



# The **NEWPORT** Independent

FALL  
2004

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## Newport Accountability Tests: All Schools Pass

The Newport Independent School District again posted an increase in the district’s accountability index for Spring 2004, with an overall district score of 67.9 a 5% increase over the 2003 index score of 64.8. While the

formance was strong enough to be classified as a “Progressing” district. Most notably, final accountability scores for Fourth Street Elementary indicate that the school did achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) for 2004 and is no longer considered a Tier 1 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Improvement School.

**The district’s standardized test scores for 2004 increased 5% over last year. Since 2000, test scores have increased 14%. All schools in the district have met their federal No Child Left Behind requirements.**

As you may recall, mandatory release of partial test results in August, flagged Fourth Street as a NCLB Improvement School. Complete test results released in October reversed the school’s classification. It should be noted that state testing timelines resulted in need to report partial results. The state has realigned its testing calendar so that NCLB evaluation will no longer be based on incomplete results.

district did not meet its overall goal of 70 for biennium performance (average of 2003 and 2004), with a score of 66.4, the district per-

District/School	Accountability Designation	2004 Accountability Index	2000 Accountability Index	Percent Increase
NIS District Overall	Progressing <sup>2</sup>	67.9	59.8	14%
A.D. Owens Elementary	Meets Goals <sup>1</sup>	73.0	62.7	16%
Fourth Street Elementary	Progressing - Novice <sup>3</sup> Reduction	65.1	57.5	13%
Mildred Dean Elementary	Meets Goal <sup>1</sup>	88.5	75.9	17%
Newport Middle School	Progressing Novice <sup>3</sup> Reduction	61.0	56.5	8%
Newport High School	Progressing <sup>2</sup>	69.7	60.0	16%

<sup>1</sup>Meets Goal: The school’s accountability index meets or exceeds its goal point.  
<sup>2</sup>Progressing: The school’s accountability index falls below its goal point, and meets or exceeds its assistance point  
<sup>3</sup>Progressing – Novice Reduction: The school’s accountability index falls below its goal point, and meets or exceeds its assistance point. The school does not meet the novice reduction requirement.



## Congratulations to Newport Wildcats and Coach Goetz

The Newport Wildcats football team made it to the Class AA playoffs for the first time since 1998. Look for a full season review in the next district newsletter!

# The **NEWPORT** Independent

*From our Superintendent...*

## **A Commitment to High Expectations**

These are exciting times for Newport Independent Schools. Despite the serious challenges of navigating the fiscal uncertainty at the state level, the Newport public school system stands poised for a period of sustained advances and improvements. For this year, with the full support of our school board, I have committed our district to developing the strategic plan that will enable and support sustainable academic improvement for the Newport Independent School District.

Our district's long-term goal is as clear as it is challenging – we will no longer be satisfied with a mind-set that looks toward achieving “adequate yearly progress” in student performance. Our intention is to build the finest, small urban school system in the country. While this goal may seem unrealistic to some, for those of us close to our schools is a firm belief in this district's unlimited potential: From the solid foundation that already exists in our district, we can support a culture of high expectations and full accountability.



Since I began in my new role as superintendent I have continued to be impressed with the strong foundation that I inherited from my predecessor, Dan Sullivan. Newport's schools are well maintained, safe and boast some of the finest facilities in the region. Our teachers are well-trained and completely dedicated to their students. Our support staffs are second to none. Our students are bright and ready for the challenge of higher expectations. Our district is fiscally sound and I would like to thank Dan for his hard work and dedication to our district.

*“Our intention is to build the finest, small urban school system in the country.”*

In partnership with the City of Newport we have conducted a third-party audit of our district's performance. This study benchmarks our schools against the top-performing schools in the country that best mirror our district in size and demographics. This will provide an “apples-to-apples” example of the highest levels of achievement by school districts similar to our own. Results from this study will be made public in January, 2005.

With the results of this study, our district, again in partnership with the city, will work with a consortium of experts in public school reform to create and implement our strategic plan for improvement. The consortium, a partnership of Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, University of Michigan and University of Wisconsin-Madison which began in 1985, provides our district with the research, insight and guidance needed to efficiently implement proven best-practices for achieving high academic achievement. Our strategic plan will be presented to the public in March of 2005.

Our districts goal is to develop and implement this academic plan under the watchful eyes of the community. You will be seeing regular progress reports in the media, in neighborhood newsletters and in mailings from the district. Our objective is to capture your attention and imagination – to engage you to the point where watching our efforts and charting our progress inspires you to become involved. Across the district, our students, teachers, administrators, school board, my staff and I; we are all collectively rolling up our sleeves, applying ourselves to the task of building a great school district in Newport.

We invite you to join us.

Sincerely,  
**Michael Brandt**  
292-3304 • mbrandt@newport.k12.ky.us



## In Memory of Kenneth L. Fields

August 13, 1933 – November 1, 2004

All of us in the Newport Independent School district mourn the passing of Ken Fields, who succumbed to a prolonged illness on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 at the age of 71. A man of deep faith, integrity and humor; Mr. Fields served in the Korean war, was one of the youngest members of the Committee of 500 and served on the Newport Board of Education for 33 years. The proud father of five children,

and beloved grandfather of thirteen, Ken Fields dedicated his life to the families and children of Newport.

Memorials can be made to the Fields Family Scholarship Fund, in care of the Newport Board of Education, 301 E. Eighth St., Newport, KY 41071, or Care Net Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky, 7134 Price Pike, Florence KY 41042.

## LensCrafters Provides Free Vision Screening to Students

*Needy Families Receive Glasses at No Cost*

For the past 5 years, LensCrafters, through its Give the Gift of Sight Foundation has been providing Newport students with free vision screenings. These screenings target 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> graders and all special education students. Teachers can also recommend any student they feel may be having a problem with their vision, for the screening process.

The LensCrafters team provides two vision screenings at each Newport school. The first screening is used to identify possible vision problems. A follow-up screening is then done a few days later to confirm that a vision problem exists with the student. If a student's family is unable to pay for a vision exam, each school will work to identify available funds in their budget to provide an eye exam at a licensed Optometrist.

Sources of funds include donations from "Neediest Kids of All", "Prevent Blindness of Kentucky" and discretionary funds. LensCrafters has made available to the Newport district an unlimited number of vouchers to provide needy students with eye glasses at no cost. Last year, in Newport, over 1,000 students were screened for vision problems.

The Newport Independent School district would like to thank all those involved at LensCrafters for providing this important service to our students and community.

To find out more about the Give the Gift of Sight Foundation, please visit [www.givethegiftofsight.org](http://www.givethegiftofsight.org) on the Internet.

## Newport High School Marching Band Rocks Blue & Gold Festival

*The Marching Wildcats Shine at State Competition*

While it's been over 10 years since the Newport High School Marching Band has competed in a state-wide event you wouldn't know it judging by the results of Blue and Gold Band Festival held earlier this year at Morehead State University. The mighty sound of the Newport Wildcats marched into the festival knowing the band would be judged against some of the stiffest competition the state could offer. The band marched out with an overall rating of "Proficient" - the second highest ranking available for the competition.

Band Director Jeff Owen, voiced his pleasure with his band's performance, "This is a grand accomplishment for these students. They were in a festival with tradition-rich bands who have been attending contests for decades, and they did themselves proud. They deserve a great deal of credit for all of their hard work."



*Congratulations to our high school band and band director for their great showing at the Blue and Gold Festival!*

## Fourth Street Elementary Re-Designated As Achieving AYP

*August Designation of No Child Left Behind  
Improvement School Based on Partial Test Results*

Fourth Street Elementary has been re-designated as achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) according to the 2004 NCLB AYP Report, released October 14th by the Kentucky Department of Education. The preliminary AYP Report, released in August, had identified Fourth Street as a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Improvement school



Michael Brandt celebrates with 4th Street Elementary.

To comply with the federal guidelines that require an AYP report to be issued prior to the start of the school year; the Kentucky Department of Education was forced to publish a preliminary report for AYP in August. The August report was based only on the multiple-choice portions of the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) in reading and mathematics. The August report indicated that Fourth Street had not achieved its goals in 1 of 14 target areas, thus not meeting AYP. The NCLB AYP report released today includes the results from all portions of the KCCT in reading and mathematics. In the future, August AYP reports would be based on complete testing results.

Based on the August report and Tier 1 sanctions, Fourth Street Elementary was required to notify parents of students that the school had been designated as a NCLB Improvement School, allowing parents to transfer their children to other schools in the district. In addition, the school was required to redevelop their comprehensive improvement plan for the state. Perhaps most damaging, the school received a great deal of media attention, creating a negative perception for the school in the community. Many reports specifically identified the disability sub-group of 4<sup>th</sup> graders (now 5<sup>th</sup> graders) as the group that put the school in AYP deficit. The final AYP report indicates that these students did in fact meet their targeted goals.

Said Superintendent Michael Brandt, "I would like to congratulate the students, teachers and administrators of Fourth Street

Elementary for achieving the No Child Left Behind requirements for this year. We're all very proud of what our kids and teachers achieved. I just hope the community and the media take the time to give these folks a well deserved pat-on-the back for all their dedication and hard work. They've been through a very tough time"

## NMS Welcomes New Principal

*David Upchurch Takes Helm in January*

Newport Middle School is excited to be welcoming their new Principal, David Upchurch in early January. Mr. Upchurch, a well respected educator and administrator, has been principal of Rapid Run Middle School, in the Oak Hills School district since 1999.

Mr. Upchurch comes to the Newport district with a history of exemplary performance at the middle school level, which is reflected in the performance of his current school: Rapid Runs Middle School is rated as "Excellent", the highest rating offered by the Ohio Department of Education.

"We're very excited to be having David join our team", indicated Newport Superintendent, Michael Brandt. "David is one of the finest administrators and middle school educators in the region. He brings with him an expectation of high academic achievement and accountability. The staff of our middle schools and I look forward to the strong leadership and academic vision that David will bring to Newport Middle School." Parents and residents will be invited to meet Principal Upchurch at an event to be announced in early January.

## Band Returns to Elementary Schools:

*Over 90 Students Sign-Up!*

After a long hiatus, students in the fifth grade again have the opportunity to participate in band. The Newport district is very excited with restarting of this important program for our fifth gradestudents.

Participation in band has proven to be a valuable asset to students as they progress through their educational careers. Students who participate in band tend to score higher on achievement test and perform at a higher level in advanced math and language classes when compared with students who are not involved in music education. That is why we feel so strongly about providing our students with this program at the earliest possible time.

# The **NEWPORT** Independent

## The Joy of Reading

*30 Minutes a Week Can  
Change a Child's Life*



Mentor Steve Duve and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader Dallas work together on "Raining Meatballs".

The HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) Program develops the reading skills of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students by pairing them with adult volunteer mentors. For a half-hour each week the mentor works with their child on reading activities that are provided by a site coordinator. The mentor acts as a coach, cheerleader and friend to the child. Working together, the student improves their reading skills and learns the joy of reading.

One of the HOSTS program's biggest advocates is school board member, Steve Duve, who has been mentoring at A.D. Owens Elementary School two days a week for the past 5 years. Mr. Duve indicated he wasn't sure what to expect when he first got started, "I was a little apprehensive at first, since I'm not a teacher, but it really couldn't be easier. There is always a teacher in the room to help you if you have any questions. All your materials are prepared and waiting for you. It's been very rewarding."

Over the course of a school year, the mentor sees their student become more confident and proficient in reading. It is not uncommon, during the course of mentoring, for a student to improve their reading skills by more than one grade level. HOSTS volunteers are comprised of retirees, college students, corporate employees

and government employees, from all over the Greater Cincinnati area. Each devotes a half-hour or more per week to assist the child with whom they've been matched.

If you're interested in participating in HOSTS or just want to find out more about the program, contact Yvette Ferrell at 292-3021 (Fourth Street Elementary) or Judy Ring at 292-3011 (A.D. Owens Elementary).

## NHS Hosts (AP)

### Teacher Summit

*First Summit of AP Teachers for Northern Kentucky Independent Districts*



Educators attend AP Summit hosted by Newport District

In October, Newport High School hosted the first annual Northern Kentucky Independent Schools AP Summit. The event, organized by Newport Independent School district curriculum consultant Alissa Ayres brought together 24 AP teachers from Northern Kentucky's independent school districts.

The objectives of the summit were to share best practices, discuss issues specific to small districts, and establish a network of resources and support for Kentucky independent district AP teachers.

Content sessions were provided for AP English Literature, AP Calculus, AP Spanish, and AP US History. "We're very excited to be initiating this program", said Newport district superintendent, Michael Brandt, "developing regular communication between independent district AP

instructors is a vital means of sharing and developing best practices for AP curriculum. The Newport district sees this summit as one of the tactics for facilitating and supporting increased academic rigor." AP course work allows high school students to receive credit for college level course work. To acquire college credits the student must pass the national AP exam for the subject.

## Media Department

### Tapes Debate

*School Board Debate Aired on Wildcat Channel*

Craig Fennell, the media instructor for Newport High School and three of his senior students Ben Hacker, Gary Boswell, and Ammeon Beckham rolled out their equipment to tape the October 14th School Board debate at the Newport Library.

Utilizing 3 cameras, Craig and his crew of NHS seniors produced a high-quality vehicle for reviewing the candidates platforms and positions.

For two weeks leading up to the general election the debate was aired daily on the Newport Wildcat Channel. Thanks again to Craig and his crew of seniors for putting this together for the community – great job guys!



Craig Fennell the head of NHS Media and seniors, Gary Boswell and Ammeon Beckham

# The **NEWPORT** Independent

## NavOps Program Puts Math & Science in an Underwater Context

*Fourth Street Elementary Teachers Train to be Part of Submarine Science Discovery Center Program*



Teachers participate in the NavyOps Program at Fourth Street Elementary

In September, teachers from 12 schools across the tri-state descended on Fourth Street Elementary to receive two days of intensive training on the ins-and-outs of submarine navigation. This wasn't the case of educator's pursuing a career change on the high seas – the training signalled the roll-out for the—"NavOps Deep Submergence™" education program to the region"—and specifically to Fourth Street Elementary, which will act as one of the pilot schools for the region.

The NavOps Deep submergence curriculum was developed in 1995 by Purdue University as a means to help elementary school teachers deliver science, math and technology curriculum through collaborative teaching methods based on submarine operations.

The program has proven to be an effective means of fully integrating fifth grade science and math curriculum into a context that appeals to the students. Classroom instruction uses networked computers and in-class experiments to study science and math.

Combining classroom and simulator sessions, students work together in teams to carry out a mission. Success is measured according to his or her proficiency in specific skill areas, as well as an ability to collaborate with peers in solving problems.

Several times a year, students will put their learning to full use in a submarine simulator which will be located at Holmes High School in Covington. The simulator, developed by a former submariner, is a full-scale mock-up of a Research & Rescue submarine control center.

The program was brought to the area by the National Submarine Discover Center, which is working to bring the USS Narwahl submarine to permanent dock on the Newport riverfront. The USS Narwahl was commissioned in 1969, and when built, was the world's quietest submarine. The submarine is 314 feet long, 33 feet wide and was decommissioned in 1999.

While Fourth Street is the only Newport elementary school involved in the pilot, plans exist to expand the curriculum to the entire region over time.

## Students Participate in "Share a Story" Night

*3rd graders and high school students attend "Share A Story Night"*



John Sowinsky, Assistant Superintendent, Reads "How Much is a Million?" to 3rd Graders

"Share a Story Night" is part of the state-wide, "Unite to Read" project which was designed by Kentucky's Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) that is being implemented this 2004-2005 school year. The goal of the program is to have all CTSO's within a school or district work together to promote literacy and lifelong reading.



Newport Independent School Third graders attend "Share a Story Night" at Newport High School

## Middle School Band continued from page 4

Instruction is being offered in:

- Flute
- Alto Saxophone
- Trombone
- Clarinet
- Trumpet
- Drums

Traditionally, students had to rent an instrument from a music store in order to participate. To ensure that all students interested in band can participate the district is actively working to provide instruments to students in need

If you have an instrument you can donate to the elementary school band program, please contact any of our schools to arrange a drop-off.

A.D. Owens Elementary: 292-3001  
Fourth Street Elementary: 292-3021  
Mildred Dean Elementary: 292-3009

# The **NEWPORT** Independent

## Parents Raise Over \$700,000 in Funding for Newport Schools

Given the fiscal uncertainty in public education, wouldn't it be great to be part of an effort that significantly increased the funding for our schools? Parents can do their part by making sure that their children get to school every day.

Average daily attendance is how the state of Kentucky determines how much state funding a school district receives. Our district has approximately 2,350 students. If we average 92% attendance; the district only receives funding for 2,162 students. When you consider that the state of Kentucky contributed \$3,805 per student last year to our district – those "lost" 188 students would account for more than \$700,000 in additional funding for our children's education.

This does not mean you should send your child to school if they are ill. The health and safety of our children is our top concern. However, we know as parents, that there are times when we are tempted to keep a child home from school if they are not ill. All parents need to realize that keeping their children out of school is reducing the funding needed to educate them. Please, do your part to help Newport School raise our funding levels – get your child to school everyday!

## A Search for Children with Special Needs

Do you have, or know of, a child 3 to 21 with special learning needs? The Newport Independent School District is dedicated to helping all Newport children learn—including those with special needs or a learning disability. If you know an infant, toddler, child or youth who you feel needs special education assistance at home or at school, please call Newport's Director of Special Education, Marilyn Galvin at 292-3040.

## School Board Reduces Property Taxes by 12%

Earlier this year the Newport School Board voted to reduce school property taxes from \$10.01 to \$8.81 per \$1000 of assessed value. For the owner of a \$150,000 house, rate reduction equates to a potential decrease in school taxes of \$186 per year. More accurate housing assessments were a big factor in the tax rate decrease. Says Tete Turner, School Board Chair, "Too often property values are not accurately reassessed every 4 years, as required by state law. As a result, tax rates tend to be kept artificially high to provide for adequate funding for schools. At the same time property that is recently sold is assessed at full market value. This results in a high burden for taxes being placed on new residents which slows down new development as well as impeding sales of existing housing."

Jim Hesch, Vice Chair of the Newport Board feels that a new spirit of cooperation between the Schools and City Government will lead to even lower rates in the future. Says Hesch, "The improved communication between the Newport School District and the City of Newport is allowing us to plan ahead and better project our local school funding."

Steve Duve, a member of the Board, is also optimistic for the future, "To the extent we can maintain development in Newport, the increase in the tax base should allow for even lower school tax rates for the future."

## Contacting Members of the Newport School Board

Members of the school board can be reached via the Newport District central office (292-3001). Because Board members hold outside jobs, it is often easier to reach a member via email.



**Tete Turner:**  
School Board Chair  
tturner@newport.k12.ky.us



**Mary Crank:**  
School Board Member  
mcrank@newport.k12.ky.us



**Steve Duve:**  
School Board Member  
sduve@newport.k12.ky.us



**Jim Hesch:**  
School Board  
Vice-Chair  
jhesch@newport.k12.ky.us

**Newport High School**  
900 East 6th Street  
Newport, KY 41071  
Scott Draud- Principal  
859-292-3023  
Family Resource Center  
859-431-7111

**A.D. Owens Elementary**  
1102 York Street  
Newport, KY 41071  
Greg Frank- Principal  
859-292-3011  
Family Resource Center  
859-431-6662

## Newport Independent Schools

**4th Street Elementary**  
101 East 4th Street  
Newport, KY 41071  
Jim Clinkenbeard- Principal  
859-292-3021  
Family Resource Center  
859-431-3007

**Newport Middle School**  
30 West 8th Street  
Newport, KY 41071  
Jack Patterson- Principal  
859-292-3017  
Family Resource Center  
859-292-0552

**Mildred Dean Elementary**  
1360 Grand Avenue  
Newport, KY 41071  
Steve McCafferty- Principal  
859-292-3009  
Family Resource Center  
859-441-6321

# The **NEWPORT** Independent

## Community Involvement

Interested in getting involved with Newport public schools? Here's where to get started. Great things are happening at Newport public schools - get involved now!

**Community Partnership for Newport Independent Schools (CPNIS):** A community group committed to supporting and facilitating the continued improvement of the Newport public schools. To join the CPNIS email list serve, send an email to CPNIS-subscribe@yahoo.com or call CPNIS Director Ed Hall at 240-0298.

**Helping One Student to Succeed (HOSTS):** 30 minutes a week of your time will help a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader improve their reading skill by a grade level or more. Contact Yvette Ferrell at 292-3021 (Fourth Street Elementary) or Judy Ring at 292-3011 (A.D. Owens Elementary).

**School Board Meetings:** Meetings are held once a month, come-by and find out what's happening in the Newport schools district. Upcoming meetings:

- December 15<sup>th</sup>
- January 19<sup>th</sup>

All meetings are held in the Board Room, Central Office 3rd Floor, at 7:30pm. The Central Office is located at 301 E. 8th Street, Newport, KY 41071, 292-3001

## School Tours & Information:

Interested in touring our schools, or finding out more information about the Newport Independent School district? Contact Bill Shamblin, Director of Communications, 292-3047, or bshamblin@newport.k12.ky.us

**Superintendent Speaking Opportunities:** Are you interested in having the Newport Superintendent address your club or organization? Please contact Bill Shamblin, Director of Communications, 292-3047, or bshamblin@newport.k12.ky.us



NEWS FROM YOUR NEWPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# The **NEWPORT** Independent

301 East 8th Street  
Newport, KY 41017

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