



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

May 23, 2025

Special Education Services and Programming

1. Speech and Hearing Awareness Month

As we near the end of the school year, the Newport Independent Schools Special Education Department remains deeply committed to supporting our students, families, and staff through targeted programs and awareness initiatives. May has been an especially active and meaningful month as we celebrated Mental Health Awareness, Better Hearing and Speech Month.

In honor of this observance, our dedicated Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) launched an awareness campaign aimed at increasing understanding of communication disorders and highlighting the vital role SLPs play in educational settings. Key highlights from the month include:

Student Engagement:

SLPs facilitated interactive lessons that focused on building essential communication skills. Activities included listening games, expressive language tasks, and social communication role-play. A coloring contest showcased creativity at Newport Primary School, with student entries proudly displayed on a themed bulletin board and winners receiving a Squishmallow prize.

Staff Involvement:

Each week, staff participated in a fun-fact quiz featuring five questions related to speech and hearing. Winners were chosen through a random generator and given a small prize. In addition, helpful information was shared with staff, including practical tips for supporting speech and language development across school settings.

Looking Ahead:

Next year, we plan to expand our awareness efforts by offering free speech screenings to parents during family engagement events. Hopefully, this initiative will promote better hearing health for our families and the community.

We are incredibly proud of the outstanding work our SLPs do each day to ensure every student has the tools to communicate effectively and succeed in their educational journey. We look forward to continuing this important work in the year ahead.

2. Mental Health Awareness Month

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, Ms. Scruggs distributed a district-wide email to all staff in May 2025. The message included a virtual "toolbox" featuring a thoughtfully curated collection of therapeutic resources to promote mental wellness among staff and students.

To encourage student engagement, a coloring sheet activity was also shared with staff for use in classrooms. Students who completed the activity were entered into a prize drawing. Ms. McGroarty's entire 1st grade class participated—demonstrating full engagement with the initiative. As a reward, the class will enjoy a celebration next week featuring their choice of root beer floats, orange floats, or ice cream sundaes.

Mental health initiatives play a critical role in supporting students' academic performance and emotional wellness by reducing stress, improving focus, and fostering resilience, which in turn enhances their ability to learn, build relationships, and thrive both in and out of the classroom.

3. Unified Sports Athletes Recognition:

Unified Sports, led by Special Olympics, unite students with and without intellectual disabilities on the same teams, promoting inclusion through shared athletic experiences. These programs foster empathy, reduce bullying, and help all participants build teamwork, communication, and leadership skills.

This year, our district participated in skiing, bocce, and track competitions. Our athletes achieved outstanding results across all events. Student recognitions and results are as follows:

❖ Track & Field

Kayden Lynn, has officially earned his varsity letter in track by participating in seven varsity meets this season. He competed in both the shot put and discus events, consistently representing the Wildcats with determination and sportsmanship. *(All measurements are in feet.)*

Meet Performances for Kayden Lynn:

- Holmes Quad Meet:
 - Shot Put: 8'6"
 - Discus: 18'6.5"
- Stan Steidel Meet:
 - Shot Put: 7'6.5"
 - Discus: 14'9"
- Boone County Meet:
 - Discus: 13'9"

- Holmes Quad (Second Meet):
 - Discus: 15'4"
- Ryle Meet:
 - Discus: 14'1"
- Pendleton Meet:
 - Discus: 15'0"
- Regional Meet:
 - Shot Put: 7'6" – 1st Place, *State Qualifier*
 - Discus: 15'2" – 1st Place, *State Qualifier*

Kayden will proudly represent the Wildcats at the State Championships on May **29th**, 2025 in Lexington, KY competing in both the shot put and discus events.

Coach: Cheryl Noonchester

❖ Bocce

Unified Bocce Tournament took place on November 1, 2024, at Town & Country Sports Club in Wilder, KY. We had several students volunteer to participate in the event this year.

Competition Results:

Court 2: Kobe Vorrhees and Kyle Lee – 2nd Place

Court 5: Damien Morales and Ka'Maryia Larkins-Hutton – 2nd Place

Court 1: Cameron Meredith and Jaylen Hartness – 3rd Place

Court 4: Kayden Lynn and Aujuana Cook – 3rd Place

Court 3: Aydian Stachel and student from Simon Kenton (substituted for Enrique Agustin)- 3rd Place

Irvan Nichols- Participation award

James Turner - participation awards

Coach: Vicki Chamberlain

❖ Skiing

Winter Games competition took place on January 22, 2024 at Perfect North Slopes.

Competition Results:

Kelsey Turner – Beginner Giant Slalom Division: F02 Gold Medal

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Ricky Tomlinson- Intermediate Giant Slalom Division: M02 Bronze Medal

Jelani Roper – Intermediate Giant Slalom Division: M01 Bronze Medal

Zachary Howard- Beginner Giant Slalom Division: M02 Bronze Medal

Martin Varias- Intermediate Giant Slalom Division: M01 4th Place

Chyanne Hunter- Beginner Giant Slalom Division: F01. Participation

Chad Wells- Beginner Giant Slalom Division: M01. Participation

Snow Cats Ski Coaches: Aaron Sutherland and Jennifer Packwood School Staff: Kate Neikirk, Ryan Strong, Tanner Watts, and Andrew Merrill Volunteer: Chris Varias

4. Special Education Service Programming Rates:

Special Education Population

238 Students

Related Service Enrollments:

Speech & Language- 151

Occupational Therapy – 40

Physical Therapy – 7

Mental Health Therapy- 25

Alternate Service Locations:

- Regional Schools – 8 Students
- Home/Private School Students – 1 Student
- Newport School of Innovation- 4 Students
- Campbell Regional Detention - 11 Students

504 Programming Rates – 34 Students

Respectfully Submitted

Lisa Swanson

