



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER ▶▶▶

Dear Newport Families and Community,

With the recent release of our 2025–26 state assessment results, I am writing to share our outcomes with complete honesty and transparency. While some of our overall scores are disappointing, they do not diminish the relentless effort, heart, and dedication that our teachers, leaders, and staff bring to our students every single day.

Across our schools, I see educators giving their time beyond the classroom, creating opportunities for students to feel connected and supported, and finding countless ways, both large and small, to show students that they matter. This commitment is one of our district's greatest strengths, and it will be essential to the progress ahead.

We also recognize that test scores are one measure of student performance and do not tell the full story of learning. We are committed to supporting the whole student, addressing barriers to learning while maintaining high expectations and providing strong instruction for every student.

Building a strong foundation

When I stepped into the interim superintendent role for the 2025–26 school year, it was evident that establishing a strong foundation required immediate, decisive action on three critical fronts: stabilizing our finances, rebuilding our leadership team, and supporting and retaining our staff.

Over the past year, that work has included:

- **Financial stability:** Through disciplined management and responsible budgeting, we stabilized the district and entered fiscal year 2027 with a \$3.8 million General Fund balance and a much stronger financial position.
- **Leadership continuity:** When I began serving as interim superintendent, one of my first priorities was rebuilding our leadership team. I worked to put a strong team in place, with new principals across our schools and five of our eight district leadership roles filled by new team members. I am proud that 100% of that leadership team returned this school year, providing much-needed continuity as we move forward.
- **Staff support and retention:** We entered the 2025–26 school year rebuilding after the departure of 65 certified staff members, including more than 30% of the teaching staff at two of our three schools. In response, we launched a retention and support strategy that includes districtwide orientation, dedicated mentorship, and ongoing professional guidance.

Implementing high-impact academic changes

Lasting academic improvement requires consistent, evidence-based changes in what we teach, how we teach it, and how we support our educators. Over the past year, we began putting those changes in place:

- **High-quality curriculum:** Beginning last winter, teams of teachers and district leaders used KDE's Model Curriculum Framework to review our instructional resources. That review identified the need for stronger resources in elementary math and middle/high school reading. This fall, we implemented new, KDE-approved curricula for reading (Grades 7–12) and math (Grades K–6), along with a new science curriculum. Educators received targeted training before the school year, with additional training continuing throughout the year.
- **Targeted coaching and walkthroughs:** School and district leaders conduct regular classroom observations to support curriculum implementation. We also partnered with the Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services and The New Teacher Project (TNTP) for external classroom walkthroughs that provide instructional feedback and improvement planning throughout the 2026–27 school year.
- **Professional learning communities (PLCs):** Teachers meet weekly in grade-level and content teams to plan lessons, analyze student performance data, and share strategies aligned with the new curriculum, creating consistent expectations across our schools.
- **Expanded family engagement:** To create more opportunities for families to connect with our schools, we added two dedicated family engagement days to our district calendar in addition to evening parent-teacher conferences.

Where we are seeing progress

While substantial work remains, our latest results show areas of progress. Kentucky uses five color-coded performance levels: Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red, with Blue representing the highest level. Areas of progress include:

- **Elementary English language learners:** Showed consistent growth, increasing nearly 20 points over four years to earn a Blue rating.
- **Middle school social studies:** Increased 14 points from the previous year.
- **Middle school combined writing:** Increased 12 points from the previous year.
- **Middle school quality of school climate:** Increased to earn a Green rating.
- **High school quality of school climate:** Increased to earn a Blue rating.
- **High school postsecondary readiness:** Increased to earn a Green rating.
- **High school graduation rate:** Maintained strong performance with a Green rating.

Understanding state support (CSI designation)

Under state assessment metrics, Newport Intermediate School received the Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) designation. Newport Primary School also receives the designation because it is the sole feeder school into Newport Intermediate, even though Primary students do not take state standardized tests.

We take the CSI designation seriously and understand the concern it may create for our families and community. The designation also brings additional support and resources from the Kentucky Department of Education that we will use to strengthen the work already underway.

Moving forward together

We recognize that trust is earned through consistent progress and open communication. Our assessment results are not an excuse to lower expectations; rather, they are an urgent call to double down on the high-impact strategies now in place.

While our results fell short of what our students deserve, and feeling disappointed is justified, redirecting our energy into strengthening the district's foundation creates the environment our kids need to succeed. Holding us accountable and supporting our schools must go hand in hand, and right now, our students need our entire community to rally together and focus on solutions.

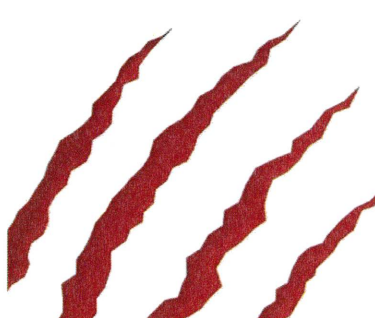
Thank you for your ongoing partnership, your support of our educators, and your dedication to Newport Independent Schools. Working together, we will build a district where our entire community thrives.

I welcome your questions, feedback, and ideas, and encourage you to reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,



Matt Atkins
Superintendent
Newport Independent Schools



The Newport Independent School District will partner with families and the community to nurture, educate, and instill core values in all students to ensure they reach their fullest potential.

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