Newport-Mesa
Unified School District

2026–2031 STRATEGIC PLAN



Dear Newport-Mesa Community,



At Newport-Mesa Unified School District, we are guided by a simple but powerful commitment: all students are all our students. That belief calls us to ensure every student is seen, heard, supported, safe, and challenged to achieve at the highest level.

Our Strategic Plan is a vision for the future and a call to action. It defines the outcomes we seek for our graduates and identifies four areas of focus: Academics—High Expectations, Rigor and Relevance; Belonging—Seen, Heard, Supported, and Safe; Connections—Our Schools, Our Community; and Resources—Systems, Finances, and Facilities.

Student success begins with the adults who serve them. Through high-quality instruction, rigorous and relevant teaching, common standards and expectations, responsive support, and purposeful use of evidence, we create the conditions for every student to grow and succeed. By working together to share expertise, analyze student learning, and take collective responsibility for results, educators strengthen learning and improve outcomes for every student.

Our Portrait of a Graduate defines the qualities we want every student to develop: critical thinkers who are confident, adaptable, ethical technology navigators, powerful communicators, and thoughtful collaborators. This requires alignment, disciplined implementation, shared learning, and the strategic use of our time, talent, and resources.

Developed with input from students, educators, staff, families, and community members, our Strategic Plan reflects our aspirations and shared responsibility. Together, we will prepare every student for academic achievement, personal growth, and future success.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wesley Smith
Superintendent
Newport-Mesa Unified School District

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Our District

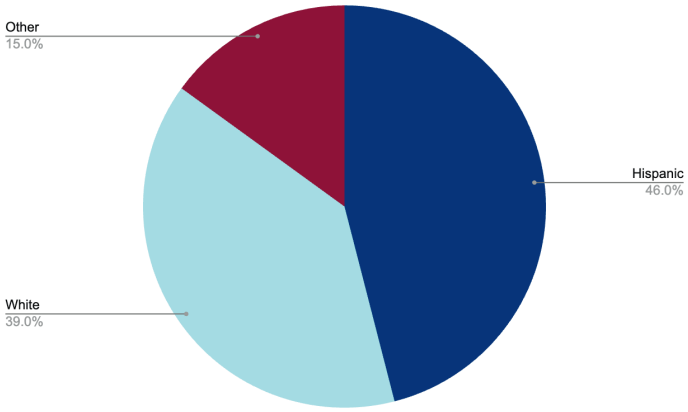
🏙️ 2 Cities 🏫 33 Schools 👩‍🎓 17K Students 👩‍🏫 3K Employees

2 Cities:

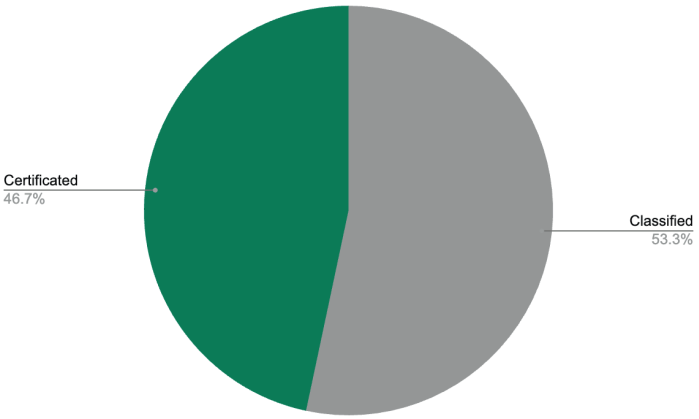
33 Schools: PreK-12th

Elementary Schools	22
Middle Schools	4
High Schools	4
Alternative High Schools	2
Independent Study	1

17,000+ Students:



3,000 Employees:



Student Demographics:

- 13% English Learners
- 57% Low Income
- 15% Students with Special Needs



Our Process

June 2025
Begin Strategic Planning Process

With the support of F3 Law, the strategic planning process began. The process was designed to be collaborative, bringing together educators, staff, families, students, community partners, and local organizations to help shape the future of NMUSD.

Nov. 2025
Strategic Visioning & Planning Sessions

A key component of this work included a 2-day Strategic Planning session, which fostered meaningful engagement and balanced representation from across the District. This process created space for thoughtful dialogue and collaboration, allowing participants to share perspectives and priorities while helping shape a plan that supports, challenges, and prepares every student for the future.

Dec. 10, 2025
Special Board of Education Meeting

The Board of Education received an update on the Strategic Visioning and Planning process, reviewed key themes that emerged from the two-day visioning sessions, and provided input to guide development of the draft plan.

Dec. 2025-Feb. 2026
Development of Draft Strategic Plan

The draft Strategic Plan was developed based on key themes and feedback from the two-day planning sessions, as well as input from the Special Board of Education Meeting.

March-April 2026
Input on Draft Strategic Plan

The draft Strategic Plan was shared with District leadership—including principals, directors, supervisors, and coordinators—and presented to Strategic Planning participants for review prior to finalizing for Board adoption.

May 19, 2026
Special Board of Education Meeting

The Board of Education was provided a draft Strategic Plan for their review and refinement.

July 21, 2026
Strategic Plan Adopted

The Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Education.

Academics: High Expectations, Rigor, and Relevance

Teaching and learning are at the heart of our work. This commitment is strengthened when each student is encouraged to set and own high expectations for their personal academic and social growth, and when rigorous, high-quality instruction is paired with lessons that are relevant and meaningful. When students see relevance in what they are learning and can connect it to their own lives, they engage more deeply, rise to meet high expectations, and accelerate their growth and achievement.

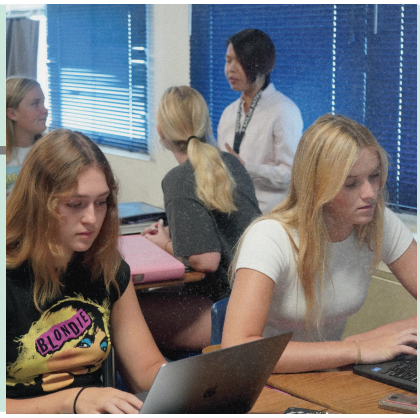


Rigorous, college-preparatory course offerings consistently provided across all schools.

- Evaluation, alignment, and equitable allocation of courses, services, and supports across all schools.
- Educator collaboration across grade levels, preschool through 12th grade, to provide each learner a consistent, rigorous, and supportive learning experience for all students to achieve their full potential.
- Instruction that emphasizes relevance by connecting learning to real-life skills and experiences, fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

Digital literacy and responsible use of innovative technology

- Equipping students to navigate technology confidently, ethically, and creatively.
- Thoughtful integration of artificial intelligence.
- Seamless, age-appropriate integration of technology throughout their learning journey.



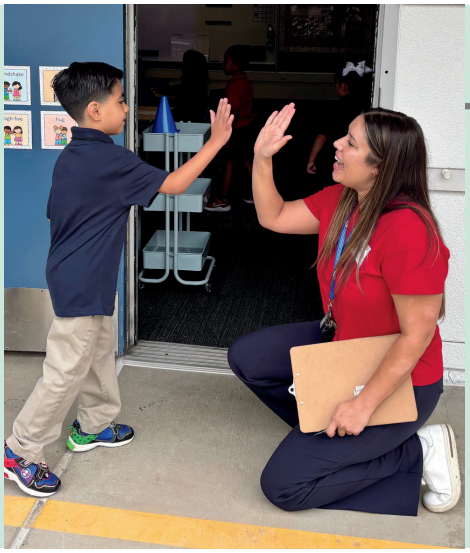


Expanded Learning Opportunities

- Provide a wide range of extracurricular opportunities to encourage student engagement and enrich their learning experience.

Belonging:
Seen, Heard, Supported, and Safe

When students have a sense of belonging, we significantly increase their opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive. Belonging means our students feel seen, heard, supported, and safe.



Leading with Care

Our employees will identify the professional learning systems and supports to:

- Help them prioritize strong, healthy, positive relationships with all students.
- Support student behavior needs.
- Promote cross-department collaboration to ensure a shared commitment to create a climate and culture of social safety.

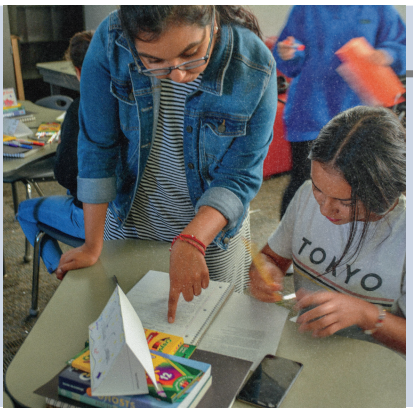
Students Known by Name and Need

- We will implement systems across schools to ensure every student is known beyond grades and test scores, and that staff have the tools and support to identify students' academic strengths, interests, and areas of need.
- We will provide high-quality, responsive teaching that proactively addresses learning needs and ensures every student can advance their learning goals.



Connections:
Our Schools, Our Community

Exceptional schools attract and connect students to their campus community by creating an atmosphere of respect, belonging, and pride. Families, neighborhoods, and communities support and engage with their schools when all students are provided with rigorous academics and tailored support systems to ensure success throughout their education.



- All schools and school communities share a culture of high expectations and connectedness that fosters pride among students, staff, and the school community.

- Engaging staff, students, and families to work as community-builders, demonstrating civic responsibility, participation, community service, and meaningful experiences that strengthen school connectedness across our District.





- Highlighting each school community's successes in rigorous academic offerings and student learning, while building on their unique identities by sharing the great work happening across campuses. This includes celebrating student achievement, recognizing exceptional teaching and support, and fostering a strong sense of pride and ownership.

Resources:
Systems, Finances, and Facilities

All resources — including time, talent, and funding — must be strategically aligned and equitably allocated to support student achievement. We will establish clear policies and processes to facilitate this alignment.

Areas of Focus:

- Academics
- Technology
- Lifelong learning skills
- Understanding career and training options
- Civic responsibility





- Positive school climate and a strong sense of neighborhood school pride
- Professional learning
- Safe, welcoming, accessible, and well-maintained facilities
- Fund development



Newport-Mesa
Unified School District

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

All Students Are All Our Students | Seen, Heard, Supported, and Safe

Our Promise

We graduate students who are prepared to succeed in college, career, and life. Empowered with academic excellence, cognitive ability, and character to pursue their passions, they can ignite their purpose and make a meaningful impact in the world. We inspire students to question boldly, think critically, communicate powerfully, and lead with empathy and confidence. We graduate students who are positive and forward-thinking, able to navigate complex real-world challenges with creativity and resilience, collaborate with curiosity, and contribute with integrity and civic-mindedness.

CRITICAL THINKERS

- NMUSD graduates approach challenges with curiosity and discernment, asking meaningful questions and making informed decisions.
- They analyze information thoughtfully, evaluate evidence, use innovative technologies appropriately, and apply reasoned judgment to solve complex problems.

CONFIDENT

- NMUSD graduates express ideas, take action, and make decisions with self-assurance, grounded in preparation.
- Focused, strong, and articulate, they draw from their personal strengths and knowledge, reflect, and have a strong belief in their ability to learn and grow.

ADAPTABLE

- NMUSD graduates are resilient, pursue growth, seek and acknowledge different viewpoints, and learn from setbacks, drawing on self-awareness and determination to overcome obstacles, access resources, and pursue their goals.
- They respond to circumstances and dynamics to navigate change with purpose and perseverance.

TECH NAVIGATORS

- NMUSD graduates are equipped to navigate today's rapidly changing technology confidently, ethically, and creatively so they can harness its potential while understanding its limits.
- They understand responsible use of technology involves human talent, sound judgment, curiosity, and critical thinking.

COMMUNICATORS

- NMUSD graduates are powerful and persuasive communicators.
- They actively listen, communicate with clarity and intentionality, and shape their message for different audiences and real-world environments.
- They clearly and effectively express ideas through written, oral, and digital means.

COLLABORATORS

- NMUSD graduates eagerly and respectfully seek others' viewpoints, learn, innovate, and create.
- They question and problem-solve with respect and empathy for others. Civic-minded, they thoughtfully consider their impact and contributions to their community and the greater good.

Newport-Mesa

Unified School District

Newport-Mesa Unified School District
Strategic Plan, 2026-2031
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