



The Newport Board of Education held a regular meeting on Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 6:30 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8th Street, Newport, KY.

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.

PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Jenny Watson from EducateNKY was present to discuss the Read Ready Newport initiative. Read Ready is a city-led early learning initiative focused on improving kindergarten readiness across Northern KY. With only 34% of river city children entering kindergarten ready to learn, Newport has committed to work on its new Read Ready effort to give its youngest learners a stronger start. The program is a prenatal-to-age 5 strategy, starting with prenatal care and continuing through childcare, homecare, and public preschool to ensure every child is ready to thrive in kindergarten and beyond. Dr. Watson explained that 80% of a child's brain development happens before they are three years old and 90% by the age of five. Development is shaped by what kids experience and that lays the foundation for future learning and well-being. Next steps include Educate NKY presenting a grant agreement and a check to the city of Newport on September 15. This will help start the planning process. Some of the initiatives include increasing kindergarten readiness by 5% by August 2026. They plan to connect and engage with at least five child care providers in Newport and five in-home daycare providers. Another goal is to increase the ASQ3 (ages & stages) questionnaire used by St. Elizabeth. This is a parent-completed screening tool for children aged one month to 5-1/2 years old.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Esther Fatsy shared her thoughts on the new school year. In her words, "it is the best start ever." She thanked the board and commented we have the best principals and she has never seen a superintendent as much as she is seeing Mr. Atkins in the buildings. It is refreshing and staff is feeling good about the school year.

MINUTES OF JULY 17, 2025 JOINT MEETING WITH COVINGTON'S BOE, JULY 30, 2025 REGULAR MEETING & AUGUST 13, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING

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

1725 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

TREASURER'S REPORT

On MOTION BY DAVIS AND SECONDED STUBBEMAN the bank reconciliation for July was approved and will be filed for audit and the invoices were approved for payment.

1726 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

STUDENT LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Mr. Atkins, Acting Superintendent, provided the Board with his monthly report. Under new business, he is asking for approval of 3 change orders for the stadium renovation: 1) provide and install two gates, 2) conduit from the press box to the concession building mechanical room, 3) access door for plumbing chase wall. These change orders are within the budget allowed for this project. He also is asking for approval of recommended tax rates for 2026. The current budget is composed of funds using the compensating rate, the district will be very conservative with spending by watching the general fund closely and we plan to be good stewards of money generated by these tax rates. He added that Newport's tax rate is lower than most surrounding districts. Next year, we need to consider an increase to the salary schedule, including step increase, the rising cost of energy, and an increase to our bond payments.

Autumn Slankard presented her report to the board. Ms. Stubbeman asked about the processes in place for identifying gifted students. Ms. Slankard has been meeting with the gifted coordinator to develop a comprehensive process and system for identifying and supporting gifted and talented students. Potential assessment options, along with costs, are being compiled to ensure we select the most effective tools. 4th graders will be tested and teachers may also recommend students.

Mr. Curl asked about the status of the SAT college admission exam. The Kentucky Department of Education + plans to switch the state-mandated, free college admissions exam for high school juniors from the ACT to the SAT for the 2025-2026 school year, but this decision is currently delayed due to a protest filed by ACT, the exam's administrator. Educators and students are uncertain how to prepare, while KDE cites cost savings as a benefit of the SAT. Students can still take the National ACT at their own expense for scholarships or college admissions, but the SAT is now the state-paid test for juniors.

Ms. Stewart presented her report to the board. In her report she updated the board on investigations. As of August 21st, 30 investigations on residency verification have been closed and 6 remain open for further evidence. Investigations have included a guardian issue, one fraudulent lease agreement, and six false affidavits of residency by relatives. Two missing students from other districts were identified and reported to the KY State Police.

Ms. Kaeff presented a report to the board on school safety and student services. There were not questions.

Kerri Niemann presented her report to the board. There were no questions.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no old business items.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel report;
2. FY 2026 District Funding Assurances
3. DJJ Interagency Agreement
4. KECSAC Agreement
5. Approve expenses for the board and superintendent to attend the following meetings and conferences:
 - KSBA Fall Regional Meeting – September 2025
 - KSBA Winter Conference – December 2025
 - KSBA Annual Conference – February 2026
 - COSSBA Annual Conference – March 2026
 - KSBA Summer Conference – July 2026
6. BG-5 – NHS – Phase 1 Stadium Renovation (project closeout)
7. Change order #2 – Newport Stadium
8. Superintendent Professional Growth Plan
9. Adopt the compensating tax rate of 77.0 for real property for tax year 2026
10. Adopt the compensating tax rate of 90.4 for personal property for tax year 2026
11. Adopt the vehicle motor tax rate 99.3 for tax year 2026

12. New teacher position at Newport Primary School due to the large class size in the 2nd grade. This position may be funded through Title II funds for class size reduction.
13. Emergency certification for 1 elementary classroom teacher

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

1727 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

BOARD COMMENTS/CONCERNS/ UPDATES

Ms. Stubbeman acknowledged everyone's hard work. She said she could not thank Mr. Atkins enough for hitting the ground running. She cannot express how impressed she is.

Mr. Davis followed with saying Mr. Atkins attended the Westside Coalition Meeting and he was very appreciative of that. He seems to be everywhere and the teachers and community are taking notice.

Mr. Curl said he is glad he is not on TV any longer and that he is happy to attend meetings now.

ADJOURNMENT

On MOTION BY STUBBEMAN AND SECONDED BY DAVIS, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

1728 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Chairman

Secretary