



The Newport Board of Education held a work session on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at 6:30 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8th Street, Newport.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ramona Malone asked for a roll call. The following were present: Ramona Malone, Melissa Sheffel, & Aaron Sutherland. Tim Curl attended the meeting via Zoom.

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

SCHOOL PLANS FOR THE 23/24 SY

Josh Snapp was present to talk about the upcoming school year for the Newport School of Innovation. They currently have 43 students enrolled; their highest enrollment in 5 years. Most students are from Newport with the exception of 6-7 who come from other local area schools and one student currently living in Boston.

NSOI is planning to hold their own graduation this year; they are currently looking for a location to hold the ceremony. Students will start attending in-person at least one day per week this year. Grades 6-8 will attend on Tuesday, grades 9-10 will attend on Wednesday, and grades 11-12 will attend on Thursdays. They will be required to work from 11-2 on-site.

NSOI is currently classified as an A5 school but they are looking into the possibility of coming an A8 classification. An A8 classification will give NSOI students the opportunity to work more with the high school and allow students the chance to participate in sports if they desire. An A8 classification would potentially allow students to take some classes at the high school that are not available to them now. Mr. Snapp is also looking into making NSOI an alternative option for students before reaching expulsion.

Mr. Sutherland asked about the current facilities currently being utilized by the NSOI. Mr. Snapp explained the location and layout of office space and classroom space currently being rented from Brighton Center on Park Avenue. He invited Mr. Sutherland to stop by for a tour. There are two staff members who oversee the program. The building is secured just like all other buildings and visitors must be let into the building by staff.

Matt Atkins presented the 23/24 goals for Newport Primary School. There are 6 areas of focus that continue to be the groundwork for the primary school.

- Through effective learning targets and success criteria reading, math, and writing objectives will be met. At least 48% of students will score proficient or distinguished in reading, at least 50% of students will score proficient or distinguished in math, and at least 44% of second-grade students will score proficient or distinguished on the spring Wonders writing assessment.
- Efficient use of PLCs
- Tracking data
- Co-Teaching
- Communication with parents

- Tier I, II, and III interventions

Ms. Malone asked about communication with parents who do not speak English. Are materials translated for those parents? Mr. Atkins said some materials are translated and we also have staff who help translate for parents when available. The district contracts with “Affordable Language Services” to help interpret by phone, in-person or by video when needed.

Ms. Michael presented her plans for the intermediate school. Their focus areas are:

- Response to intervention
- PLCs
- PBIS - Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Culturally responsive teaching and learning

NIS is focused on continued improvement by all by Leveling Up. Their goal is to increase students learning and student success by building teacher capacity. They will focus on instructional support for all teachers.

CSIP Goals – by 2025, NIS will:

- Increase the percentage of students scoring proficient in math from 13% to 50% and in reading from 23% to 50% as demonstrated on KSA.
- Reach 50% proficiency as demonstrated by KAS in science, social studies, and writing.
- Have every EL student exiting the program within 5 years
- Increase participation in PBIS rewards day by 100%

NIS is partnering with Big Brothers and Big Sister to participate in the Beyond School Walls program. Beyond School Walls is a version of Big Brothers Big Sisters’ one-to-one mentoring program. Beyond School Walls is unique in that students from a local school meet with their mentors at their workplace. Children in these programs not only have a new adult friend and role model, but are also exposed to a positive work environment – something they may never have experienced before. The program introduces children to jobs at an early age, giving them an opportunity to learn about the corporate world first-hand. Students experience what it means to work for a corporation and the educational requirements needed to achieve this professional success.

Mr. Grayson presented the plans for NHS. Staffing has changed dramatically since last year. There are now 2 assistant principals, 4 instructional coaches, and 3 guidance counselors. All changes that Mr. Grayson feels is vital if NHS is to be successful. The high school also has two ERLs from KDE this year supporting teachers and administration.

Ms. Malone asked about all the new hires. Mr. Grayson said he feels good about his building. The instructional coach hires are very competent and each one brings a different content area of expertise to the table. They will be supporting teachers in their roles. Instructional coaches have created an implementation plan that will provide support to staff. Utilizing the backward design unit plan, staff will understand what they are teaching, how it will be assessed, and how data analysis will be used to drive instruction and impact Tier II and Tier III instruction.

MTSS will be providing targeted academic and behavior interventions for students having various needs. Tier II and Tier III supports will allow students to become more successful both academically and behaviorally.

PBIS – utilization of restorative and reflective practices will be the focus moving forward. The three school counselors will be conducting group sessions, classroom guidance, and working with students in the BIC and New Pathways Programs. NHS will also be utilizing more student rewards; this will be monitored on a regular basis through administrator meetings and shared with staff.

Culturally responsive teaching is a student-centered approach to education. By recognizing and nurturing individual strengths, this encourages success and promotes an open-minded and supportive environment.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

Mr. Watts presented his growth plan for this school year. The board will be asked to approve this at the regular board meeting later this month.

Mr. Watts will concentrate on Standards 2 and 4 again this year. Standard 2- the superintendent supports and builds a system committed to shared values and beliefs focused on teaching and learning where performance gaps are systematically eliminated over time and each student graduates from high school college and career ready.

Mr. Watts continues to have monthly meetings with principals to discuss walkthrough, attendance, discipline and MAP data. He continues to visit each school every month to make himself available to staff who would like to speak with him. This year they will be conducting unannounced walkthroughs.

Standard 4 – the superintendent ensures the district is a professional learning community with processes and systems in place that result in recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development and retention of a high-performing, diverse staff. The superintendent uses distributed leadership to support learning and teaching, plans professional development, and engages in district leadership succession planning. Mr. Watts continues to focus on hiring a diverse staff. He continues to reach out to local colleges and universities to recruit teachers as well as local and national Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He believes strongly in training teachers to advance in their careers as educators and mentoring new teachers to ensure their success and aide in district's mission of teacher retention.

Mr. Watts reported that new teacher/staff orientation was held on August 8th and that PD was held District-Wide on the 9th and 10th. The district will be sponsoring our first-ever Wildcat Academy Summit on the 14th and 15th. The goal of the summit is to be a catalyst for becoming a community of educational excellence. Sessions are designed with teacher learning needs in mind. They have the opportunity to create their own learning path to boost their professional growth knowledge. Principals provided a list of areas of improvement they felt we needed to support teachers in and then teachers were surveyed for their input on what sessions might be most helpful.

TAX RATES

Mr. Watts said he will be recommending the board accept the proposed 4% increase with exonerations. This will decrease the rate from 1.012 last year to 0.964 this year.

Mr. Watts said with loss of ESSER funding, he knows there are certain positions we will want to keep that are currently funded with ESSER. Other areas of future funding issues include:

- Competitive salary schedules;
- increasing the number of students that can attend our preschool which would mean hiring more staff;
- Renewal of current curriculum programs;
- Replacement of furniture that could cost upward of \$750,000.

Mr. Sutherland said he would like to look at lowering the motor vehicle tax. He compared surrounding districts that have rates that go as low as .49. Even though Newport's rate has remained .99 for years, he would like to see the financial impact of lowering that number to perhaps .90. Mr. Curl was not opposed to considering a lower vehicle tax rate either.

Ms. Hoover explained that the state sets the maximum vehicle tax rate which is why that tax may vary drastically from district to district.

Mr. Sutherland asked for an explanation of exonerations. Ms. Hoover explained that an exoneration is a process by which the city reduces a property tax assessment because it is incorrect or the property owner disputes the amount and the city changes the amount. An exoneration is a way for the district to recoup some of the funds lost if a property is valued less than projected in the budget.

The board gave the finance officer permission to post a tax rate hearing notice in the paper. The tax rate hearing will be scheduled for August 30th at 6:00.

ADJOURNMENT

On MOTION BY SUTHERLAND AND SECONDED BY SHEFFEL the meeting adjourned. Time: 8:07 PM

1478 – MOTION CARRIED 3-0

Chairman

Secretary