



Dr. Robbie Fletcher
Commissioner of Education

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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May 29, 2026

Matt Atkins, Superintendent
Newport Independent Schools
30 W 8th Street
Newport, KY 41071

Dear Superintendent Atkins:

As you know, one goal of Kentucky Statewide Consolidated Monitoring (KSCM) is to help create opportunities for the programs in our schools and districts to look at new ways to collaborate and collectively meet our ultimate goal: increasing student achievement while closing gaps and positioning our students to be college- and career-ready. The team members from your visit have engaged in this collaborative process in order to produce the attached Consolidated Monitoring Report.

During the 2025-2026 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted monitoring in the Newport Independent School District. During this process, KDE program staff, utilizing program-specific monitoring tools, conducted on-site visits for the following programs:

- Title I, Part A
- Title I, Part D
- Title II, Part A
- Title III, Part A
- Title IV, Part A
- Alternative Education Programs
- McKinney-Vento
- Preschool
- Procurement

Each program involved in the KSCM has an impact on our goal. For example, Title II, Part A focuses on improving teacher and principal quality to ensure that all students have equal access to highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. Title I programs provide not only funding, but also guidance on working with disadvantaged students.

This report is the result of what can be best described as a “snapshot” of the district taken during our visit. It begins with identifying “effective practices.” These are individual program practices

that the team felt were effective, and in some cases innovative. We strongly suggest that the practices identified be submitted to the [KDE Best Practices website](#).

Each district program has already been provided an individual report as required by federal or state law. All findings will need to be addressed by district program areas as specified in the individual reports.

In the meantime, if you have questions regarding specific program monitoring requirements, please contact the individual program contacts listed in this report. If you have questions concerning the consolidated monitoring process, please contact [Erin Sudduth](#) by email or by phone at (502) 564-3791, Ext. 4021. Information regarding education programs within the state of Kentucky may also be found at the [KDE website](#).

Thank you for your work in improving Kentucky's education programs to better serve our children.

Sincerely,

Kelly Foster, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office of Continuous Improvement and Support
Kentucky Department of Education

KF/TR/ES/vb

Attachment: Consolidated Monitoring Report for Newport Independent Public Schools

2025-2026 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

District: Newport Independent

Dates of Visit: March 3-5, 2026

Team Leads:

- Title I, Part A – Shashawna Dotson
- Title I, Part D – Monica Higgins
- Title II, Part A – Jason Howard
- Title III, Part A – Kaiman Triplett
- Title IV, Part A – Lee Bowling
- Alternative Education Programs – Cristina Green
- McKinney-Vento – Zach Stumbo
- Preschool – Tyler Forsythe

Effective Practice No. 1: Parent and Family Engagement

Programs Addressed: Title I, Part A; Title III, Part A; Alternative Education

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 1

Newport Independent provides Title I, Part A parent and family engagement support that meets families where they are by conducting a Home Visit Day where every student receives an in-person visit before the first day of school. This is a time for parents to learn about upcoming district/school events and the details of their school’s school-family compact. The district’s transition guide is an extensive document that details the transition process between each grade level. English learner (EL) parent involvement is a priority for the district. Numerous EL events are hosted throughout the year, and the Lau Plan committee includes EL parent members who provide input on the district’s core language instruction educational program. Newport School of Innovation’s (NSI) advisory council allows parent collaboration on the school’s continuous improvement and decision-making processes. NSI also engages families through a literacy program, independent living seminars and regularly occurring family nights.

Effective Practice No. 2: Student Services and Plans

Programs Addressed: Title I, Part D; Title III, Part A; Alternative Education

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 2

The Title I, Part D program at Newport Regional School (NRS) provides individualized educational transition plans and growth plans that support the needs of students in the delinquent institution by prioritizing mental health and life skills. The life skills classes provide training for independent living that includes employability skills and personal growth. Other courses include personal finance, career exploration, job decision making, self-esteem improvement and information on community resources. EL students are provided with supports based on their social-emotional and academic needs, which leads to decisions made based on a student’s strengths and not test scores alone. The lead teacher of New Pathways, the alternative education program (AEP) housed at Newport High School, maintains a record of student performance data that is directly aligned with their individual goals.

Effective Practice No. 3: Professional Development

Programs Addressed: Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Preschool

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 3

The teacher mentorship program funded with Title II provides supports for first-year teachers and principals as well as teachers and principals who are new to the district. First-year teachers receive two years of mentorship from an experienced teacher, while teachers new to the district receive one year.

New principals also receive mentorship from an experienced principal. Preschool and EL teachers have a professional learning menu with options that are differentiated to meet the needs of staff based upon experience. This menu is the result of staff feedback and is easily accessible by all. In the preschool program, certified and classified preschool staff provide positive feedback regarding professional learning opportunities based upon the menu. In one case, special training was provided to accommodate a student with a severe health issue for the applicable staff.

Effective Practice No. 4: Climate and Culture

Programs Addressed: Title I, Part A; McKinney-Vento; Alternative Education

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 4

The homeless liaison demonstrates a commitment to the public notice of the educational rights of homeless children by placing posters beyond the required district buildings. Non-district placements include the local social service agency, a community feeding center, the public library and the Boys and Girls Club. This provides an awareness of the existence of these students to the community at large and helps ensure families are aware of supports available from the district. The liaison maintains a master list of all poster placements to ensure they remain visible and up to date. The lead teacher at New Pathways makes intentional efforts to promote social, emotional, intellectual and physical safety within the program setting by the establishment of shared norms, values and expectations. At NSI, the program’s approach to culture building promotes trust and positive connections between students and program staff. Trauma-informed practices are comprehensive and visible throughout the program. Staff work diligently to get to know students and their needs from the moment they enroll in the program. Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision-making. This commitment is reflected in communication among leaders, staff and students. Students reported feeling safe with and encouraged by program staff. The program provides clear expectations for students while effectively and actively supporting individual student needs.

Opportunity for Improvement No. 1: Community

Programs Addressed: Title II, Part A; Title IV, Part A; Alternative Education

Summary of Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

Stakeholders are not consulted in the planning of the Title II program and the spending of program funds. There was not sufficient documentation that stakeholders were consulted periodically throughout the school year regarding the Title IV, Part A program. The alternative education program at NRS and New Pathways both demonstrated a lack of consistent engagement with community agencies and community members.

Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) for Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

The district would benefit from intentional, planned collaboration between program leads and various stakeholder groups such as parents, teachers, principals and community partners. It may be helpful to use the collaboration processes of the McKinney-Vento program and the AEP at NSI as models. The McKinney-Vento program liaison collaborates with community partners, local nonprofit organizations and other district homeless liaisons to provide exemplary support that goes beyond the requirements of the grant. At NSI, partnerships with families, community agencies, industry, government and a community college enhance student engagement and provide preparation for postsecondary success. The approaches used by these programs may be able to be tailored to meet stakeholder consultation requirements for Title II, Title IV and New Pathways.

Opportunity for Improvement No. 2: Finance

Programs Addressed: Title I, Part A; Title I, Part D; Title II, Part A; Title IV, Part A

Summary of Opportunity for Improvement No. 2

The district does not spend Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement as well as equitable services for participating private schools in a timely manner. District spending for Title I, Part D, Title II, Part A, and Title IV, Part A does not align with the approved program applications. Titles II and IV noted that the district's finance officer is unaware of any procurement procedures or the district's financial processes or policies.

Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) for Opportunity for Improvement No. 2

The district would benefit from increased meetings between federal programs coordinators and the district finance officer to discuss alignment between spending and the approved applications. During these meetings, discrepancies would be uncovered that necessitate revisions to each application and would ensure alignment. Reviewing the remaining budget balances during these meetings can help lead to timely spending. The Kentucky Department of Education recommends meeting on at least a quarterly basis. Since the finance officer is new to the role, it would be beneficial for her to meet with the federal programs coordinator to review program requirements, processes and procedures related to the fiscal management of federal programs.

Opportunity for Improvement No. 3: Policies and Procedures

Programs Addressed: Title I, Part A; Alternative Education

Summary of Opportunity for Improvement No. 3

The district does not have a foster care transportation agreement or district parent and family engagement policy that meet all of the requirements of Title I, Part A. Additionally, there was no process for involving parents in decisions regarding the spending of Title I, Part A parent and family engagement funds. Processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing and applying learning from data have not been established at NRS or New Pathways. A comprehensive, program-wide behavior system has not been implemented at NRS. There are challenges to consistent program implementation between NRS program staff and correctional personnel, including correctional staff undermining the teacher's authority by telling students that they are not required to follow the teacher's directions. There was no evidence of established policies and procedures at NRS. The implementation of entrance/exit criteria at New Pathways is inconsistent. Placement decisions are made at the discretion of the high school administration and there are no steps to provide intervention supports prior to placing students in the highly restrictive program. Although the New Pathways handbook references a "trauma-informed approach to education" there was little evidence that this is occurring. Students enrolled in New Pathways are not permitted to participate in career and technical education opportunities and extracurricular activities which is in direct contrast to the district's board policy.

Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) for Opportunity for Improvement No. 3

The district should review existing policies and procedures for AEPs to ensure effective and consistent implementation. Program requirements and expectations should be reviewed with all staff working with students at NRS to concretely define the roles, responsibilities and authority of staff members. The district should develop processes and procedures that can be implemented consistently across AEPs. It may be beneficial to review some of the procedures developed by the McKinney-Vento liaison as they are clearly written, detailed and easy to understand. The Title I, Part A program should incorporate the

discussion of the parent and family engagement policy and spending of program funds into existing conversations with parents and families. The district should work collaboratively with the local child welfare agency to review and update the existing foster care transportation agreement.

Opportunity for Improvement No. 4: Communication

Programs Addressed: Title I, Part A; Alternative Education

Summary of Opportunity for Improvement No. 4

The district does not monitor to ensure equitable services are provided to parents of participating private school students, including communication related to student achievement. There are limited efforts to meaningfully engage caregivers and stakeholders in educational experiences for students attending NRS. The program administrator stated that student report cards are placed in the office at the end of each grading period and due to ineffective communication between the school and the home, these are frequently discarded and never provided to parents/guardians.

Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) for Opportunity for Improvement No. 4

The district would benefit from incorporating the discussion of parent and family engagement services and communication with parents into existing consultation meetings with participating private schools. The district should consider creating a process for all AEP programs regarding methods that are used to ensure that caregivers are provided information on student progress while enrolled in these programs. For example, NRS could send report cards home via mail for parents that do not pick them up. It is recommended that the district provide professional learning opportunities for all staff at both NRS and New Pathways that includes strategies to build culture and foster a sense of belonging within a school environment. Leadership at the high school is encouraged to arrange professional development opportunities between non-AEP staff and the New Pathways lead teacher on how to create a greater sense of inclusion for the New Pathways students no matter where they are in the building.

Final Overview

Newport Independent has seen a number of leadership changes at the district level in recent years and is working diligently to establish and implement meaningful practices. Several programs have cultivated valuable partnerships between the community, parents, students and district and school staff in order to meet student needs in an authentic way. The district encourages a data driven, growth mindset focused on continuous improvement. Staff are empowered by opportunities for professional growth and leadership skills. Initiatives such as the teacher and principal mentorship programs assist in providing professional development and building confidence which allows all staff to make a positive impact on students. Strengthening collaboration regarding alignment of financial records and further developing internal policies, processes and procedures will allow the district to address areas of concern and increase the effectiveness of programming, particularly during periods of staff transition. The district is strongly encouraged to extend the existing best practices to the alternative education programs. Incorporating data review into program planning and consistently implementing well-developed procedures will help ensure all students benefit from the district's effective practices.