



The Newport Board of Education held a work session on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 6:30 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Newport Independent School District will partner with families and the community to nurture, educate, and instill core values in all students to ensure they reach their full potential.

### **PRESENTATION**

The representative from Square 1 was not in attendance so the board moved to the next agenda item.

### **NEWPORT EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Ms. Malone turned the floor over to Mr. Watts for opening remarks. Mr. Watts reported that the district will be presenting data from various departments in response to the education task force report. While there is data in their report we can all agree on, the report also included data that KDE waived that perhaps should not have been included. The data that will be presented this evening from our directors, should be weighed by the task force as we begin to move forward together.

One of our goals is to improve the perception of the district. Saying negative things about the district or using data that the state waived in a report against us does not help our image and it is unfair to our students. This year's salutatorian made a comment in her speech about people making negative comments about our school's yet have never taken the time to visit them. Students do hear the ongoing negative comments about their school and it does affect them.

The board and district leaders have been accused of not caring. This accusation could not be further from the truth.

We do have the capacity to make the gains needed in academic achievement scores. This was proven when I was hired as principal at the high school while it was labeled persistently low achieving.

Our goal is academic excellence. We want to leave a legacy of being a high-ranking school district and I am confident we can make that happen. This is going to take a lot of work on everyone's part.

Mr. Watts introduced Jennifer Stewart, DPP, and asked her to share data regarding Newport's student demographics. Her report covered:

- Student enrollment, demographics, and continuity – 3-year data trend
- 3-year enrollment data trend by grade
- Enrollment 22/23 by grade
- McKinney Vento program data
- Current gender, race, and ethnicity by school and district
- Student population comparisons
- Student enrollment continuity
- Transient population aggregate
- First day of school – no show reporting 22/23
- HB 563 – non-resident choice

Ms. Malone asked for more information on unaccompanied youth. She would like this data presented at the October work session.

Mr. Sutherland said we are collecting data for why students enroll in Newport but are we collecting data on why they leave? Ms. Stewart said students are usually gone before we are aware they have left. We usually find out when the new school requests records. Often the student's family will move out of state and we have no contact with them.

Mr. Watts introduced Lisa Swanson, Director of Special Education. She shared the following:

- Funding to support special education programming
- Newport's Special Education population
- KY Department of Education Parent Surveys

The average cost to serve the exceptional children in our district is approximately \$4,600.00 per student. Services for some students may range up to \$10,775.00. Newport's funding from the state does not cover these additional costs so the general fund must absorb the difference in order to provide needed services for our students; speech/language pathologists, physical therapist, occupational therapist, orientation and mobility training for blind or visually impaired, and orientation and mobility services.

Regarding the 2020 parent survey, Newport's approval averages were above the state average in every category regarding how parents felt about their child's educational services. The parent survey in 2021, resulted in Newport averaging higher in every category except one compared to the state average.

Ms. Swanson reported only about 50% of Newport's parents completed the survey but that exceeded the state average of 35%. Newport's goal for 2023 is 80%. A guest in the audience asked about the reliability of the report if only 50% of parents responded. Ms. Swanson restated the goal is to have 80% participation next year to achieve more reliable results.

Rachel Ball, Director of Curriculum, reported on post-secondary readiness and college and career readiness. Her report covered:

- Data from the graduating class of 2022. Out of 74 graduates, 43 attended Newport schools for 10 or more grades. 33 of those students were academic ready, 8 were career ready. These are non-duplicated numbers;
- Career pathways offered based on labor market data and student interest;
- Academic readiness benchmark assessments;
- Opportunities for career exposure and student support;
- Dual credit classes thru Gateway and NKU;
- Young Scholars Academy.

Ms. Stubbeman said her children were students in some of the CTE classes and they complained about low expectations set by teachers in many of those classrooms. Many students slept all the time.

Ms. Ball said that is where the academic excellence mindset must be embraced. Expectations must be set high in order to achieve the results we need in the district.

Mr. Watts said through MAP and iReady assessments, we should see gains throughout the school year. In his monthly principals meeting they will review discipline data, attendance data, and failure data. Any student who receives an “F” is expected to attend after school tutoring or ESS. Two failures will result in no extra-curricular activities.

Mr. Curl asked if St. Elizabeth had been contacted regarding a nursing pathway. Ms. Ball reported that there are ongoing discussions with area healthcare providers but the program requires an RN to teach the class and the problem lies therein. Teacher pay does not compare to what a registered nurse makes in his/her field and the position is hard to fill based on salary.

Dr. McCafferty asked about the benchmark assessments in state reporting. Besides ACT, KYOTE, and Dual Credit, Ms. Ball said there is a 4<sup>th</sup> assessment, ALEKS, (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) that is rarely used in determining benchmarks.

Ms. Malone called for a 5-minute break at 7:35 PM.

After the break, Ms. Jennifer Hoover, District Finance Director, presented financial data. Her report covered:

- Administrative Support Services and what that entails; i.e. board paid activities, other professional services such as membership fees, audit fees, general supplies, some salaries, professional development, school resource officer salary, phone charges, etc.
- Business Administrative Support Services – Apple lease payments for district 1:1 devices, classroom laptop charging stations, and network maintenance charges.
- Instructional Staff Support Services – general fund and federal and state grants.
- Federal and state grant revenues

Ms. Hoover explained that there are over 900 account codes in the MUNIS financial system and KDE does not monitor how a district codes every item. The only way to make a fair comparison between one district and another is to look at each expenditure individually. Using just an account code to look at expenditures may not be giving someone a true picture of how money is being spent.

Ms. Sheffel pointed out that 12 years ago the district was on the state financial watch list. Because the board has been fiscally responsible, the district now has a healthy balance.

Overstaffing was one of the areas highlighted in the ETF report. Mr. Watts pointed out that when the district receives a grant, you must follow the guidelines in the grant on how the money is spent. Often times, it requires additional personnel to fulfill the requirements. Once the grant ends, it is a board decision on whether to keep a position or not. The district has hired additional personnel with ESSER funds. Once those funds are exhausted the district may not fund those positions any longer.

Mr. Watts concluded the district's presentation with a list of areas we are currently working towards and/or on:

- Changing the culture and climate;
- Concentration on hiring and retention of teachers;
- Hiring bonus;
- Academic incentive;
- Attendance incentive;
- Housing assistance;
- Referral bonus;
- Mentoring programs;
- Salary increases;
- End of year celebration;
- Employee Assistance Program with St. Elizabeth;
- Free life insurance;
- Spanish classes to primary and high school students;
- High expectations.

Ms. Malone asked how the education task force sees everyone partnering together? Ms. Lynn Schaber took the floor. She recognized Dr. Steve McCafferty and Ms. Bobbie Stubbeman; both members of the task force.

She thanked administration for their reports and commented that it was helpful to have the context that was presented from each department. She explained that everyone in the room has the same purpose – to make Newport a top performing district. There is still some question on how the task force and the board/district can work together to make this happen. Are the schools open to a broader approach?

Mr. Watts said he feels the community needs to be involved with our teachers so they feel more supported. Ms. Malone said we need to build out the education task force by adding more diverse stakeholders to the committee.

Ms. Stubbeman said adding more members was fine but pointed out that the watchdog committee is not going away and their focus will remain the same. This comment was reiterated by Ms. Schaber. Dr. Smith-Morrow said she did not want them to go away and thanked them for their involvement; the board welcomes the opportunity to work with the task force.

Other comments centered around community engagement, forming a working group of board members and members of the EFT, involving the city because they can be part of the solution, the impact of family engagement and what that looks like and the importance of families embracing education, resources to support working conditions, removing barriers for our families and students.

Ms. Schaber said we need to approach the solution by working on the three areas outlined in the report: academic achievement, working conditions, and finances. Should each area be addressed by a different group of individuals? Mr. Sutherland said we have to work together, this includes staff from schools. We need to understand the report and we must make group decisions. He supports involving the city. Dr. Smith-Morrow would also like the city to be involved especially in addressing the underlying conditions that

affect our students and their families. Ms. Covington supports the idea of everyone working together to make Newport the best school district it can be. Because of the current housing issues on the west side of town, she is concerned about the impact of this on the students, families, and district.

Audience comments centered around the state of the district for the last 20 years, livestreaming board meetings, reducing central office staff and utilizing those funds to improve working conditions, engagement from the community, matrix to manage student behavior, and timetable for goals.

Ms. Schaber concluded by saying the task force would love to engage with the district. They will take their lead from the board.

Ms. Malone thanked those who attended and participated in this discussion. The board will talk further about this partnership and how we can work together in the best interest of our students.

### **CERTIFIED TUITION REIMBURSEMENT AGREEMENT**

After discussing the agreement for the teacher rank change program, the board asked that this be re-visited at another meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, On MOTION BY SMITH-MORROW AND SECONDED BY SUTHERLAND the meeting adjourned. Time: 9:23 PM

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Chairman

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Secretary