	48%	35%	54%	35%	54%	44%	47%
School Climate (Overall social and learning climate of the school)	60%	34%	64%	38%	67%	46%	54%
	State			Difference versus State			
Educating all Students (Readiness to address issues of diversity)	67%	-2%	-6%	-3%	-4%	-5%	-1%
Staff-Leadership Relationships (Faculty & staff relationships with school leaders)	76%	-16%	3%	-14%	-6%	-15%	7%
Resources (Adequacy of school's resources)	49%	4%	2%	-12%	16%	5%	6%
School Leadership (School leadership effectiveness)	64%	-20%	-1%	-16%	-5%	-20%	3%
Managing Student Behavior (In the classroom and school)	65%	-24%	5%	-18%	8%	-25%	-7%
Professional Learning (Amount & quality for growth & learning opportunities)	57%	-17%	-8%	-14%	-2%	-10%	9%
Feedback & Coaching (Amount and quality that staff receives)	55%	-17%	-8%	-9%	-13%	-12%	2%
Emotional Well-Being and Belonging (Educator well-being, efficacy & belonging)	48%	-13%	6%	-13%	6%	-4%	-1%
School Climate (Overall social and learning climate of the school)	60%	-26%	4%	-22%	7%	-14%	-6%
Note: NISD Response Rate: 80.1%, State Response Rate: 76%.				Statistically worse than State Average at the 95% confidence level			
Note: Survey conducted by Panorama Education 11/1 - 12/17/21				Marginally higher, lower or the same as State Average			
				Statistically better than State Average at the 95% confidence level			

Source: Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (https://www.impactky.org)

"School climate" refers to the relationships among the adults in the school organization, especially the relationships between classroom teachers and school principals. Because this survey is also nationally normed, national percentile ratings for all Kentucky school districts can be seen. Figure 10 shows NISD placing in the bottom 10th percentile on school climate compared to other high-poverty, urban schools nationally.

Figure 10

Source: Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (https://www.impactky.org)

These very low ratings on school climate indicate strained relationships among the professional staff which likely have a direct effect on academic achievement.

Figure 11 shows "Managing Student Behavior" draws NISD's second lowest score on the survey. The management of student behavior is a critical factor impacting working conditions in schools. The combination of low levels of trust (very low scores on school climate) and the perception of unsuccessful management of student behavior is not conducive to high achievement on any front or the retention of high performing teachers.

Figure 11

NISD Teacher - Working Environment compared to other NKY Districts							
Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (Formerly TELL KY Survey) - Results							
Topic	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable	% Favorable
Responses are favorable - a HIGH % is always preferred	State	NISD	Ludlow	Covington	Ft Thomas	Dayton	Bellevue
Educating all Students *(Readiness to address issues of diversity)*	67%	65%	61%	64%	63%	62%	66%
Staff-Leadership Relationships *(Faculty & staff relationships with school leaders)*	76%	60%	79%	62%	70%	61%	83%
Resources *(Adequacy of school's resources)*	49%	53%	51%	37%	65%	54%	55%
School Leadership *(School leadership effectiveness)*	64%	44%	63%	48%	59%	44%	67%
Managing Student Behavior *(In the classroom and school)*	65%	41%	70%	47%	73%	40%	58%
Professional Learning *(Amount & quality for growth & learning opportunities)*	57%	40%	49%	43%	55%	47%	66%
Feedback & Coaching *(Amount and quality that staff receives)*	55%	38%	47%	46%	42%	43%	57%
Emotional Well-Being and Belonging *(Educator well-being, efficacy & belonging)*	48%	35%	54%	35%	54%	44%	47%
School Climate *(Overall social and learning climate of the school)*	60%	34%	64%	38%	67%	46%	54%
	State	Difference versus State					
Educating all Students *(Readiness to address issues of diversity)*	67%	-2%	-6%	-3%	-4%	-5%	-1%
Staff-Leadership Relationships *(Faculty & staff relationships with school leaders)*	76%	-16%	3%	-14%	-6%	-15%	7%
Resources *(Adequacy of school's resources)*	49%	4%	2%	-12%	16%	5%	6%
School Leadership *(School leadership effectiveness)*	64%	-20%	-1%	-16%	-5%	-20%	3%
Managing Student Behavior *(In the classroom and school)*	65%	-24%	5%	-18%	8%	-25%	-7%
Professional Learning *(Amount & quality for growth & learning opportunities)*	57%	-17%	-8%	-14%	-2%	-10%	9%
Feedback & Coaching *(Amount and quality that staff receives)*	55%	-17%	-8%	-9%	-13%	-12%	2%
Emotional Well-Being and Belonging *(Educator well-being, efficacy & belonging)*	48%	-13%	6%	-13%	6%	-4%	-1%
School Climate *(Overall social and learning climate of the school)*	60%	-26%	4%	-22%	7%	-14%	-6%
Note: NISD Response Rate: 80.1%, State Response Rate: 76%.				Statistically worse than State Average at the 95% confidence level			
Note: Survey conducted by Panorama Education 11/1 - 12/17/21				Marginally higher, lower or the same as State Average			
				Statistically better than State Average at the 95% confidence level			

Source: Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (https://www.impactky.org)

Figure 12 supports the survey findings on management of student behavior. The percentage of serious behavior events, those drawing suspension or expulsion, over the most recent three years shows NISD behavior events are double the State average. Also, the number of behavior events in NISD schools exceed those in other local districts, smaller and larger.

Figure 12

% of Students with State Reported Behavior Event			
Behavior Events	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
NISD	26.4	21.5	5.2
STATE	13.0	11.0	2.7
Dayton	20.0	15.6	6.7
Bellevue	12.0	14.1	5.5
Ludlow	8.2	6.5	1.4
Covington	22.5	19.0	3.4
Campbell County	10.4	7.9	4.2
Fort Thomas	3.0	2.5	1.7
Erlanger	9.3	8.0	2.8

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)

Figure 13 addresses teacher attrition and years of teaching experience. In 2021 teacher turnover for NISD hit 19%, compared to 36.2%. in 2020. Still, at 19% NISD teacher attrition exceeds the State average and is the second highest in northern Kentucky. Figure 13 also shows that NISD employs a higher percentage of inexperienced teachers than most Kentucky schools, 29.1%, in contrast to the State average 18.5%.

Figure 13

NISD Teacher Overview

		20/21		19/20		18/19		
		NISD	**State**	**NISD**	**State**	**NISD**	**State**	
# Teachers (FTE)		146.1	42,525.2	136.8	42,278.8	126.7	41,832.1	
Student : Teacher Ratio		9:01	16:01	9:02	16:01	11:01	15:01	
Avg Yrs Teaching Experience		9.1	12.1	9.2	12.0	9.2	12.0	
Inexperienced Teachers		29.1%	18.2%	29.3%	17.6%	18.0%	6.9%	
Teacher Turnover		19.0%	16.2%	36.2%	18.2%	32.5%	18.4%	

NISD Teacher Turnover 2020/21 & 2019/20- Compared to other NKY Districts

	State	**NISD**	**Ludlow**	**Covington**	**Ft Thomas**	**Dayton**	**Bellevue**
Teacher Turnover 20/21	16.2%	19.0%	7.5%	21.2%	9.4%	13.5%	17.0%
Teacher Turnover 19/20	18.2%	36.2%	16.9%	31.0%	4.7%	22.2%	27.7%

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)
*FTE refers to "Fulltime Equivalent."

High teacher attrition and low levels of teacher experience likely combine with low ratings for the working environment in schools to drag down academic achievement significantly.

The final section of this 2022 Report addresses on NISD finances reveals another force within NISD moving in the wrong direction.

Finances

While posting low scores on measures of academic achievement and working conditions, NISD has been for many years, a well-funded school district. The allocation of these public funds is revealing.

Over the last decade, NISD has chosen to invest at the highest levels in the administrative and business categories (central office staffing and salaries). As shown in Figure 14, NISD spends almost $2000 more per student on business and administration support services compared to State averages and other local school districts, large and small. This accounts for 16% of total spending versus the State average of 9%. Figure 14 compares NISD's per pupil spending in eight categories to State averages and six local school districts.

Figure 14

Per Pupil Spending	*STATE*	Newport	Ft Thomas	Dayton	Camp. Co	Ludlow	Covington	Bellevue
Instruction	*$7,174*	$10,800	$7,190	$7,424	$6,890	$7,045	$8,817	$8,754
Business Support Services	*$352*	$997	$323	$446	$352	$189	$695	$611
Instructional staff Support Serv.	*$672*	$921	$513	$785	$557	$1,212	$196	$1,467
Student support services	*$626*	$649	$704	$883	$886	$684	$1,134	$785

Administrative Support Serv.	*$994*	$2,297	$1,246	$1,465	$887	$1,488	$1,867	$2,002
Average Teacher Salary	*$54375*	$52,413	$64,608	$50,878	$54,682	$55,820	$49,921	$47,791
Average Principal Salary	*$92389*	$103,499	$110,420	$91,805	$99,471	$99,259	$101,186	$93,997

Source: KDE School Report Card (www.kyschoolreportcard.com)

Figure 14 reveals that NISD spends heavily on business and administrative support services exceeding all other local school districts, large and small, most by a substantial margin. Figure 15 shows that NISD central office (CO) staffing is out of proportion to its student population and that central office staff are paid well above the norm. Newport with 1,322 students spends more on central office salaries than most local schools, even the much larger Fort Thomas. Covington with 3,550 students is the exception as shown in the following table.

Figure 15

Central Office (CO) Spending, Student Population, Number of Central Office (CO) Staff 2022						
	NISD	Dayton	Bellevue	Ludlow	Ft. Thomas	Covington
Total CO Staff Salaries	$2,028,576	$1,194,618	$810,569	$689,501	$1,906,038	$2,461,977
School Population	1,322	892	601	786	3,125	3,555
Number of CO Staff	28	18	13	8	24	35

Source: Open Records Requests

The number of NISD's central office staff at 28 is comparable to Fort Thomas at 24; however, Fort Thomas serves more than double the number of students. The three smaller districts have fewer students and many fewer central office staff. NISD's student population has dropped substantially over the decade, but the number of central office staff has remained about the same.

Figure 16 shows some improvement from the ETF 2020 Report in NISD central office salaries. These include the right-sizing of the superintendent and the treasurer's salaries. Still the number of staff and their collective salaries are out of proportion to the number of students served.

Figure 16

Top Six CO Salaries	NISD	Dayton	Bellevue	Ft. Thomas	Covington	Ludlow
Total	**$673,861**	**$649,260**	**$544,023**	**$760,704**	**$738,402**	**$601,729**
Difference vs NISD	-	- $24,601	- $129,838	+$86,843	+$64,541	-$72,132
Student Population	1,322	892	601	3,125	3,555	786

Source: Open Records Requests

In contrast to NISD's generous levels of central office staffing and salaries, classroom teachers' salaries fall below the State average as well as below most local districts as shown in Figure 17. NISD teachers used to be among the highest paid in northern Kentucky and the State. Over the last decade, however, NISD has not kept pace with other local districts, averaging an annual increase of just 0.6% on average teacher salaries.

Figure 17

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Growth over 10 yrs	Average Growth
						Average Classroom Teacher Salaries by District (From KDE site)							
1 Ft Thomas	56305	57399	58740	60147	60348	61160	62217	62598	65517	66142	$9,837	1.6%
2 Ludlow	51199	50973	52421	53245	55889	55015	56065	55820	58193	56852	$5,653	1.1%
3 Camp Co	48383	49318	49830	50919	50657	52177	53187	54325	54725	55529	$7,146	1.4%
4 Dayton	47837	49346	49053	49279	48577	48797	47783	49894	52615	54725	$6,888	1.4%
5 Newport	50332	48308	47777	47872	47964	48776	49659	51805	52935	53195	$2,863	0.6%
6 Erlanger	47452	46786	47618	47646	47511	48658	47753	48726	49923	50976	$3,524	0.7%
7 Covington	44754	46406	46622	47274	47750	47909	48502	49907	49564	49402	$4,648	1.0%
8 Bellevue	44927	45480	47493	47220	48276	48129	47208	47791	47372	47632	$2,705	0.6%

Source: https://education.ky.gov/districts/FinRept (School District Personnel Information)

Figure 18 shows that Fort Thomas offers the highest teacher salaries in our area while NISD salaries are among the lowest. Salaries appear to have improved slightly from two years ago but remain low relative to other local districts.

Figure 18

Teacher RANK	Yrs Experience	Ft Thomas	Ludlow	Camp. Co	Dayton	Newport	Covington	Bellevue	Avg
		Average Salaries - State Published Salary Schedules by District							
3	0 to 5 Years	43,510	42,702	42,445	41,845	41,500	41,471	41,851	42,150
2	5 to 15 years	51,114	49,383	47,514	48,385	46,507	46,905	47,179	47,949
1	15 to 25 years	70,895	67,754	70,005	65,056	66,543	65,330	62,449	66,438

Source: https://education.ky.gov/districts/FinRept (School District Personnel Information)

Competitive teacher salaries may help attract talented teachers to NISD, but it will take a supportive working environment to retain that talent. Low salaries and subpar working conditions go in the other direction.

A detailed comparison of northern Kentucky teacher salary schedules can be found in Exhibit #3.

As Figure 19 shows, the Newport tax rate ranks 7th of 23 local districts. The Newport school tax portion accounts for 72% of the total Newport tax bill. When school taxes are excluded, Newport ranks 18 of 23. Compared to surrounding districts – among the lowest. While NISD taxes the community at a high rate, its performance is at the other end of the scale. Citizens paying a premium for services expect high quality. NISD does not deliver, academically.

Figure 19

City/Tax District	County	Real Estate + Fire	Rank	School Rate	Rank	City + School + County	Rank
2021 School (and Other Tax Rates) in Northern KY							
Ranked by School Rate per $1000 real estate value							
Source: https://revenue.ky.gov/News/Publications/Pages/default.aspx and KY Dept of Revenue Rate Book							
Southgate	Campbell	6.499	2	11.89	1	19.559	17
Walton-Verona	Boone	3.980	8	11.37	2	16.300	1
Ft Thomas	Campbell	3.970	9	10.93	3	16.070	14
Dayton	Campbell	4.460	6	10.61	4	16.240	19
Covington	Kenton	3.270	16	10.61	5	15.010	5
Newport	Campbell	2.740	18	10.17	6	14.080	7
Erlanger-Elsmere	Kenton	5.070	5	10.01	7	16.210	3
Beechwood	Kenton	1.630	21	9.63	8	12.390	4
Ludlow	Kenton	6.950	1	9.59	9	17.670	2
Bellevue	Campbell	3.700	10	9.17	10	14.040	16
Kenton County	Kenton	1.130	22	6.71	11	8.970	8
Boone County	Boone	1.010	23	6.59	12	8.550	6
Melbourne (2020)	Campbell	6.030	3	6.58	13	13.780	23
Crestview (2020)	Campbell	5.100	4	6.58	14	12.850	22
Silver Grove	Campbell	4.060	7	6.58	15	11.810	21
Campbell County	Campbell	3.670	11	6.58	16	11.420	20
Alexandria	Campbell	3.540	12	6.58	17	11.290	18
Highland Heights	Campbell	3.450	13	6.58	18	11.200	15
California (2020)	Campbell	3.390	14	6.58	19	11.140	13
Cold Spring	Campbell	3.330	15	6.58	20	11.080	12
Mentor (2020)	Campbell	3.000	17	6.58	21	10.750	11
Woodlawn (2020)	Campbell	2.390	19	6.58	22	10.140	10
Wilder	Campbell	2.310	20	6.58	23	10.060	9

This final section on Finances shows that while NISD is well funded, the distribution of those public funds cries out for re-allocation that directly addresses the long-term shortcomings in academic achievement, working conditions and the infrastructure that supports and sustains healthy, successful schools.

Summary and Conclusion

The ETF 2020 Report showed that NISD was mired for years in low performance. The 2022 ETF Report finds that NISD continues to perform at low levels for academic achievement, Kindergarten through grade 12, compared to State averages. Locally, NISD remains among the lowest performing school districts.

The data show that working conditions in NISD schools remain dramatically low compared to other schools in the State and comparable schools nationally. The trust and professional confidence among the adults in a school are among the most potent ingredients for learning and growth among students. Clearly, NISD students are poorly served in the current environment.

NISD remains a well-funded school district and is among the higher taxing districts in northern Kentucky. Regrettably, while academic achievement is low and teacher salaries moderate between average and below average, central office staffing and salaries are very generous compared to other local school districts.

Given these conditions in NISD, the Education Task Force recommends the following actions.
- Academic Achievement – Elevate Student Performance:

- o Recruit/develop school leaders with the proven ability to lead NISD through significant and positive change.
  - o Provide robust, advanced academic program options for students.
  - o Dramatically increase expectations and supervision for all employees, especially for leadership.
  - o Hold all employees accountable, especially leadership, with precise measures of academic achievement.
- Working Conditions – Dramatically improve the work environment:
  - o Increase teacher salaries to rank among the highest in the region.
  - o Improve the quality of school climate, management of student behavior, and teacher-leader relationships, dramatically.
  - o Locate, recruit, and hire talented, resourceful educators to meet the needs of NISD students.
- Finances – Reduce administrative spending:
  - o Reduce central office staff and salaries to reflect the size of the school district.
  - o Invest the savings in teachers' salaries, training, and support at a high level.

The past two years have been exceptional with the pandemic, the hiring of a new superintendent and the writing of a new strategic plan for NISD; however, the families and citizens of Newport cannot continue to be short-changed. NISD must begin to meet the challenge of educating our youth without exception or excuse.

The ETF believes that incremental or "continuous" improvement cannot produce the sweeping change needed to raise the culture and performance of the Newport schools. NISD must make substantial, statistically significant changes to begin to meet the needs of the citizens and families of Newport. NISD must do this, now.

The citizens of Newport must demand improvement of NISD schools on all fronts. The School Board and school leaders must hold themselves accountable on each of these fronts. If results are not realized by 2025, the ETF recommends more significant change, including the possible merger with the Campbell County School System.

In closing the Education Task Force thanks Re-Newport for supporting our work and the production of this report. We thank NISD and the other local school districts for providing the data and documents, the result of open records requests, necessary to complete this report. We are also grateful to KDE for providing robust performance data on all Kentucky public schools.

Newport Education Task Force Report II - EXHIBITS

Exhibit #	Table of Contents
1	ACT Scores – past 14-year history
2	Impact KY Working Conditions Survey
3	Teacher Salary Schedule
4	Academic Achievement, Distinguished + Proficient: NISD & State averages
5	ETF Executive Summary from the 2020 Report
6	ETF Contact Information

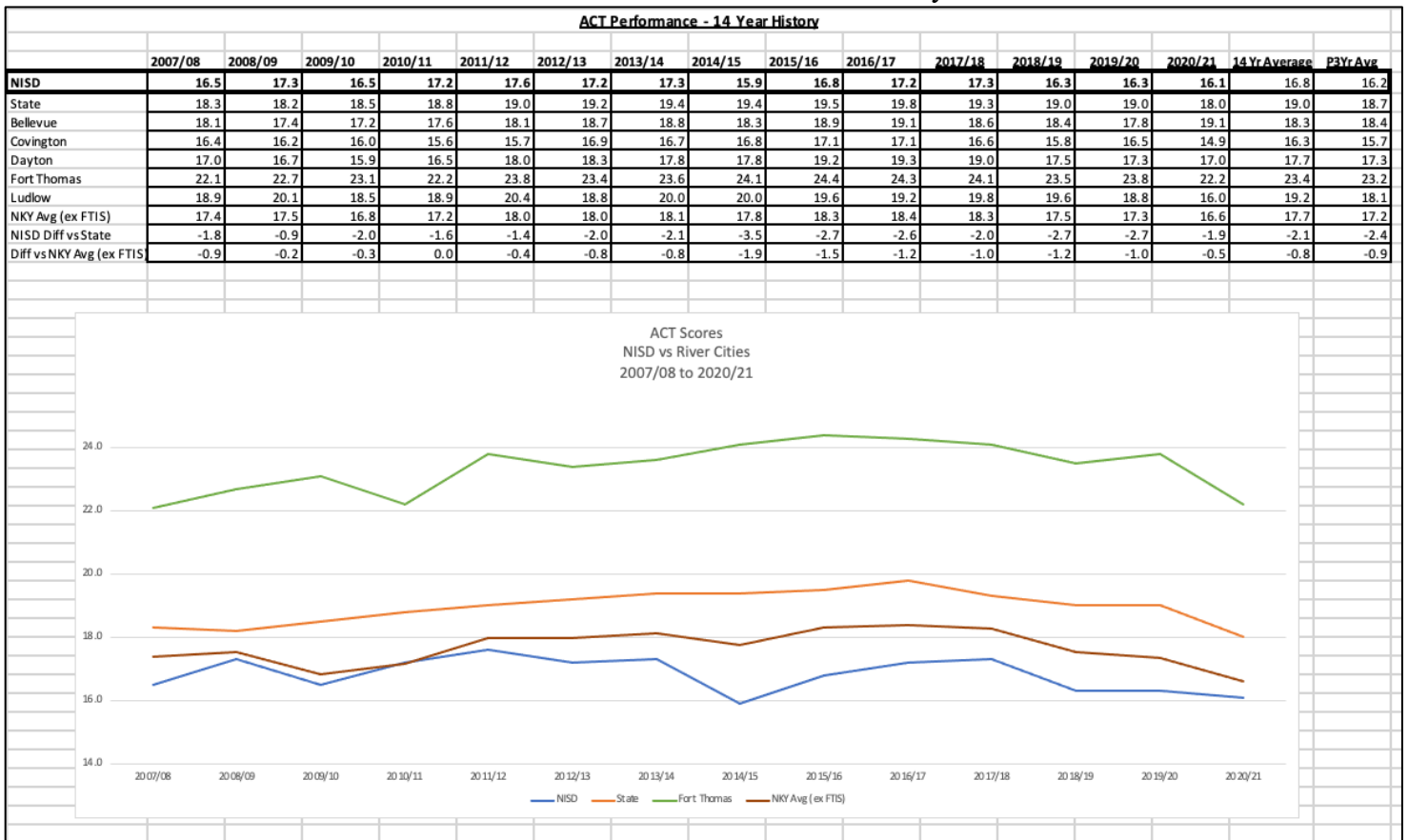Exhibit 1

NISD ACT Scores – Past 14 Year History

ACT Performance - 14 Year History															
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	14 Yr Average	P3Yr Avg
NISD	16.5	17.3	16.5	17.2	17.6	17.2	17.3	15.9	16.8	17.2	17.3	16.3	16.3	16.1	16.8	16.2
State	18.3	18.2	18.5	18.8	19.0	19.2	19.4	19.4	19.5	19.8	19.3	19.0	19.0	18.0	19.0	18.7
Bellevue	18.1	17.4	17.2	17.6	18.1	18.7	18.8	18.3	18.9	19.1	18.6	18.4	17.8	19.1	18.3	18.4
Covington	16.4	16.2	16.0	15.6	15.7	16.9	16.7	16.8	17.1	17.1	16.6	15.8	16.5	14.9	16.3	15.7
Dayton	17.0	16.7	15.9	16.5	18.0	18.3	17.8	17.8	19.2	19.3	19.0	17.5	17.3	17.0	17.7	17.3
Fort Thomas	22.1	22.7	23.1	22.2	23.8	23.4	23.6	24.1	24.4	24.3	24.1	23.5	23.8	22.2	23.4	23.2
Ludlow	18.9	20.1	18.5	18.9	20.4	18.8	20.0	20.0	19.6	19.2	19.8	19.6	18.8	16.0	19.2	18.1
NKY Avg (ex FTIS)	17.4	17.5	16.8	17.2	18.0	18.0	18.1	17.8	18.3	18.4	18.3	17.5	17.3	16.6	17.7	17.2
NISD Diff vs State	-1.8	-0.9	-2.0	-1.6	-1.4	-2.0	-2.1	-3.5	-2.7	-2.6	-2.0	-2.7	-2.7	-1.9	-2.1	-2.4
Diff vs NKY Avg (ex FTIS)	-0.9	-0.2	-0.3	0.0	-0.4	-0.8	-0.8	-1.9	-1.5	-1.2	-1.0	-1.2	-1.0	-0.5	-0.8	-0.9

ACT Scores
NISD vs River Cities
2007/08 to 2020/21

Legend: NISD — State — Fort Thomas — NKY Avg (ex FTIS)

Exhibit 2

NISD Teacher - Working Environment				
Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (Formerly TELL KY Survey) - Results (Raw Data)				
Topic Questions within the Topic		**% Favorable**	**Diff**	**% Favorable**	**Diff**
Responses are favorable - a HIGH % is always preferred		**NISD**	**vs 2020**	**State**	**vs 2020**
Educating all Students *(Readiness to address issues of diversity)*		65%	-8	67%	-7
How often do teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction	85%	+1	88%	+1
How easy do you find interacting with students at your school (diff culture	80%	n/a	86%	+2
How comfortable incorporating new material about diff cultures	82%	n/a	81%	-2
Staff-Leadership Relationships *(Faculty & staff relationships with school leaders)*		60%	-7	76%	0
How much Trust exists between school leaders and faculty	43%	-14	65%	n/a
How respectful are your school leaders toward you	75%	-4	85%	0
How friendly are your school leaders toward you	74%	+1	83%	0
Resources *(Adequacy of school's resources)*		53%	-5	49%	+3
At your school, how crowded do the learning spaces feel	64%	-8	47%	-2
How urgently does your school's technology need to be updated	84%	-8	62%	+8
Help is available for students who need extra support	74%	+2	73%	0
School Leadership *(School leadership effectiveness)*		44%	-11	64%	-2
When the school makes decisions, how much input do teachers have	22%	-15	49%	-3
How positive is the tone school leaders set for the school	56%	-8	71%	-1
Managing Student Behavior *(In the classroom and school)*		41%	-6	65%	0
How often does student misconduct disrupt learning	10%	-3	34%	+1
How effective is Leadership at developing rules that facilitate learning	34%	-15	62%	-1
Professional Learning *(Amount & quality for growth & learning opportunities)*		40%	-12	57%	-2
How valuable are the professional development opportunities	31%	-23	48%	-2
How much input do you have into individualizing your prof development	23%	-9	50%	-1
Feedback & Coaching *(Amount and quality that staff receives)*		38%	-7	55%	-1
How often fo you receive feedback on your teaching	50%	+6	56%	-2
Emotional Well-Being and Belonging *(Educator well-being, efficacy & belonging)*		35%	n/a	48%	n/a
How concerned are you about your own well-being as a result of work	26%	-9	36%	-13
How concerned are you about the emotional well-being of colleagues	9%	-16	26%	-15
School Climate *(Overall social and learning climate of the school)*		34%	-13	60%	-2
How positive are the attitudes of your colleagues	25%	-25	50%	-5
Colleagues are supportive of new initiatives	31%	-28	54%	-3
Optimistic that the School Will Improve in Future	45%	-21	66%	-4
How positive is the working environment at your school	30%	-19	59%	-4
Note: NISD Response Rate: 80.1%, State Response Rate: 76%.					
Note: Survey conducted by Panorama Education 11/1 - 12/17/21					

Exhibit 3

Teacher Salary Schedules

Green highlight = highest in row   Blue highlight = lowest in row
Yellow highlight = levels Newport is substantially behind the front runner by $4000 - $7500.

RANK 3	Ft Thomas	Ludlow	Camp. Co	Dayton	Newport	Covington	Erlanger	Bellevue
0	41531	40804	40866	40648	40172	40051	39531	40198
5	45489	44600	44024	43042	42828	42890	44226	43503
10	52177	49221	47426	49600	46809	46645	46726	47081
15	55676	54328	51092	52514	49883	51179	48865	50952
20	61609	57665	55040	56152	52418	55617	53091	55142
25	66394	61207	59294	57468	55091	60356	56823	59676
			(27+) 61086					
30	68338	64329		64332	57901	61923	61474	64583

RANK 2	Ft Thomas	Camp. Co	Ludlow	Dayton	Newport	Covington	Erlanger	Bellevue
0	46155	45439	41824	44926	43384	42826	42004	41786
5	50596	48951	45931	47224	46561	46719	47880	45222
10	57312	52734	52211	54008	51290	51243	51443	48941
15	61004	56809	57628	57107	55671	55962	54796	52965
20	64663	61200	61169	60851	60796	60639	58979	57320
25	68673	65929	64923	62324	68806	65607	61670	62034
30	72308	(27+)67922	68236	69005	72316	67259	65895	67135

RANK 1	Ft Thomas	Camp. Co	Ludlow	Dayton	Newport	Covington	Erlanger	Bellevue
0	50404	50213	47435	47613	47345	47299	46051	45430
5	53290	54093	52451	51340	50869	51292	50874	49166
10	63796	58274	59957	58439	55973	55864	55184	53209
15	67797	62778	65854	61681	60348	60399	58792	57584
20	70711	67629	69963	65688	65410	65279	62335	62319
25	74176	72856	74197	67799	73871	70313	69281	67443
		(27+)75058				(27+)71998		
30	77671		77981	75054	77640		73793	72989

Source: https://education.ky.gov/districts/FinRept (School District Personnel Information)

Exhibit 4

Academic Achievement - Distinguished + Proficient
Kentucky Department of Education School Report Card

Elementary	2020/21 NISD	2020/21 State	2019/20 NISD	2019/20 State	2018/19 NISD	2018/19 State	2017/18 NISD	2017/18 State
Reading	21.7%	39.5%	n/a	n/a	28.7%	54.6%	31.9%	54.6%
Math	11.4%	31.4%	n/a	n/a	23.2%	48.6%	30.6%	48.8%
Science	n/a	25.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	31.7%	15.2%	30.8%
Writing	n/a	39.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	46.7%	13.0%	40.5%
Social Studies	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	53.0%	20.9%	53.0%

Middle School	2020/21 NISD	2020/21 State	2019/20 NISD	2019/20 State	2018/19 NISD	2018/19 State	2017/18 NISD	2017/18 State
Reading	30.0%	44.4%	n/a	n/a	38.4%	59.6%	38.8%	60.0%
Math	13.4%	27.8%	n/a	n/a	31.1%	46.4%	38.1%	47.0%
Science	n/a	20.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	26.0%	7.5%	25.9%
Writing	24.4%	50.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	46.7%	13.0%	44.3%
Social Studies	n/a		n/a	n/a	21.9%	58.8%	33.3%	60.2%

High School	2020/21 NISD	2020/21 State	2019/20 NISD	2019/20 State	2018/19 NISD	2018/19 State	2017/18 NISD	2017/18 State
Reading	n/a	37.9%	n/a	n/a	25.6%	44.5%	30.4%	45.4%
Math	n/a	30.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	35.3%	25.8%	37.5%
Science	n/a	26.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	29.9%	13.8%	29.6%
Writing	n/a	57.2%	n/a	n/a	34.9%	50.3%	31.5%	51.8%
Social Studies	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ACT	16.1	18.0	16.3	19.0	16.3	19.0	17.3	19.3

Note: NISD Strategic Plan sets the Distinguised + Proficient target at 75% by 2025
Data Source: KY Department of Education School report Card
17/18 & 18/19 is based on "Accountability" (150 days of attendance) and 19/20 & 20/21 is based on "Enrollment"

Elementary: NISD Proficiency vs State (Past 3 Years)

Middle School: NISD Proficiency vs State (Past 3 Years)

High School: NISD Proficiency vs State (Past 3 Years)
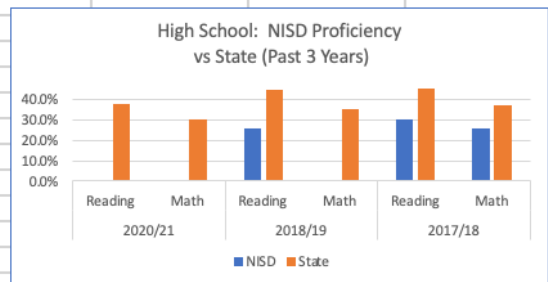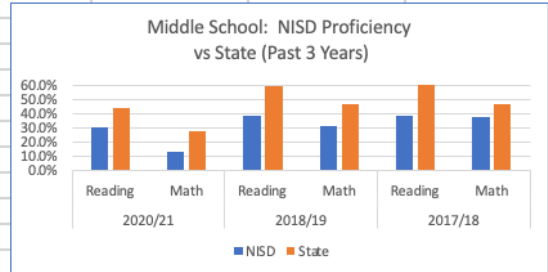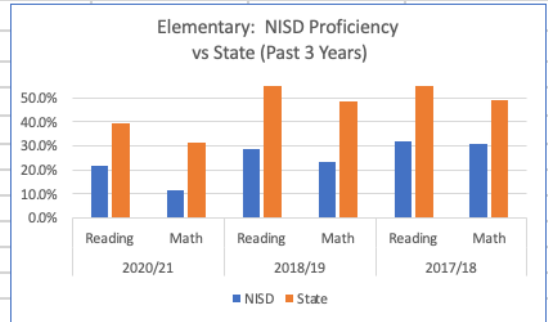
Exhibit 5 – 2020 ETF Executive Summary.

For full report: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vnqkIGHenxJlB_iKEpevAF14u6pfChJW/view?usp=drivesdk)

Executive Summary

The Newport Education Task Force (ETF), a Newport citizens' group, assembled in July 2019 in an effort to support the Newport Independent School District (NISD) toward improved performance. The ETF amassed relevant data for analysis including the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE) 2017 TELL Survey of Newport schools' staff[1] and KDE's AdvancED Diagnostic Review[3], which includes data from interviews, observations, and document reviews. The report also draws on official records from numerous local school districts obtained through open records requests[2], along with Newport's KDE School Report Cards[4], other schools' report cards, documents, and information available on KDE websites. Various interviews and interactions at the November 21st, 2019 Education Task Force Open House event are included.

The task force analyzed these data to discern strengths and weaknesses in the operations and results for the Newport schools over the last five years. The consensus is that while well funded, Newport schools rank among the lowest five percent of schools in the State for student achievement. Many of the problems identified are profound, pervasive, and systemic.

Members of the task force recommended by the Mayor, School Board Chair, and ReNewport Board President, subdivided into committees to identify problems in three areas: structure, programming and delivery, and public engagement. The committees worked independently over several months, each articulating their findings in independent reports that are merged here in a final report. The Task Force recommended actions to increase student achievement include:

- Increase support for teachers, specifically to address a 29% turnover and poor climate by increasing teacher compensation, classroom aides, and cultural initiatives.
- Reduce central office salaries/staff, and recruit leaders with the skills to execute the needed turnaround.
- Increase expectations for leadership and educator performance with accountability measures.
- Provide more advanced program options for accelerated learning.
- Set high expectations and accountability for student performance and conduct with unwavering support by leadership.
- Engage the community more in key decisions, board elections, and appointed positions.

The results of the committees' work are joined in the full report that follows, which includes graphics illustrating important information and an appendix that comprises documents, charts, tables, and descriptions of documents supporting the content of this report.

The City of Newport can no longer tolerate the ineffective use of vast public resources. The community of Newport must call for the dramatic change required in its schools. As the City of Newport continues to rise, the Newport Independent Schools must also rise.

Our hope is that this document will serve as a resource for leaders in the City of Newport and NISD. The community of Newport has experienced positive change in the past decades. The community expects no less from our schools.

Exhibit 6

The Newport Education Task Force (ETF) is a Newport citizen's group. The group's purpose is to support the Newport Independent School District (NISD) toward improved performance. The first report was created in March 2020 and this report is the second. The ETF can be reached via this Email address:

NewportEducationTaskForce@GMail.com.