



The Newport Board of Education held a special meeting on Wednesday, July 17, 2025, at 6:00 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8th Street, Newport, KY. The Covington Board of Education joined the meeting in a joint effort to collaborate and discuss what is going on in both districts.

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. Becky Egan called the role for Covington. The following board members were in attendance: Tom Haggard, Hannah Edelen, and Kareem Simpson.

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

OPENING REMARKS

Tom Haggard thanked Ms. Malone for her efforts in organizing the meeting. He also expressed appreciation to his fellow board members and conveyed his gratitude to the staff, emphasizing the value of coming together to explore potential areas for future collaboration between the districts.

Ms. Malone acknowledged her counterparts and noted that she frequently speaks with Mr. Haggard on a variety of topics. She expressed her gratitude to Kareem Simpson for introducing the idea of collaboration, pointing out that Newport and Covington share many of the same challenges—and, at times, even students. After thoughtful consideration, Ms. Malone said she saw no reason not to meet and explore opportunities to work together across various areas of mutual interest.

She welcomed Matt Atkins, Acting Superintendent, and expressed enthusiasm about having a home-grown leader heading into the new school year. She also thanked Alvin Garrison and shared that she is looking forward to the outcomes of this meeting.

Mr. Haggard said there are 4 broad areas to cover this evening. The meeting is meant to be informal and conversational. He asked that each presenter come to the front of the room as their area of expertise is being discussed.

EXPLORING REGIONAL APPROACHES TO CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

David Hartman, Assistant Principal, came forward to introduce the programs offered at Holmes High School. The presently offer programs that fill the need for the five most in-demand job sectors in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Health Sciences, Info Tech/Computer Programming, Construction Technology, Manufacturing Technology, Leadership/Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps, Business & Marketing, Media Arts, and Education. There are 11 pathways offered to students.

Over the past few years, the River Cities Network has supported collaboration among Bellevue, Dayton, Newport, Ludlow, and Holmes. The network has played a key role in securing grants that have allowed students to take field trips and explore opportunities beyond the I-275 beltway. The group meets monthly to continue fostering these connections.

To date, Newport has sent students to Holmes to participate in the ROTC program, although Holmes has not yet had the opportunity to send students to Newport. Notably, Newport has a certified Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)

teacher—a credential that is increasingly difficult to find. While scheduling challenges have so far prevented reciprocal arrangements, this could present a future opportunity for Holmes' students to engage in programs at Newport, pending resolution of logistics.

Mr. Atkins reported the CTE courses Newport currently offers: Carpentry, Business, Family and Consumer Science, and Media Arts. He also reported all the pathways offered under each course. Julie Kaeff, District Court Liaison reported Newport students also participate in FCCLA, FBLA, and SkillsUSA.

Mr. Simpson requested additional information about the media arts curriculum. Ms. Kaeff shared that Newport is fortunate to have a certified graphic arts teacher, allowing the program to offer courses in photography, marketing, graphic design, and introductory media arts.

Ms. Malone added that students are actively involved in real-world projects, such as photographing local events and documenting homes in Newport's historic district. Ms. Watts noted that students also produce the school newspaper and a monthly newsletter, in addition to creating flyers for many community events—including Italian Fest, Goetta Fest, and others. A lot of the artwork on display at the Levee has been created by Newport students.

Ms. Stubbeman said her daughter's experience with graphic arts was very positive. She learned how to make t-shirts and banners as well as learning the Adobe software. Mr. Hartman also said students at Holmes are involved with interactive design thru their graphic arts classes.

Mr. Haggard asked if CTE classes are at capacity. Mr. Hartman said out of 850 students in the high school 578 students are enrolled in CTE classes. The goal is to have every high school graduate receive a diploma and a certificate indicating they are employer ready. Ms. Kaeff said Newport is the same as far as enrollments and goals for graduates. Ms. Malone said the goal is for the schools to collaborate whenever possible.

Ms. Edelen asked about professional learning opportunities for teachers. Mr. Hartman said high impact learning opportunities are available just like core teachers. There are offsite training opportunities, the annual summer conference where teachers network with other districts as well as contacts with professional consultants at the state level. Linda Jackson will be working with teachers on unit planning this summer also.

JOINT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Scott Alter, Assistant Superintendent, reported for Covington. The board of education approves PD plans. However, based on the results of past IMPACT and TELL surveys, scores for PD were always low. This prompted the district to send out annual surveys for teacher input on school PD as well as district PD. Consideration is now given to the top 10 or so suggestions and results of the surveys are slowly improving. A lot of professional development is job embedded and is what is reflected in the CSIP and CDIPs. Like Newport, Covington offers a summer academy of professional development topics that teachers can choose to attend based on content or interest. Professional development is also driven by building principals and data.

Mr. Atkins said professional development in Newport is also driven by academic data and CSIP; looking at what our staff really needs. A lot of academic planning is completed in PLCs. Some of the main topics we are focusing on this year is MTSS academic systems, the science of reading at the primary level, high quality instructional resources, and refining assessments such as AIMSWEB and iREADY. Teacher workdays are also built into the calendar for planning and collaboration.

Ms. Slankard commented that $\frac{1}{2}$ of our focus is on systems and $\frac{1}{2}$ is focus on practice. A lot of professional development is on teacher practice and what helps students learn the most and the other half is on systems and programs to make sure we fully understand materials to be implemented. We had the PD Academy last year but we were missing the input part which would have gone along way if teachers had input on what was being offered. Our PLCs include a lot of productive data driven conversations.

Mr. Simpson mentioned this could an opportunity for teachers to share in opportunities that come out of surveys resulting in similar interests.

Ms. Edelen asked how Newport differentiates professional development between new teachers and experienced teachers. Ms. Slankard said Newport has a New Teacher Institute that has been led by our district. At the building level, new teachers are paired with experienced mentors. Ms. Edelen also asked about building in “fun” into PD. Ms. Slankard said at the primary school, the building administrators built in activities that keeps the days more interesting and impactful. Ms. Edelen also mentioned that the Bounce Coalition is offering free training to teachers. Bounce builds the resiliency of children, adults, and families by improving knowledge about the impact of adverse childhood experiences and the skills to help people bounce back from adversity.

Mr. Garrison said in a perfect world, PD should be driven by evaluations. This drives differentiation and professional learning.

SHARED SERVICES AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Mr. Haggard emphasized that the core mission of any school district is the interaction between teachers and students. However, he raised an important question: are there opportunities to reduce operational costs through shared services, allowing more funds to be directed toward the classroom?

Annette Burtschy, Covington’s Finance Director, shared that Covington partners with Ludlow Independent by servicing their school buses. Additionally, the Northern Kentucky Finance Group meets monthly to collaborate and engage in joint professional development efforts.

Newport has implemented several cost-sharing strategies as well. We share a mechanic with the City of Newport to maintain our bus fleet, and we split salaries with the city for our School Resource Officers (SROs). Newport also collaborates with other districts on federal funding initiatives, and in previous years, supported Southgate with payroll and benefits services.

Mr. Haggard’s concern centers on the significant operational expenses faced by independent districts. By identifying and implementing more efficient ways to share these costs, districts could potentially redirect funds to enhance salary schedules or invest directly in classroom resources. The goal is to be above average in instructional support; not operational costs.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Marshelle Watkins-Blackwell, Newport’s Family Resource/Youth Service Center Coordinator at Newport Intermediate School, addressed both boards on collaboration with other districts in their areas. They recently attended a professional development opportunity where they hosted a workshop with Covington to support PD for classified employees. FRYSCs from Grant County to the River City Schools meet together monthly to discuss various topics and collaborate on projects. Newport is currently working with an area non-profit to help support family engagement. Ms. Watts offered to share a list of events the FRYSCs are collaborating with other districts on. Ms. Watkins-Blackwell mentioned that during a regional meeting with Partners for Change they discussed how to create a universal framework to take on some of the heavy lifting regarding family engagement using non-traditional ways to engage families. Their goal is for families to have a great school experience.

Ashley McClure, Covington’s Director of Community and Family Engagement, shared that their family engagement initiatives are organized around six key categories: Formative, Collaborative, Instructive, Interactive, Observational, and Empowerment. Attendance at these events is carefully tracked, with participation reaching 75% of student enrollment during the past school year.

The events are intentionally diverse, blending academic support with fun and engaging activities to meet the needs of families. Feedback is actively gathered through surveys distributed to students, families, and community partners, helping shape future programming.

A particular focus has been placed on engaging high school students and their families. As students grow older, it becomes increasingly challenging to design events that capture their interest and encourage them to return to school for family-oriented activities. Significant effort is being made to overcome these barriers and foster meaningful connections.

NEXT STEPS

Both Ms. Malone and Mr. Haggard agreed that tonight's discussion was educational and meaningful. As each member was asked for feedback, everyone at the table agreed that this is a good start to finding ways to collaborate with each other as well as the surrounding river city districts. The independent school districts face the same financial challenges so finding ways to conserve resources to better enhance opportunities for teachers and students is utmost important.

The board chairs will work together to coordinate the next meeting date.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, on MOTION BY EDELEN AND SECONDED BY DAVIS the meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.

1715 - MOTION CARRIED – 8-0

Chairman

Secretary