

**New Milford Board of Education  
 Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes  
 October 1, 2024  
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

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 NEW MILFORD, CT

Present:	Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Chairperson Mr. Brian McCauley Mr. Dean Barile
Also Present:	Dr. Janet Parlato, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Mrs. Megan Sylvester, K-5 Literacy Coordinator Mrs. Nicole Heering, K-2 Literacy Interventionist Mr. Raymond Manka, Principal New Milford High School Dr. Megan Dwyer, Assistant Principal New Milford High School
Absent:	Mrs. Sarah Herring

1.	<b>Call to Order</b> The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:32 pm by Mrs. Tammy McInerney.	<b>Call to Order</b> The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m.
2.	<b>Public Comment</b> None	<b>Public Comment</b> None
3.	<p><b>Items of Information</b></p> <p><b>A. Science of Reading Update</b></p> <p><b>B. Early College Experience: Where are we? Where are we going?</b></p> <p><b>Science of Reading Update:</b> Ms. Hollander stated they are working to support students' success by grounding the work with keystones and informed by research. With changes to assessments, there needs to be a screener in place. The choice was DIBELS. Mrs. Sylvester explained DIBELS is a K-8 screener. It provides specific data that is benchmarked to the grade. Mrs. Heering stated it has great usability for the teachers, providing quick assessments that can give a multitude of information.</p> <p>Mrs. Heering explained why the district uses Heggerty and UFLI. The recent data shows 3rd has steadily grown and the current 3rd grade is showing grade level proficiency.</p> <p>Mrs. Heering stated the New Milford Units of Study are being used towards language/vocabulary and the district is not seeing the same growth. Vocabulary is not going up. Ms. Hollander explained the district did</p>	<p><b>Items of Information</b></p> <p><b>C. Science of Reading Update</b></p> <p><b>D. Early College Experience: Where are we? Where are we going?</b></p>

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<p>not want to rush into a process, so Mrs. Sylvester enhanced and re-wrote the Units of Study. This data shows it's time to look at the materials. Teachers have asked for more materials for vocabulary. The question is, do we revise what we have, or bring in something different.</p> <p>Mr. Barile asked why the underperformance in comprehension. Mrs. Heering stated there is a difference between the two sides. One has a solid program that follows a logical scope and sequence. The other side has Mrs. Sylvester re-writing the units so that they may be incorporated for vocabulary and comprehension in a meaningful way. It is a huge lift for one person. Teachers who may be new and not have as much experience, do not have as many resources to pull from. Mr. Barile stated he understood and recognized it as a need to support the teachers. Mrs. Sylvester stated it is up to teachers to plan the instructional needs for all their learners.</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney stated the district was right not to jump into buying something too early and asked what the deadline was to pick a program. Ms. Hollander stated it was last year, but they are working with the state. It is a work in progress, the Units of Study did not have everything the state required. The hope was to have the teachers trained out of their classrooms, but there were not enough substitutes and the teachers needed to be with their students. Mrs. McInerney stated, given the missing pieces, she does not want to miss a year waiting for funding. Materials should be ordered. Ms. Hollander agreed and stated she is planning to use funding from Title I. A firmer decision about materials will be made after the committee meets next week.</p> <p>Mrs. Sylvester continued by reviewing the concept of mapping words onto prior knowledge. Dr. Parlato stated students who come from poverty may not have as large of a vocabulary. Mrs. Heering stated the goal is to make sure everyone is on the same playing field, even with their socio-economic background. Mrs. Sylvester added that they are looking for resources so students will not fall behind. One key is word reading, which is doing well. The other is comprehension, which shows that students are struggling.</p>	
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<p>Ms. Hollander stated teachers are good at bringing on the foundational skills. It's important to honor the hard work of the teachers while building on what has already been established.</p> <p><b>Early College Experience: Where are we? Where are we going?</b></p> <p>Ms. Hollander stated Early College Experience (ECE) is a way for students to get college credit while working with higher education.</p> <p>Mr. Manka stated the proposal was to bring the ECE experience to New Milford High School over the course of the school year, while being in the comfort of high school. They have been working with Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) and UConn, who have offered to waive the \$65 course fee for the next two years. The school must operate on the same timelines as WCSU, UCONN, and Naugatuck Community College. After modeling off of what other high schools offer, and reviewing the asset component, the hope is to have an ECE course ready to launch in December for Statistics and Calculus. The plan is to go through the onboarding process and offer students college credit in the second semester.</p> <p>Mr. Manka continued by stating there are considerations for things like STEM-based labs. Students can visit campus and rent equipment. The textbook can often co-seat with AP books. The grant they are utilizing will expire at the end of the calendar school year. The key is to do intelligent hiring so there is no interruption in offerings.</p> <p>Mrs. McNerney asked if AP interest may decline. Mr. Manka stated students can co-seat. Students taking AP will take the AP exam. ECE students may do something a little different but can still get credit for WCSU and still take the AP test.</p> <p>Mr. Barile stated the potential for savings is huge.</p> <p>Mrs. McNerney asked how ECE grades are weighted. Mr. Manka stated it is roughly the same weighting as AP.</p>	
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	<p>Mr. Barile asked how long ECE has been available. Dr. Parlato stated UCONN started ECE courses back in the 90s. Ms. Hollander noted it is becoming easier because it's easier to certify teachers.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Items for Discussion and Approval</b></p> <p><b>A. Course Proposals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Academic Reading/9th Grade Reading Academy</li><li>b. Introduction to Ceramics</li><li>c. Political Science</li><li>d. Treble Chorus</li></ul> <p><b>Academic Reading/9th Grade Reading Academy:</b> Ms. Hollander stated there are students who have needs for comprehension coming from Schaghticoke Middle School (SMS) into the high school. There is currently a course at the high school, but there is a need for more explicit instruction. The hope is to give students going from grade eight to grade nine support. Mr. Manka stated it would provide leveled texts that would be appropriate for the students. They would remain in their English class. This new course could be used in place of SRBI (Scientific Research Based Interventions), which is designed to help students get caught up. Ms. Hollander stated they identified 37 eligible students. Mrs. McInerney asked if the student would take English I along with this class. Mr. Manka stated yes.</p> <p>Ms. Hollander stated materials can be brought over from the middle school. There should not be heavy purchasing required. Mrs. McInerney noted there is a funding component of almost \$8,000. Ms. Hollander stated there is but she may have some of those items and the cost could come down.</p> <p><b>Introduction to Ceramics:</b> Ms. Hollander stated the current ceramics teacher sees a need for this course. Mrs. McInerney asked if this would replace Ceramics 1. Ms. Hollander stated no, there are some students who did not take ceramics at SMS and need a more introductory course. Mr. Manka added it is a ½ credit and can partner nicely with Academic Reading.</p>	<p><b>Items for Discussion and Approval</b></p> <p><b>1. Course Proposals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Academic Reading/9th Grade Reading Academy</li><li>b. Introduction to Ceramics</li><li>c. Political Science</li><li>d. Treble Chorus</li></ul>

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	<p><b>Political Science:</b>          Mr. Manka stated it is a ½ year elective course and will fit well into the criminal justice pathway. The hope is it will get students interested in the local judicial systems by visiting courtrooms, etc. There is a wide range of elective offerings in social studies, and this would be put into the rotation. It could run as early as the spring.</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney stated she saw they were hoping to hire another social studies teacher at the high school and asked if they could still teach this course without that position being filled. Mr. Manka stated they could.</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney added she agrees this course would tie nicely into the criminal justice pathway.</p> <p><b>Treble Chorus:</b>          Ms. Hollander stated Ms. Rosen has built up the choral program. This is another ensemble group and will be an addition to what she currently offers.</p> <p>Once approved by the Board, these courses will go into the curriculum writing phase in late October.</p> <p><i>Mr. Barile moved to approve the following Course Proposals to the Board of Education: Academic Reading/9th Grade Reading Academy, Introduction to Ceramics, Political Science, and Treble Chorus. Seconded by Mr. McCauley. Motion passed unanimously.</i></p>	<p>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the following Course Proposals to the Board of Education: Academic Reading/9th Grade Reading Academy, Introduction to Ceramics, Political Science, and Treble Chorus.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Public Comment</b>          None</p>	<p><b>Public Comment</b>          None</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Adjourn</b>  <i>Mr. McCauley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Barile, with all voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.</i></p>	<p><b>Adjourn</b>          The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.</p>

Respectfully submitted:



Tammy McInerney, Chairperson  
 Committee on Learning