



The Newport Board of Education held a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 6:30 PM. The meeting took place at 30 W. 8th 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.

RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Student & staff members of the month:

NPS

- Carter Turner, Student
- Kathy Hale, Teacher

NIS

- Keith Bland, Student
- Emily Kenner, Teacher

NHS

- Kelsey Turner, Student
- Holly Selover, Teacher

Steve Crawford from Assured Partners provided an update on the Bluegrass Risk Management Pool, which the board joined in 2024. He shared background information that helped inform this decision. Previously, Liberty Mutual was the only insurance provider offering liability coverage to school districts in Kentucky. Without competition, they were able to raise premiums and deductibles without concern of losing clients.

Recognizing the financial strain this placed on school districts, Bluegrass Risk Management entered the market to offer a competitive alternative. Management pools like this are common in other states and provide districts with more options and greater bargaining power.

To date, 27 school districts across Kentucky have joined the Bluegrass pool, with a goal of reaching 40 by July 1. While Liberty Mutual is projecting a 15% rate increase along with higher deductibles, Bluegrass Risk Management expects only a 9% rate increase, with deductibles remaining unchanged.

Board member Mr. Davis asked whether enrolling an additional 13 districts would help reduce coverage costs. Mr. Crawford confirmed that this is the long-term goal. As the pool's reserves grow, there is potential to return dividends to participating districts.

The board took a 10-minute break.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Several guests signed up to address the board:

1. Andy Bernert, Prevention Specialist with Family Nurturing Center was present to introduce himself and expressed interest in forming a partnership with the district to help end the cycle of child abuse by promoting individual well-being and healthy family relationships. He left a packet of information to be shared with district leaders.
2. Esther Fatsy invited the board once again to visit the buildings to see first-hand the work that takes place with teachers and students every day. She also reminded the board that staff is very anxious about allocations. People's lives are counting on knowing whether they have a job or not. She also shared that many teachers are not comfortable attending board meetings for fear of retaliation. Just because there is not representation from many, does not mean they do not care about what is going on.
3. Elizabeth Bravo circled back to her complaint from last month regarding the curriculum department. To date, she still has not received feedback on her video presentation in regard to the Education Epiphany assignment and is also concerned about the future use of the program. She expressed communication concerns especially from the superintendent. He was scheduled to be in the primary building last Friday but did not show and there was no communication letting staff know this. She also echoed Ms. Fatsy's concern on the clarity of allocations. Careers are on the line. Her last concern was about the Employee Assistance Program thru St. Elizabeth and not knowing the district no longer contracted with them.

MINUTES OF MARCH 26, 2025 AND APRIL 16, 2025

On MOTION BY COVINGTON AND SECONDED BY CURL the board approved the minutes as written

1653 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

TREASURER'S REPORT

Before approving the bills for payment, Ms. Stubbeman inquired about recent charges on Ms. Hoover's business credit card. Ms. Snapp explained that some vendors are set up for automatic payments using this card. As charges continue to come in, a new credit card is being issued and updated for future transactions. This process is in place to prevent account defaults while each vendor is identified and transitioned. It was noted that Ms. Hoover does not have physical possession of the credit card. She also inquired what the difference is between administrative and business support over instructional support. Ms. Snapp will get back to her with that information. Mr. Davis asked about the rental of space within our buildings and our busses. Mr. Maines said board policy does allow the rental of space and busses. Bus rental rarely happens due to insurance concerns but we do assist other districts with transportation from time to time and they do the same for Newport. The football field has been rented out many times over the years. Ms. Stubbeman asked about the lodging expense for St. Therese. Ms. Stewart explained how Title funds must be shared with private schools in-district and this particular expense is a result of that. She also asked how students were chosen to go Disney over spring break. Ms. Donna Watts will be the point of contact for answers to that question.

On MOTION BY CURL AND SECONDED BY STUBBEMAN the bank reconciliation for March was approved and will be filed for audit.

1654 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

On MOTION BY DAVIS AND SECONDED BY STUBBEMAN the bills were approved for payment.

1655 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

STUDENT LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Ms. Payne informed the board that the district has been selected as a recipient of the Kentucky Comprehensive Literacy Grant, a statewide initiative aimed at enhancing reading and writing outcomes for students from early childhood through high school. This grant supports districts and schools in implementing evidence-based literacy practices that align with the Kentucky Academic Standards. The district is expected to receive funds in the fall, which may be used for consumables and benchmark assessments, though not for salaries.

Ms. Stubbeman inquired about the role of the curriculum department in school-based training. Ms. Payne responded that the department's involvement varies depending on the specific nature of the training being conducted. Trainings can be led by the district, outside contractors, school leaders, or teachers.

Ms. Stewart presented her report and opened the floor for questions. She updated the board on attendance. The Superintendent's Annual Attendance Report is currently showing an absent rate of 4.6% within the district for a rate of 95.4% with five low attendance days applied.

Mr. Rehtin, Coordinator of the 21st Century After-School Program received a grant for Newport Primary School for next year. All three schools will now have programming next year.

Several in-district employees and Josh Tunning have been working with the City and Re-Newport in writing a Rapid Response Grant. Rapid response grants are small, quick-turnaround funding opportunities designed to support organizations dealing with immediate crises or urgent needs. They are distinct from regular grant cycles, offering faster funding for time-sensitive issues. If the district receives the grant, the funding will support a school counselor position. Mr. Curl asked about the grant's due date. Ms. Stewart replied April 30th.

Mr. Maines submitted his report and invited any questions or concerns. Mr. Maines said the district will receive grant funds to replace older AEDs districtwide. He mentioned all employees, including transportation, are trained to use these devices in cases of emergency. The AEDs are checked monthly to make sure they are all working and batteries do not need to be replaced. Under new business, he is asking for final approval of the district facility plan based on the hearing report. The Tank contract is still under consideration for next year; we are looking at the possibility of using district yellow bus service to save money. This will be up to Mr. Watts and the board.

Ms. Swanson submitted her report. There were no questions. Ms. Stubbeman thanked her for the detailed report on autism.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel report
2. Hire emergency certified substitute teachers for the 25/26 SY.
3. IRB with PLK Communities
4. KETS Offer of Assistance in the amount of \$10,904
5. 25/26 Cooperative Membership Agreement with KEDC
6. Per the District Facilities Plan hearing report, adopt the district facilities plan developed by the Newport Independent Schools Local Planning Committee.

On MOTION BY CURL AND SECONDED BY COVINGTON the consent agenda was approved as presented.

1656 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

BOARD COMMENTS/CONCERNS/ UPDATES

Ms. Covington thanked Mr. Maines for all hard work and efforts on the stadium renovations. It looks amazing. The board congratulated the recipients of awards at the Education Excellence event: Mr. Maines, Ms. Barbour, and Ms. Kennedy. Mr. Davis thanked everyone involved in the district for collaborating with the City and Re-Newport in the rapid response grant opportunity. Ms. Stubbeman thanked the teachers for what they do every day.

ADJOURNMENT

On MOTION BY STUBBEMAN AND SECONDED BY CURL, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM

1657 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Chairman

Secretary