



The Newport Board of Education held work session on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 6:30 PM following by a special meeting for executive session to discuss the superintendent's evaluation.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ramona Malone asked for a roll call. The following were present: Ramona Malone, Sylvia Covington, Aaron Sutherland, Tim Curl, & Ed Davis.

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

BUDGET UPDATE

Ms. Hoover, Director of Finance, shared a copy of the general fund working budget for FY 2025. She will be asking the board to transfer \$1,639,960 from the investment account to balance the budget before submitting the working budget to KDE. This request will be on the agenda for the regular board meeting later this month. The contingency is being reported as 2.12% at the end of the 2025 fiscal year.

Mr. Sutherland voiced his frustration regarding the handling of tax rate information this year, describing the process as a complete debacle. He was particularly disheartened to discover from the community that the compensating rate would generate \$800,000 more revenue in 2025 than the previous year, contrary to his expectation that it would remain consistent. He emphasized that this information was crucial for making informed decisions.

Additionally, Mr. Sutherland requested a detailed breakdown of payroll by building and department, as well as examples of budget cuts that have been implemented or are planned. He raised concerns about travel expenses and ESSER funding, specifically questioning the costs associated with bringing guest speakers into the district for the Wildcat Academy. While acknowledging that ESSER funds may have covered these expenses, he pointed out that those funds could have been redirected to alleviate pressure on the general fund.

In response, Ms. Malone noted the need for careful spending in light of the current circumstances. She also requested information on the district's vacation policies and inquired about whether the agreement with Strategic Advisors has been updated.

Mr. Davis asked if the Mildred Dean funds are invested in a higher yield account. Ms. Hoover informed him the funds are in a money market account at Heritage Bank.

Before proposing tax rates, Mr. Watts meets with district and school administrators to assess both current and future needs. He then presents this information to the board for consideration prior to adopting a rate.

With the board's decision to adopt the compensating rate for 2025, all departments are implementing budget cuts, travel expenses are being reduced, and a hiring freeze is now in effect. Attendance incentives, which have proven ineffective as demonstrated by last year's substitute costs, will also be eliminated. The administrative team will continue to scrutinize every dollar spent and will bring any items requiring board approval back for review.

ADA AND SEEK

Ms. Stewart, DPP, shared several documents with the board:

- Attendance data statewide
- SEEK Executive Summary
- KDE introduction to SEEK
- Exception Child Add-on to SEEK funding formula
- SEEK trend data for Newport FY 2025
- SEEK funding formula
- Article on SEEK funding
- Article on funding gaps

SEEK was implemented by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 1990. It is the foundation program for legislative funding of public education. The program is administered by the Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Finance and Operations, and Division of District Support.

The General Assembly establishes a per-pupil amount of funding for each budget cycle. The Guaranteed Base Funding is calculated by multiplying the per pupil funding amount set by the General Assembly by the prior year average daily attendance (ADA), adjusted for growth. The ADA utilized is the end-of-year average. The growth adjustment is determined by comparing a district's first two months' ADA of the current year to the first two months' ADA of the prior year. The percentage increase is added to the ADA figure in the Guaranteed Base Funding calculation. No reduction in funding is experienced if the comparison results in a decrease. The hold harmless provision guarantees a district will not receive less state SEEK funding per pupil than it received in 1992, without regard to the property wealth of the district. A provision exists in KRS 157.360(9) and (10) which provides for an additional adjustment to ADA for a district experiencing an extreme decline in ADA.

Statutes provide for add-ons which reflects the additional costs that comes with educating at-risk, exception, and limited English proficiently students as well as home and hospital instruction and transportation.

Mr. Sutherland asked how our transient population affect SEEK. Ms. Stewart said it has no impact at all. We receive funding for every day they are in attendance.

READING SCIENCE UPDATE

Ms. Payne, Chief Academic Officer, shared her report. The UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute) Reading Science program is a comprehensive, research-based approach to teaching reading that is grounded in the science of reading. UFLI provides evidence-based practices for educators to enhance students' literacy development, particularly focusing on early reading instruction and intervention.

LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) is a professional development program based on the science of reading, and it has been adopted by many states, including Kentucky, to improve reading instruction. LETRS is designed to help teachers understand the cognitive processes involved in reading, the structure of language, and effective instructional practices.

Kentucky's LETRS program is part of a statewide initiative to improve literacy outcomes by ensuring educators are well-versed in the science of reading and its application in classrooms. It aims to close reading achievement gaps and improve overall literacy by equipping teachers with research-based practices aligned with how students learn to read. The program is praised for providing teachers with in-depth, practical knowledge to help students become proficient readers.

Both programs focus on equipping educators with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver effective, evidence-based reading instruction, with UFLI offering targeted classroom resources and Kentucky's LETRS emphasizing professional development for educators.

Currently, we have the following number of staff members who have or are currently participating in the both UFLI and LETRS training:

Newport Primary School - Teachers/Administrators trained in LETRS Last Year

- Administrator
- 5 Teachers

Teachers/Administrators in LETRS training this Year

- 3 Administrators
- 5 Teachers

The following people were trained in UFLI during the Wildcat Academy:

- 34 Certified NPS Staff Members
- 10 Classified NPS Members

Newport Intermediate School - Teachers/Administrators trained in LETRS Last Year

- 2 Teachers

Teachers/Administrators in LETRS training this Year

- 4 teachers

Developing Reading Skilled Middle & High School students through KDE

- 2 Instructional Coaches

The report outlines the implementation of the practices of science or read by administration, coaches, and teachers. Professional development and implementation will continue. Practices will be expanded to support middle and high school levels through a focus on vocabulary, reading skills, word development, and reading comprehension.

Ms. Malone asked how we measure the success of the programs. Ms. Payne explained thru walk-throughs and by delivery of instruction. Mr. Davis asked if teachers had to pay for training. All training has been free to staff. Ms. Malone asked if this was part of the model classroom training; Ms. Payne confirmed this to be.

STAFFING UPDATE

There are currently two certified openings: high school science and gifted and talented. Unfortunately, applicants for both positions are in short supply. The demand for gifted and talented (GT) endorsements is particularly challenging, as many candidates do not pursue this specialization due to the limited need for certified positions within school districts. Newport's gifted position has been advertised for nearly a year, and as a result, gifted students are not receiving dedicated services beyond what classroom teachers can offer.

FUNDRAISING

The board discussed the newly upgraded 90+ seats at the stadium and the potential for incorporating them into a fundraising initiative. After careful consideration, they agreed on a price of \$250 for four seats, which will also include admission to the remaining three home games. Donors will have their names displayed on the seats they purchase, adding a personal touch to their contributions.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the word session adjourned. Time 8:25 PM

Ms. Malone called a special meeting of the Newport Board of Education. The purpose was to enter into an executive session to discuss the superintendent's evaluation. All members were present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On MOTION SUTHERLAND AND SECONDED BY CURL the board went into executive session. Purpose: KRS 61.810 (k) and KRS 156.577 – discussion relating to the evaluation of the superintendent. Time: 8:34 PM

1592 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

On MOTION BY SUTHERLAND AND SECONDED BY CURL the board returned to open session. Time: 9:37 PM

1593 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

ADJOURNMENT

On MOTION BY COVINGTON AND SECONDED BY DAVIS, the meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM

1594 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Chairman

Secretary