



The Newport Board of Education held a regular meeting on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 6:30 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8<sup>th</sup> 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**

Each school recognized a student and staff member of the month.

- NPS recognized D'Cari Wright as their student of the month and Elena McBride as the staff member of the month.
- NIS recognized PJ Stallworth as their student of the month and both Teresa Moeller and Tessa Hoelmer as their staff members of the month.
- NHS recognized Hailey Scott as their student of the month and both April Amis-Walsh and Eric Hill as their staff members of the month.

Ms. Carla Oetinger, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program Coordinator at NPS, presented the work she has been doing this year at the primary school:

- WIN Instruction (What I Need) – the goal is to increase the percentage of students performing at or above grade level in reading and math on i-Ready assessments. Instruction is determined by areas of need with current focuses on comprehension, vocabulary, and number sense.
- Enrichment Instruction – the goal is to increase the number of opportunities for students to engage in STEAM activities and to utilize community partners to provide engaging & purposeful classes and events. STEAM activities are led by certified teachers, visual art is taught by Stephanie Baker from the Baker-Hunt Arts and Cultural Center and by the professional artist team of Batres-Gilvin. Music instruction is provided by a certified teacher as well as a weekly visit from our community partner Band in the Bus.
- Special experiences have been provided from the Newport Aquarium's Finstitute.

Overall, the year has been very successful and Ms. Oetinger expressed her love for Newport and the students.

The board took a 10-minute break to greet tonight's guests.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

None

### **MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2025 AND JANUARY 7, 2026**

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

1760 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

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

1767 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Ms. Snapp asked the board to acknowledge receipt of the draft budget and asked if there were any questions about the information presented.

Ms. Malone requested a brief overview of the draft budget process. Ms. Snapp explained that the draft budget provides a high-level view of the district's financial position—including revenues, major expenditures, and contingencies—based on current information and assumptions. It is intended to illustrate overall financial capacity rather than serve as a final line-item decision.

## **STUDENT LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICE**

Mr. Atkins, Acting Superintendent, provided the Board with his monthly report. He highlighted the work he has aligned to Standard 2: Instructional Leadership.

On January 5<sup>th</sup>, all three schools participated in professional learning based on research from The New Teacher Project (TNTP). Newport Primary and Intermediate focused on The Opportunity Makers, while the High School explored The Opportunity Myth.

The Opportunity Myth shows that meaningful student learning happens when students consistently experience four essential elements: access to grade-level work, strong instruction, meaningful engagement, and high expectations. When these elements are in place every day for every student, outcomes improve, and students are better prepared for the future—regardless of background.

The Opportunity Makers highlights that schools are most effective when they focus on three core conditions: belonging (students feel safe, supported, and valued), consistency (students regularly receive strong, grade-level instruction), and coherence (staff are aligned around clear goals and expectations). When these conditions exist, students are more likely to catch up academically and thrive.

This professional learning is ongoing and supported through the Kentucky Comprehensive Literacy Grant. Over the coming years, the district will continue building systems that promote belonging, ensure consistent access to grade-level instruction, and maintain coherence across district goals and expectations.

Under new business, the board is being asked to approve the following:

- Change order for US Specialties – this is a billing error
- Change order for Nora Flooring – reimbursement for materials not used
- SFCC Offer of Assistance in the amount of \$18,431
- Surplus at NHS

An SFCC Offer of Assistance is an official promise from the State of Kentucky to help a school district pay for major building projects or technology upgrades. The state "offers" to pay a portion of the yearly debt if the school district takes out a bond to fund a project.

Mr. Atkins also updated the board on a couple of bills currently being considered in the KY General Assembly:

HB 257 - is a major piece of education legislation focused on overhauling the state's school assessment and accountability systems.

The bill is designed to move away from a "one-size-fits-all" testing model toward a system that values local community priorities.

#### Key Changes:

- It allows school districts to create their own "measures of quality" (such as student well-being or local performance goals) alongside state standards.
- The bill aims to reduce the overall time students spend on state testing.
- Instead of just looking at a school's current standing, the system would evaluate the academic progress individual students make over the course of a year.
- This metric would replace the "school climate and safety survey" in the state's official accountability model.
- To encourage districts to build these new systems, the bill offers an incentive of \$10,000 per district plus \$3 per student.
- It removes specific state writing/editing tests and instead requires schools to adopt their own comprehensive writing policies with support from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

SB 181 - is designed to clarify and refine the "traceable communication" law passed during the previous session.

The original law required all electronic communication between school staff and students to occur through school-approved, traceable platforms to prevent grooming and inappropriate relationships. However, the 2026 version of SB 181 aims to fix practical issues that districts have faced during implementation.

#### Key Updates:

- It provides a clearer definition of "unauthorized electronic communication," specifically targeting private messages where a parent is not a recipient or has not given prior written consent.
- It allows school personnel to message a student directly if they have reason to believe an emergency exists, provided they disclose the message to a supervisor afterward.
- The bill creates specific exemptions for certain types of interactions that were previously in a "gray area," such as:
  - Virtual school instruction.
  - Communications where a parent is actively participating.
  - Phone calls made from an official school telephone number.
- It grants school districts more discretion in how they discipline employees or volunteers who violate the policy, rather than a one-size-fits-all penalty.
- The bill expands definitions to clarify which volunteers are covered and under what specific circumstances private communication is restricted.

Ms. Malone said some board members recently attended a session at the KSBA Winter Symposium where they received some insight from legislators about how bills are passed; often without time to review them before asking for a vote.

Ms. Slankard provided her monthly report. There were no questions. She announced that the district has finally hired a Gifted teacher; Ms. Carla Oetinger. Carla will be resigning from her position in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program as of February 6 and starting her new position on February 9.

Ms. Malone asked if feedback had been received on the TNTP professional day earlier this month. While she has not received specific feedback yet, Ms. Slankard feels the day went well. She also mentioned that TNTP has offered individual coaching for principals. This will be provided as a 2-hour training on line.

Ms. Slankard also shared a one-page document covering the 2026-2029 Comprehensive District Improvement Plan. Major goals by 2029 include:

- Close Achievement Gap: Focus on supporting African American & Novice students for equitable outcomes
- 50% Proficiency in Core Subjects: Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, & Writing

- 90% Postsecondary Readiness: 9 out of 10 students graduate ready for college, military, or career
- 98% Graduation Rate: Supporting every student in reaching the finish line
- "Blue" Safety Rating: Achieve highest state rating for school climate & safety

The document outlines how the goals will be reached, monitored, and funded. Mr. Curl asked if the "Watch List" covers all students. Ms. Slankard confirmed that it does, noting that the list monitors more than just academic performance; it also tracks attendance or behavior issues to ensure students receive immediate help regardless of the specific challenge they are facing. Mr. Curl inquired about the monitoring process for the 3-year plan. Ms. Slankard explained that the district has established annual "mini-goals" to track progress incrementally, ensuring the plan stays on course to meet its 2029 targets.

Ms. Stewart presented her report to the board. Ms. Malone asked about preschool funding since these students do not generate funding for the district thru SEEK. In Kentucky, preschool funding is primarily provided through a combination of state dollars, federal funds, and local district contributions. The general assembly appropriates funds for a non-competitive state grant program and federal funds are used for pre-school aged children with disabilities. Funding for eligible four-year-old students is increasingly integrated into the SEEK formula which is the primary method for funding K-12 education.

Mr. Curl said he liked that non-resident enrollment was a separate item for information purposes. Ms. Covington commented on the positive enrollment numbers.

Ms. Stewart provided a copy of the 2026-2027 calendar for the board's review and feedback. The final calendar will be on the agenda for board approval in February. Ms. Stewart is still waiting on feedback from several committee members.

Ms. Stewart also mentioned the board procedure for staffing was under new business for review. This procedure states the minimum allocations the board will be providing schools.

Ms. Niemann provided her report. There were no questions. Ms. Niemann said the Winter Games for the Special Olympics have been cancelled due to this week's inclement weather. There are no plans to reschedule this event.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There were no old business items.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Personnel report
2. Change order #1 – CTE Renovations (US Specialties)
3. Change order # – CTE Renovations (Nora Systems)
4. Volleyball fundraising request
5. SFCC Offer of Assistance
6. Surplus – refrigerator damaged in flood at NHS
7. Surplus – curriculum materials – intermediate school
8. Per board policy 01.821, Board Member Expense Reimbursement, approval is requested for actual and necessary expenditures incurred while traveling to the following conferences in 2026:
  - COSSBA National Conference in Louisville, KY – March 12-15, 2026
  - Annual KSBA Conference in Louisville, February 20-22, 2026
  - KSBA Summer Institute
  - Fall Regional Meeting
  - KSBA Winter Symposium
9. Superintendent's out-of-state travel and corresponding expenses for 2026
10. Review board procedure 02.4331 AP 1 – School Staffing Guidelines

On MOTION BY CURL AND SECONDED BY STUBBEMAN consent agenda items 1-10 were approved.

1768 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

**BOARD COMMENTS/CONCERNS/ UPDATES**

Donovan Macario-Avila, Student Board Representative, updated the board on the MLK Luncheon and the award he received as well as a fellow classmate who received a \$1,000 scholarship. He also updated the board on indoor track, FBLA, FCCLA, baseball, and bowling.

On behalf of the board, a sincere thank you was extended to all staff for their hard work and continued dedication to our students. It was emphasized that this hard work is truly seen and appreciated across the district.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On MOTION BY STUBBEMAN AND SECONDED BY CURL the board went into executive session. KRS 61.810 (b) Property – Time: 7:43

1769 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

On MOTION BY CURL AND SECONDED BY STUBBMAN the board returned to open session. Time: 8:15 PM

1770 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

**ADJOURNMENT**

On MOTION BY COVINGTON AND SECONDED BY STUBBEMAN, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM

1771 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

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Chairman

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Secretary