

## **Recommendation to the Board of Education**

**To:** Newport Independent Board of Education

**From:** Jennifer Stewart, Director of Pupil Personnel

**Date:** September 23, 2025

**Subject:** Recommendation to Maintain Current Status, Expand SBDM Preparation, and Consider Return Before End of School Year

### **Executive Summary**

Based on the attached data graphs and district trends, I recommend the Board:

1. Maintain the district's current governance plan while we prepare for transition.
2. Provide targeted professional development to staff on Kentucky SBDM roles, responsibilities, and procedures.
3. Increase the role and capacity of school advisory councils (or equivalent advisory bodies) to serve as preparatory structures for full SBDM councils.
4. Intent to consider a formal transition back to SBDM governance at the school level prior to the end of the current school year, contingent on completion of training, policy alignment, readiness checks, and staff feedback on leadership.

### **Rationale**

Given the data trends, an immediate return to full SBDM governance without preparatory steps could risk inconsistency in policy implementation and uneven capacity across schools.

A phased approach will:

- Preserve positive outcomes already achieved under the current governance model;
- Build staff and community knowledge of statutory duties and council processes;
- Strengthen advisory structures so schools have tested, representative committees ready to assume SBDM responsibilities; and
- Allow district leadership to verify compliance with KRS 160.345 and related regulations prior to full transfer of authority.

## **Recommendations (Detailed)**

### **1) Maintain Current Status (Immediate)**

- Continue current governance operations and decision-making pathways to avoid disruptions.
- Communicate to staff, families, and community that the district is intentionally preparing for SBDM return and will provide timelines and support.

### **2) Provide SBDM Training for Staff**

- Deliver professional development opportunities for principals, teacher representatives, classified staff, and parent leaders covering: statutory roles under KRS 160.345, council composition and elections, meeting law basics, policy development, selection of principals, budgeting basics, and data-driven school improvement planning.
- Use Kentucky Department of Education–endorsed providers or district-developed modules aligned with state expectations.
- Track completion in a district training registry.

### **3) Increase Role of Advisory Councils (Concurrent)**

- Expand advisory councils' membership and authority (within current district policy limits) to practice agenda-setting, policy review, budget input, and data analysis.
- Ensure parent and teacher representation mirrors the SBDM composition model so transitions are smoother.
- Assign advisory councils specific deliverables (e.g., review of school policies, participation in budget scenario planning, community engagement events).

### **4) Readiness Checks and Consideration for Return (Before End of School Year)**

- Establish objective readiness criteria (completed training, minimum advisory council activity level, updated school policy templates, documented community outreach).
- Schedule Board review of readiness evidence and a resolution to authorize schools that meet criteria to reinstate SBDM authority. Survey staff and parents to garner feedback on a potential return of SBDM authority in April and May of the current school year.

### **Resource Implications**

- Minimal administrative time to expand advisory functions and manage documentation.
- No immediate changes to staffing or budget authority until the Board approves formal SBDM reinstatement for individual schools.

### **Legal and Policy Considerations**

- Any transition will be conducted in alignment with Kentucky statutes and regulations governing School-Based Decision Making (KRS 160.345 and implementing regulations).
- The district will ensure required member professional development, proper council composition, meeting and recordkeeping requirements, and any necessary policy updates prior to transfer of authority.

### **Recommendation (Motion Language for Board)**

“ I move that the Board approve the district’s governance plan to continue under the guidance of the Board of Education while providing SBDM training for staff and increasing the leadership and role of school advisory councils; and further direct the Superintendent/designee to present a readiness report to the Board prior to the end of the current school year so the Board may consider reinstating SBDM authority to individual schools that meet established readiness criteria.”