

**Curriculum Department Report to the Board of Education**  
**Curriculum Department Highlights**  
**November 20, 2024**

**To:** Mr. Watts, Superintendent  
Ms. Malone, Chairperson of the Board  
Members of the Board of Education

**Newport Curriculum Department Vision:**

We envision a day when **all leaders** of Newport Independent Schools exhibit high expectations and guarantee excellence of instruction, ensure equitable opportunities, and leverage all high-quality resources so that students, staff, and leaders will **maximize** their fullest potential.

**Chief Academic Officer & Director District Wide-Services**

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the implementation and progress of our Novice Reduction Instructional Strategies initiative. The primary goal is to reduce the number of students performing at the novice level in core academic areas and increase the number of students scoring proficient, by strengthening instruction, fostering student engagement, and using data-driven teaching methods. This month focused on equipping teachers with targeted instructional strategies, evaluating initial data, and setting short-term goals to track progress.

**Key Accomplishments**

- Professional Development:  
60+ teachers participated in workshops focused on instructional techniques proven to reduce novice performance. Training sessions included strategies such as differentiated instruction, scaffolding, formative assessments, and cooperative learning.
- Instructional Coaches Deployed:  
Coaches provided one-on-one support to teachers, modeling strategies and observing classroom implementation. Teachers who needed additional support were assigned to meet with their instructional coaches regularly to move through a coaching cycle.
- Data Analysis & Goal Setting:  
Baseline data was collected from initial benchmark assessments to identify students at the novice level. Each school set specific novice reduction targets and developed action plans aligned with district objectives.

**Novice Reduction Strategies Implemented** (monitored through walkthrough observations and lesson plan review)

- Scaffolded Instructional Design:  
Teachers were trained to implement scaffolding techniques, breaking down complex concepts into manageable steps and gradually removing support as students gained confidence and competence.
- Differentiation for Diverse Learners:  
Strategies for differentiating content, process, and product were introduced. Teachers were encouraged to provide varied resources and adjust instructional methods to meet the students' unique learning needs.
- Formative Assessments & Feedback Loops:  
Formative assessments were prioritized, allowing teachers to gauge understanding in real

time and provide immediate feedback. This iterative approach helps to address misconceptions promptly.

- **Student-Centered Learning Activities:**  
Emphasis was placed on collaborative learning, where students engage in small-group activities that foster peer support and collective problem-solving.

## Initial Data and Observations

- **Progress on Reducing Novice Numbers:**  
The superintendent initiated data meetings with all building-level leaders. Data was provided and action plans were presented on how students would be monitored for progress toward proficiency.

Here is an example of data questions and responses posed to each building administrator: [Copy of Data Questions 10/31/24](#)

[Copy of Academic Plan for 2024-2025](#)

[Copy of NIS Data Tracker 2024-2025](#)

- **District Walkthrough Data:**  
A team from the district office and building instructional coaches conducted instructional walkthroughs. These walkthroughs monitor each building's progress toward implementing research-based strategies for improving instruction. Unannounced walkthroughs were completed this month at all building sites including NSOI and the Regional School.

## Next Steps for Continued Implementation

- **Focus on Data-Driven Adjustments:**  
Continue to use formative assessments to tailor instruction and monitor novice reduction in real-time. Data will inform any necessary adjustments to the instructional strategies.
- **Family Engagement Initiatives:**  
Develop strategies to engage families in supporting students at home. We aim to host workshops for families on how they can support learning aligned with classroom strategies.
- **Additional Training Opportunities:**  
A follow-up professional development session is scheduled for the coming months to reinforce differentiation strategies, introduce advanced scaffolding techniques, and align instructional practices across the district.

-Dr. Dickey, keynote speaker and presenter from the Wildcat Academy will begin his partnership with all schools in the district. Below please find information concerning system creation and strategies for district-wide literacy alignment. As you are aware we have implemented our five-year plan for literacy improvement. Dr. Dickey's work is in direct support of where we are as a district in this five-year plan, which is: year 4 - improving instructional practices.

Dr. Dickey's company is Educational Epiphany. Education Epiphany is a purpose-driven organization focused on promoting student achievement and school improvement through a finite set of actionable, measurable, and replicable ideas. Educational Epiphany's instructional resources not only meet the requirements of the Science of Reading but also provide students, teachers, and parents access to resources that effectively integrate research-based practices that directly align with the art and science of teaching reading. These resources and practices ensure

that students have access to teaching and learning opportunities characterized by all six levels of cognitive demand: remembering, understanding, application, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

## Conclusion and Long-Term Goals

- Summary of Immediate Impact:  
The novice reduction instructional strategies are showing positive initial results, with reductions in novice-level performance observed in classrooms where strategies are implemented consistently.

Empowering teachers to make a meaningful difference in their students' learning. By equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to excel, this has a direct impact on learner outcomes. Through effective instructional practices, tailored interventions, and a focus on the diverse needs of every student, teachers will be able to create learning environments where all students thrive.

- Long-Term Objective:  
Continue to decrease the number of novice-level students each semester, leveraging ongoing data analysis, targeted instruction, and community support to reach the district-wide goal of increased student proficiency.

Improving teacher efficacy is paramount to increasing student success quickly. John Hattie's research states the following concerning collective teacher efficacy: "Collective Teacher Efficacy is the collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students. With an effect size of  $d=1.57$  Collective Teacher Efficacy is strongly correlated with student achievement." In Hattie's research, Collective Teacher Efficacy has the highest effect size concerning the impact on student achievement. When reached it has an impact of 1.57 years of growth for the learner.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Katina Brown**

Director of District-Wide Services

**Darla Payne**

Chief Academic Officer