



The Newport Board of Education held a work session on April 16, 2025, at 6:30 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Newport.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ramona Malone asked for a roll call. The following were present: Ramona Malone, Tim Curl, Ed Davis, Sylvia Covington, and Bobbie Stubbeman.

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

### **SCHOOL UPDATES**

Matt Atkins, NPS Principal, presented the following information in his report:

- iReady reading and math goal comparisons from fall and winter. Spring testing will take place in May but based on current trends, gains are expected.
- iReady reading data comparisons from fall to winter 2024
- K-2 reading data fall to winter 2024
- Reading comparisons from winter 2023 to winter 2024
- Phonological awareness data from winter 2023 to winter 2024
- Phonics data winter 2023 to winter 2024
- Students at or above 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading – 2022, 2023, and 2024
- Spring reading iReady goal
- Math data fall to winter 2024
- K-2 math fall to winter 2024
- Math data winter 2023 to winter 2024
- Students at or above 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in math – 2022, 2023, 2024
- Spring math iReady goal
- The focus of NPS
- 2024-25 Mindset
- Core values and commitments
- Goal setting
- Ms. Hayden reviewed school climate, focusing on the Student Ambassador Program. This program is designed to build academic and behavior student leaders.

Mr. Atkins provided an overview of the implementation and impact of UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute). The program was introduced in the fall of 2024 as a foundational reading curriculum designed to help students learn how to decode words. All instructional staff have been trained in the UFLI framework, and two teachers received specialized training directly from the University of Florida Literacy Institute to serve as in-house trainers.

UFLI is delivered daily for 30 minutes across all grade levels. Student progress is monitored using data from iReady, which helps assess the program's effectiveness and guide instructional decisions.

In addition to UFLI, the school also utilizes the Wonders reading program. Wonders is a comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum that supports the development of reading, writing, and critical thinking skills through a combination of whole-group instruction, small-group learning, and independent practice.

Mr. Atkins also clarified the distinction between phonics and phonological awareness. Phonics involves understanding the relationship between letters and their sounds and applying that knowledge to decode unfamiliar

printed words. Phonological awareness refers to the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language, such as rhyming, syllables, and individual speech sounds.

Ms. Covington asked about communication to parents regarding progress or lack thereof. She also inquired whether students that are behind had an early or late birthday when entering kindergarten.

Ms. Stubbeman asked why growth in kindergarten is so much higher than 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Mr. Atkins said that is always the trend at the kindergarten level. However, they are starting to see greater second grade growth.

Mr. Grigson, NIS Asst. Principal, presented the following information in his report:

- School climate
- Impact Survey year-to-year comparisons
- Behavior data
- Attendance data
- iReady data
- Reading predictions
- Math predictions
- Requested positions above allocations

Amber Onkst talked about PBIS which stands for Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. PBIS is a framework our schools use to create positive, predictable, and safe learning environments for all students. PBIS focuses on teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors while also providing supports for students who struggle with certain behaviors. It's a tiered system, meaning it offers different levels of support based on individual student needs.

Ms. Tiemeier, the intermediate school's MTSS coach, reported that behavior data is reviewed in the Behavior PLCs to determine the level of intervention a child may need. A Multi-Tiered System of Supports coach is an instructional leader who provides support and guidance to educators in implementing the MTSS framework. They help schools establish and maintain a system of tiered supports for students for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

Ms. Stubbeman asked if they thought this system discourages teacher to report misbehavior. Ms. Tiemeier said perhaps when it was first introduced but not anymore. Ms. Stubbeman stated that her child's experience was chaotic and teachers were not empowered to report behavior. Administration did say there is room for improvement but the data does reflect a positive improvement.

Champs is another tool being utilized by teachers. This refers to a classroom management strategy that helps teachers create a structured and supportive learning environment. It uses the acronym CHAMPS to define expectations for student behavior during different activities including conversation, help, activity, movement, and participation. Conversation defines the acceptable levels and types of talking during a specific activity. Help outlines how students can ask for help during independent work or activities. Activity specified what kind of activity students are engaged in whether it is individual work, group work, test-taking. Movement defines the rules around getting out of their seat during a lesson or activity. Participation clarifies what behaviors are expected of students to actively participate in the lesson, and supplies specifies what students need for a given activity.

Ms. Schultz and Ms. Wolfe, Assistant Principals at Newport High School, presented the following:

- 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading diagnostic comparison
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading diagnostic comparison
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade math diagnostic comparison
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade math diagnostic comparison
- Freshman CERT scores
- Sophomore CERT scores
- Juniors CERT scores
- Transition data (grades 9-12)
- Attendance

- Behaviors events
- Suspensions
- Culture
- Plans to move forward
- Additional staff beyond allocations
- Curriculum update
- Social-emotional support

Ms. Stubbeman commented that behavior is still an issue and teachers need to be given more support. Mr. Davis asked about students who return to school after expulsions and what support they receive.

### **IRB WITH PLK COMMUNITIES**

Ms. Malone reminded the board that the city manager presented this IRB proposal at the March meeting. She reminded them that the board will vote on this at the April regular meeting. If they have any questions before then, the board attorney should be able to answer.

### **STAFFING**

Mr. Watts announced the district is not \$3.9M in debt. That is a budget number arrived at by the former finance director based on minimum revenues predicted to come into the district next year versus current spending trends. If we do not cut expenses, we will end up \$3.9M in debt.

The following represents how the budget has been impacted over the last few years:

- Salary increases – close to 10% over the last 5 years – to stay competitive with surrounding districts
- Tuition reimbursement for teachers – over \$300,000
- Tax rates
- Loss of revenue in the amount of \$369,000 in 2024 due to property tax miscalculation
- Loss of revenue in the amount of \$96,000 in 2024 due to miscalculation on bourbon barrels from New Riff
- Incentives
- Additional staff

Ms. Malone said the board approved all raises to stay competitive and all incentive proposals presented were approved to help improve culture and make staff feel valued. Questions were always asked regarding impact to the budget and they were reassured the funds were available.

Mr. Watts stated that the training provided by Dr. Dickey was funded with ESSER. The funds were originally earmarked for NWEA but when that contract was cancelled Dr. Dickey's Educational Epiphany was presented to leaders who all agreed to this professional development opportunity.

Mr. Watts stressed the need for staff cuts. The district office is not filling some open retirement vacancies but building level cuts are necessary as well. Ms. Stubbeman commented that schools are getting hit the hardest and if we need interventionists to help with academic growth and behavior, we need to keep them. Ms. Malone said the board will look at all positions districtwide.

Before adjourning, Ms. Malone gave a shout out to Ms. Payne for writing and being awarded a curriculum grant. More information will be shared at a later date.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 PM.