The Newport Board of Education held a work session on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 6:00 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.

iReady Data

Principals presented iReady results from fall testing:

School	Subject	Fall	Winter Goal	Spring Goal – On Grade Level
NPS	Math	8.4%	39.2%	70.0%
NIS	Math	9.7%	27.3%	45.0%
NHS – 7-9	Math	15.7%	25.3%	35.0%

School	Subject	Fall	Winter Goal	Spring Goal – On Grade Level
NPS	Reading	14.5%	44.7%	75%
NIS	Reading	18.8%	31.9%	45%
NHS – 7-9	Reading	19.8%	27.4%	35.0%

NPS Next Steps:

Data Analysis

Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- Curriculum-focused
- PLC days

Leadership Coaching
- PNCA Cohort 2 (Math)
- NKCES HQIR Implementation (Reading)

Parent Communication

NIS Next Steps:

Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- Curriculum-focused
- PLC days - CBPLs and Cohorts

Leadership Coaching
- NISL (monthly)
- Principal and Assistant Principal Roundtable (monthly)

● NKCES HQIR Implementation
● TNTP Coaching
● Leadership Team - increasing intentionality

Parent Communication
● Rooms, email, and phone calls
● 75% Attendance at conferences

Culture / Climate
● Academic focused conversations around progress and goal setting with students/families

NHS Next Steps:

1. Math is off to our strongest fall start yet. Grades 7-9 opened at 15.7% on grade level, up from 12.3% last fall and 4.2% in 23-24. Last spring's 21.5% was also our best finish in four years, which supports our 35% spring goal.
2. Reading needs our attention. Grades 7-9 opened at 19.8%, down from 24.0% last fall. Reading also dipped from 36.8% in spring 24-25 to 24.7% last spring, so reaching 35% this spring means reversing that trend.
3. Grades 10-12 are a new data set this year. Under the KyCL25 decision chart, upper-grade students who scored below the reading benchmark are screened three times a year. Fall results are 27.6% in reading and 15.4% in math, with spring goals of 40% and 30%.
4. We're putting more into the PLC process. Teams will use targeted unit internalization: studying each unit before teaching it, naming the key standards and likely misconceptions, and planning around what i-Ready shows our students need. Reading and ELA teams will make this a priority.
5. PLC time will be protected and focused on curriculum.
6. We're connecting screening to intervention. Students below benchmark take a diagnostic and receive MTSS support, including through the advisory block, with progress monitoring throughout the year.

Due to the "summer slide" that many students experience, there was discussion on how to help those students and families over the summer months.

Ms. Stubbeman asked about the set growth goals. Mr. Atkins reminded her that those are the goals set by the board during his evaluation.

Mr. Curl asked about rewards. Dr. Watkins said they provide tons of options for students; i.e. Cats Cash, PBIS parties, recognitions school-wide and at monthly board meetings, just to name a few.

Mr. Curl also asked for an explanation of Think Circa. Think Circa is a research-based core ELA curriculum and literacy intervention platform designed to build critical thinking and argumentative writing skills across subjects for grades 3–12. The program provides close reading and writing modules designed for ELA, Social Studies, Science, and Math, creating a unified writing language across disciplines.

Mr. Atkins added that there are consistent systems in place across all buildings. This will help with seamless transitions, operational efficiency, and clear expectations moving forward. Data oversight will help compare performance, track attendance and behavior, and help make informed decisions.

UNDERSTANDING SGOs

The primary focus of recent legislation regarding Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) centers on the creation and rollout of the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC)—also referred to as the Education Freedom Tax Credit.

The key provisions of this legislation include:

- Tax Credit for Donors: Individual taxpayers who make cash contributions to certified SGOs can claim a nonrefundable federal tax credit of up to $1,700 per individual ($3,400 for joint filers) starting in tax year 2027.
- State Opt-In System: Participation is voluntary at the state level. States must elect to participate (using IRS Form 15714) and submit a certified list of eligible in-state SGOs to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Kentucky has opted to participate.
- SGO Compliance & Requirements: To participate, SGOs must:
    - Be a registered 501(c)(3) public charity.
    - Direct at least 90% of their revenue toward K–12 scholarships.
    - Maintain separate, segregated accounts for qualified contributions.
    - Serve at least 10 students across multiple schools.
- Student & Expense Eligibility: Scholarships prioritize or limit eligibility to students in households earning at or below 300% of the Area Median Gross Income. Funds can cover private school tuition, tutoring, textbooks, technology, uniforms, and special-needs support services.

Most school districts in this area are approving a MOU with the Kentucky Education Fund as the nonprofit to collect private donations and distribute K-12 scholarships directly to eligible KY students.

After much discussion, the board asked Mr. Atkins to have someone from the Kentucky Education Fund attend the next meeting to present more information about their services.

ADJOURNMENT

On MOTION BY STUBBEMAN AND SECONDED BY COVINGTON, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM

1873 – MOTION CARRIED 5-0

_____
Chairman

_____
Secretary