

**Curriculum Department Report to the Board of Education**  
**Curriculum Department Highlights**  
**February 26, 2025**

**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**

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION:**

The Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services paid the entire expense for the curriculum department to attend Marzano's Highly Reliable Schools Conference. Each district in the region was allowed to send 2 people to the conference. The grant for the conference was specifically designed for each district's professional learning consortium participants. Newport's Chief Academic Officer is the monthly facilitator for this group.

Marzano's Highly Reliable Schools Conference 2025 was an immersive, research-driven event designed to empower educators and school leaders to create lasting improvements in student learning. Centered on the five core pillars of the HRS framework, the conference provided a platform to explore proven strategies for establishing safe, supportive, and collaborative school cultures, ensuring effective teaching in every classroom, developing guaranteed and viable curricula, implementing standards-referenced reporting, and advancing competency-based education.

Keynote presentations from renowned experts—who shared insights based on decades of educational research—set the tone for the event, highlighting data-driven practices that have transformed schools nationwide. Attendees participated in interactive breakout sessions, workshops, and panel discussions that offered hands-on strategies for strategic planning, continuous improvement, and building a common instructional language among staff. The practical sessions focused on how to monitor progress using quick data, foster collaborative professional learning communities, and support teachers through targeted professional development.

Beyond the instructional sessions, the conference fostered a dynamic networking environment where educators exchanged best practices, celebrated successes, and addressed challenges in real-time. Participants left with actionable takeaways to drive sustainable school improvement and create educational environments where every student is given the opportunity to succeed.

Marzano's Highly Reliable Schools Conference 2025 showcased a research-based framework built on five core pillars that are directly aligned with Newport Independent Schools' mission and strategic plan for literacy. Newport Independent Schools is dedicated to ensuring every student develops strong literacy skills as a foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. Here's how the HRS pillars support that mission:

1. **Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture:**  
Newport's literacy mission begins with a learning environment where students and teachers feel secure, valued, and supported. By fostering a collaborative culture during PLCs (professional learning communities), educators can share literacy best practices and create a community where every student is encouraged to become a confident reader and writer.
2. **Effective Teaching in Every Classroom:**  
The conference emphasized equipping teachers with proven, research-based strategies to deliver high-quality instruction. This aligns with Newport's strategic focus on literacy by ensuring that all educators are prepared to implement effective literacy instruction, tailored to meet the diverse needs of every student.
3. **Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum:**  
A robust, standards-based literacy curriculum is essential for Newport Independent Schools. The HRS framework stresses that all students should have access to a consistent, high-quality curriculum. This pillar supports Newport's goal of providing every student with the reading and writing materials and instruction necessary to master key literacy skills.
4. **Standards-Referenced Reporting:**  
Monitoring and reporting individual progress are crucial for targeted literacy interventions. This pillar promotes the use of precise, data-driven assessments that align with established literacy standards, helping Newport Independent Schools track student growth, identify areas for improvement, and adjust instruction accordingly.
5. **Competency-Based Education:**  
Allowing students to advance upon demonstrating mastery ensures that each learner fully grasps essential literacy concepts before moving on. This approach, highlighted at the conference, supports Newport's commitment to personalized learning—ensuring that all students progress at a pace that meets their individual literacy needs.

In essence, the HRS framework provides Newport Independent Schools with a comprehensive strategy that mirrors its literacy mission. By establishing a strong, supportive culture; empowering effective teaching; guaranteeing a high-quality curriculum; using precise, standards-based assessments; and embracing competency-based progression, Newport is well-equipped to drive significant improvements in student literacy outcomes. Immediate implementation has occurred at NIS thus far during ELA, Writing, and Math professional learning communities (PLC)

#### **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TARGETED SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT (TSI):**

Newport Independent Schools has formed a strategic partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education through its Targeted Support Improvement (TSI) ERL(Educational Recovery Leader), where a KDE rep visits once a week. This collaboration is designed to accelerate school improvement by providing Newport with targeted data analysis, targeted intervention strategies, and sustainable improvement verification—all critical for elevating student outcomes in literacy and beyond. Key elements of the partnership include:

- **Data-Driven Insights:** The TSI ERL program supplies Newport with comprehensive data analysis tools that help pinpoint areas of need and monitor progress. This enables precise interventions and ensures that instructional adjustments are grounded in real-time performance metrics.
- **Targeted Intervention Strategies:** With access to a robust array of resources and support materials, Newport can deploy evidence-based interventions that directly address gaps in student learning. This

targeted approach ensures that every student receives the personalized instruction needed to master key academic and literacy skills.

- **Sustainable Improvement:** By integrating the school improvement framework, Newport reinforces a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. The partnership not only drives immediate gains but also lays the foundation for long-term, sustainable school success.

Overall, this alliance with the Kentucky Department of Education's TSI initiative strengthens Newport's commitment to educational excellence, ensuring that every learner is supported through targeted, data-driven practices leading to student success.

## **DISTRICT ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR MONTHLY MEETING:**

The February 18, 2025 DAC Consortium monthly meeting was held virtually via Zoom and brought together representatives from numerous Kentucky school districts and institutions in the region to discuss current testing, training, and resource-sharing initiatives. Key agenda items included:

- **Testing Updates:**
  - For ACT sessions, participants were reminded that sessions can now be scheduled in PAN and that all staff must be trained.
  - Specific testing protocols for juniors (non-test activities and parental consent) and sophomores were addressed, including readiness checks for the new "ACTNOW" TCM system
- **Additional Programs & Logistics:**
  - AKSA materials are scheduled to arrive during the week of March 24/31, with SDRR opening soon (including any necessary medical releases).
  - For ACCESS testing, extensions can be requested via KDE, and for EOP testing, the window runs from February 24 to March 28, with testing tickets now available in E-SESS.
  - A reminder was issued to complete the K-Screen ordering spreadsheet (due March 28th) as referenced in recent DAC emails.
- **Regional and Administrative Discussions:**
  - Review of takeaways from the Regional Town Hall (including verifying if the session was recorded and seeking feedback).
  - Sharing of DAC resources such as the assessments spreadsheet from last year and a new ACT spreadsheet.
- **Training and Compliance:**
  - Upcoming February DAC trainings were noted, with a special emphasis on tech personnel to assist with this year's testing.
  - A list of testing items and procedures was reviewed, including the Test Administration Manual, site visit forms, survey questions for KSA, AKSA, and ACT site visits, as well as Caveon Visits and other related documentation.
- **Discussion and Resources:**
  - Members were invited to add additional topics for discussion.
  - A set of resources was provided, including NKCES important dates, Regional Professional Learning Networks details, the NKCES PL Catalog, and access to the DAC Consortium Google Drive for collaborative work.

The meeting concluded by reiterating the importance of clear communication, adherence to testing protocols, and ongoing collaboration among consortium members—all coordinated through the support of the Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services (NKCES).

## **GRANT WRITING:**

Newport Schools is leveraging two competitive grant opportunities from the Kentucky Department of Education to enhance both academic outcomes and school safety.

### **Numeracy Grant:**

This grant is designed to boost student performance in mathematics by funding targeted initiatives that include curriculum enhancements, teacher professional development, and evidence-based intervention programs. For Newport Schools, the Numeracy Grant will provide critical resources to strengthen math instruction—integrating updated teaching materials, focused training sessions, and data-driven assessments—so that students build strong numeracy skills alongside their literacy development.

### **AED Grant:**

The AED Grant supports school safety by providing funding for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). By securing this grant, Newport Schools will be able to equip and/or replace essential emergency medical devices on campus, ensuring that both students and staff have access to life-saving technology in the event of a cardiac emergency. This initiative underscores the district's commitment to creating a secure and responsive learning environment.

Together, these grants not only reinforce Newport Schools' mission to deliver high-quality education but also align with broader state priorities by enhancing instructional effectiveness and ensuring the well-being of the school community.

For additional details on grant eligibility and application guidelines, visit the Kentucky Department of Education's Competitive Grants webpage:

<https://www.education.ky.gov/districts/business/Pages/Competitive%20Grants%20from%20KDE.aspx>

## **Director District-Wide Services:**

**District Wide Professional Learning -Classroom Environment to address needs of all students**

**Date: February 26, 2025**

**Location: All Schools Library**

**Time: NPS-3:30p.m. NIS- 3:15p.m. NHS-3:00p.m.**

**Focus: Chapter 6- Establishing Alliance in the Leadership Partnership from Dr. Zaretta Hammond's Book on Teaching and the Brain**

Chapter 6 of Dr. Zaretta Hammond's work on continuous improvement focuses on the importance of creating a leadership partnership, often through the establishment of an alliance. The Classroom

Environment Professional Learning Team will conduct professional learning to enhance instructional practices.

The central theme is developing a 'warm demander' stance, which combines high expectations with a supportive environment that respects student engagement and sense of belonging.

### **Analysis:**

The concept of a warm demander is critical as it fosters an educational environment where students feel both challenged and supported. This approach hinges on the understanding that effective feedback is crucial in shaping learners' academic journeys. Feedback, when used correctly, is not merely evaluative but is instructive and corrective, aimed at addressing misconceptions and guiding students towards independence and mastery.

### **Synthesis:**

The integration of feedback into daily instructional practices encourages teachers to transition from primarily evaluative feedback to a more balanced approach that includes corrective and instructive feedback. This shift is vital in helping students navigate their learning processes and adjust their learning strategies based on formative assessments.

### **Implications:**

The implications of this approach are profound for culturally responsive teaching. By aligning instructional feedback with students' collectivist cultural worldviews, which emphasize relationships and community, educators can enhance student engagement and foster a more inclusive learning environment. This alignment also requires educators to continually adapt and differentiate instruction to meet diverse learning styles and needs, ensuring that all students are brought into their zone of proximal development.

### **Application:**

To apply these concepts, educators can start by ensuring that feedback mechanisms are aligned with Dr. Dickey's Practice 1, which advocates for performance-based objectives informed by standards. This includes incorporating structured student interviews into lesson planning, which can provide insights into students' backgrounds and help bridge their lived experiences with academic content. Additionally, teachers should focus on formative assessments to identify student misconceptions and provide targeted feedback that is both corrective and instructive. Finally, creating opportunities for students to adjust their learning strategies within the classroom will help them become more independent learners and improve overall student achievement.

This approach not only enhances academic engagement but also builds a classroom environment where students are more likely to feel respected and valued, fostering better relationships and ultimately, better educational outcomes.

**Dr. Dickey return to NISD (in person)**

### **Educational Epiphany:**

February 28, 2025 | [Schools will need a Substitute Teacher or scheduled rotation for teachers to participate @ grade level.]

Description: Demonstration Lesson - 1 classroom per school. Recorded Fishbowl exercise.

Location: All schools

Session Length: 1 hour per school

### **Video Demonstration Lessons:**

Is a one-of-a-kind, carefully crafted demonstration lesson will refine your team's capacity to position children to demonstrate unparalleled gains between and among the core content areas: ELA, Mathematics, and Science.

**Focus:** ELA District Wide

The Demonstration Lessons will Support educators at all levels to:

- Improve student outcomes through an introduction to and subsequent support around a small number of high-impact instructional practices, including:
  - Performance-Based Objectives
  - Curriculum-Driven Opportunities to Teach General and Domain-Specific Words
  - Gradual Release of Responsibility
  - The 5Es of Inquiry-Based Science Instruction
- Successfully integrate the aforementioned instructional practices into daily instruction for the benefit of children who possess complex and diverse needs
- Calibrate on a small number of teacher behaviors necessary to integrate literacy into daily instruction without disseminating an artificial checklist of new things to do

### **The Demonstration Lesson includes:**

- **60** minute demonstration for **ELA**
- Demonstration Lesson Viewing Guide

### **Outcomes:**

- Understanding the value of performance-based objectives as an approach to [improving literacy outcomes](#).
- Understanding curriculum-driven approaches for teaching and assessing general and domain-specific vocabulary as an approach to improving literacy outcomes.

- Understanding the gradual release of responsibility as an approach to transitioning students from dependence upon the teacher's knowledge/ability to reliance on their own independent knowledge/ability.
- Understanding standards-informed writing from sources and the relationship between [informational text structures](#) as an approach to improving writing outcomes.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Katina Brown**

Director of District-Wide Services

**Darla Payne**

Chief Academic Officer