



The Newport Board of Education held a special meeting on Wednesday, July 8, 2026, at 6:00 PM. The meeting was held at 30 W. 8th Street, Newport, KY. The purpose of the meeting was to approve contracts and recess to executive session to discuss the superintendent's evaluation.

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.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NEWPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING GROVE

Mr. Atkins began by expressing his gratitude to everyone involved in bringing this partnership together. He highlighted some of the expectations from both parties:

- Learning Grove will provide services to pre-school students at the Newport Primary School from 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM Monday-Friday all year, except national holidays and PD days that are observed by Learning Grove.
- Learning Grove shall manage and operate the program in accordance with all regulations and requirement of the state, the cabinet, and any other federal or local authority.
- Learning Grove shall be responsible for all aspects of their program, including funding the program and designing and implementing the curriculum.
- The board shall supply, rent-free, space at NPS deemed appropriate by the cabinet. The Board is responsible for maintaining the space provided to the program, including outdoor playground area, and for providing utilities and custodial service.
- Enrollment expectations of at least 12 preschool children in the first year whose parents are working and qualify for KYs Child Care Assistance Program or who pay tuition so that the district can recoup its costs and Learning Grove can afford to provide full-day education and care all year.
- Students in the Learning Grove program will be able to set up an account with the district's food service program.
- The Board will assist and collaborate with Learning Grove in making referrals of eligible children to the program.

NEWPORT TRI-PARTY EARLY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

This Tri-Party Early Learning Partnership Agreement is entered into by Newport Independent Schools, Learning Grove, and EducateNKY. As part of the Read Ready initiative, Newport has endorsed the goals of Read Ready Newport and committed to working collaboratively with families, early childhood providers, and community partners to improve outcomes for young children. The purpose of this agreement is to advance the goals of Read Ready Newport by creating a coordinated early learning partnership among these three parties.

Learning Grove agrees to:

1. Establish and operate a full-day, year-round childcare program at Newport Primary School beginning with the 2026-27 school year.
2. Provide enrollment preference to Newport preschool students and families, subject to program capacity and applicable requirements.
3. Operate the program for a minimum period of three (3) years, subject to the terms of this Agreement.
4. Maintain all licenses, certifications, insurance coverage, and regulatory compliance required to operate the program.
5. Participate in evaluation and continuous improvement activities associated with the partnership.

Newport agrees to:

1. Provide access to facilities at Newport Primary School at no cost to Learning Grove pursuant to a separate operating agreement between Newport and Learning Grove.
2. Support coordination between Newport's public preschool program and Learning Grove's childcare services.
3. Participate in evaluation and continuous improvement activities associated with the partnership.
4. Execute data-sharing agreements reasonably necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership.
5. Participate in the WillBridge early learning to kindergarten data-sharing pilot, subject to mutually agreed data-sharing and governance agreements that preserve the district's ownership of its data and its independent authority over future participation in any regional data-sharing initiative.
6. Share student-level data, consistent with applicable federal and state law, necessary to evaluate kindergarten readiness, preschool participation, and longer-term educational outcomes associated with participating students.

EducateNKY agrees to:

1. Provide a one-time investment of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000), consisting of Fifty-Two Thousand Dollars (\$52,000) in operating support; and Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000) in capital support for facility improvements, equipment, or other startup expenses.
2. Support student and family recruitment efforts intended to maximize participation in Newport's preschool program and Learning Grove's childcare program.
3. Provide technical assistance, partnership coordination, and evaluation support as mutually agreed by the Parties.
4. Support documentation and dissemination of lessons learned from the partnership for the benefit of Read Ready Newport and other early learning initiatives.

Ms. Stubbeman asked if the students enrolled in Learning Grove would be Newport students. Mr. Atkins explained that it could be a combination; students could attend Learning Grove in the AM or PM and Newport's preschool program during the opposite times. Additionally, Learning Grove could accept outside students to fill enrollment if there are openings and they meet qualifications. The 21st Century after-school programming will remain an option for students who do not enroll in the Learning Grove program.

Ms. Covington asked about RTI. Mr. Atkins noted that the transition from Newport to Learning Grove should be seamless, as both the district and Learning Grove use the Creative Curriculum, ensuring academic consistency. Rules and expectations for behavior will also be shared to create consistency in that area. While fine details are still being worked out, Ms. Malone emphasized that the partnership itself is what matters most—sharing resources and working together to ensure as many students as possible are kindergarten-ready. Mr. Davis noted that this could have generational impact and all the work is appreciated.

Dr. Smith-Morrow, Vice-Mayor, commented about her excitement for this partnership. It is something that has been talked about for years and she hoping for good things to come. Mr. Rehtin said it is important to recognize these kids belong to all of us and we want them to succeed. He thanked everyone for what they are doing to make this happen.

On MOTION BY CURL AND SECONDED BY DAVIS both the agreement between the district and Learning Grove and the Tri-party Early Learning Partnership Agreement with the district, Learning Grove, and EducateNKY were approved.

1834 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On MOTION BY STUBBEMAN AND SECONDED BY CURL the board went into executive session. KRS 61.810 (k) and KRS 156.577 – discussions relating to the evaluation of the superintendent. Time: 6:27 PM

1835 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

On MOTION BY COVINGTON AND SECONDED BY STUBBEMAN the board returned to open session. Time: 7:56 PM

1836 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

ADJOURNMENT

On MOTION BY STUBBEMAN AND SECONDED BY CURL, the meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM

1837 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Chairman

Secretary