

**New Milford Board of Education  
Board Workshop Special Meeting Minutes  
December 3, 2014  
Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

Present:	Mrs. Daniele Shook, Chairperson Mrs. Angela C. Chastain Mr. Robert Coppola Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach – arrived at 7:07 p.m. Mr. Dave Littlefield Mr. David R. Shaffer
Absent:	Mr. David A. Lawson Mr. John W. Spatola Mrs. Theresa Volinski

Also Present:	Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Superintendent of Schools Mr. Joshua Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
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1.	<b>Call to Order</b> <b>A. Pledge of Allegiance</b> The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed the call to order.	<b>Call to Order</b> <b>A. Pledge of Allegiance</b>
2.	<b>Presentation</b> <b>Mr. Jonathan Costa, Director of School and Program Services for Education Connection, will present information regarding Connecticut core standards.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Costa introduced himself as a former high school history teacher, consultant and member of a Board of Education from 2001 to 2007. Currently he is the Director of School and Program Services for Education Connection. He said his intent with this presentation was to put some context around common core and answer any questions the Board members might have.</li> </ul> Mrs. Faulenbach arrived at 7:07 p.m. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He noted that the standards of common core reflect a growing recognition that traditional educational practices were falling short, that the way we prepare kids for their future needs to change as the world has changed a lot.</li> </ul>	<b>Presentation</b> <b>Mr. Jonathan Costa, Director of School and Program Services for Education Connection, will present information regarding Connecticut core standards.</b> <div style="text-align: right;"> RECEIVED TAX CLERK 2014 DEC - 8 P 1:05 NEW MILFORD, CT </div>

- He said there was nothing in the standards about how to teach – this is a local decision. There are no teaching practices in the standards.
- Mr. Costa spoke of the history of some of the school acts including the 1986 Educational Enhancement Act which passed in Connecticut. Prior to that act, teachers' pay was low and so there was no real call for measuring the results of what teachers were doing for the children. Once the pay started to rise, there was a national movement to measure results.
- In 2001, the No Child Left Behind law was passed which changed everything including that by 2014 all children will be performing at 100% of their ability. There was a sunset provision but since there is no law to replace it, the NCLB law is still the law of the land.
- In 2012, Connecticut passed PA 12-116 which was a response to the NCLB and the schools' inability to get students to achieve at 100%. A waiver was requested from the NCLB law and as part of that waiver application, the state promised to create its own accountability system. As a result, Connecticut adopted the smarter balanced assessment test and the teacher evaluation method.
- Mr. Shaffer asked if the common core ever passed the legislature or did it come directly from the Commissioner of Education. Mr. Costa said the legislature never approves curriculum rather they put "pet" things in to be taught such as civics. The legislature passes budgets that support policy.
- Mr. Shaffer asked about the smarter balanced test and the topics to be covered. Mr. Costa said there is no state law that says a district needs to teach the common core standards but you must administer the test. Parents can opt out of the test for their kids.
- Mr. Costa continued with his presentation noting that some parents feel the common core lowers the standards. He said actually the English Language Arts are 91% aligned with standards and the math is aligned at 83%. He

noted everyone believes these standards have raised the bar dramatically.

- He said the standards do not mean kids get taught the same way – NCLB took away the license for districts to sort kids out and give up on kids they think cannot be taught. These standards set the bar as a floor – not a limit. The differentiation comes in how it is taught.
- Mr. Costa noted that some criticism has come from people suggesting that teachers were not involved with the writing of the standards. He said the writing of the common core standards was virtually identical to any other standards that have been written including teacher input and public comment. He said that the teaching of common core is voluntary and this is not a big government intrusion – he said the intrusion came from the NCLB law.
- Mr. Littlefield asked about the Cradle to Career and the smarter balanced tests results, noting that parents have expressed concern about the Department of Labor looking at the results. Mr. Costa said the Department of Labor has an interest in workplace readiness and the content standards as it relates to workplace readiness but all the data is protected and especially as it relates to kids.
- Mr. Littlefield asked if there is no tracking of data on the smarter balanced assessment testing why are the kids' names put on the test. Mr. Costa said the only group that will get the data is the school district itself. He said there is no way for the State of Connecticut to know who the data comes from because they will only get the numbers.
- Mrs. Shook noted that this is just like the mastery test reporting.
- Mr. Costa said the adaptive testing will allow kids who could not answer questions in the past because they are too hard and those who are not challenged because the tests are too easy to have questions asked that are appropriate for their level. He noted again that the privacy laws when it comes to kids are very strict and data could not be shared. He said he felt with the

	<p>NSA and Edward Snowden issue that the ground might have been fertile for people to distrust government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Costa also noted that even though Connecticut did not win the race to the top grant, part of the requirement of those states that got the grant was to share the resources at no expense to the public.</li><li>• Mr. Costa explained that for people who think this is an opportunity for a company to make money on common core, companies have always made money on education – textbooks and materials. He said the College Board is a business – when someone pays for their SATs, etc. they are supporting the business of the College Board.</li><li>• In regards to Bill Gates being involved, his foundation has granted money to study teacher evaluation and effectiveness. But technology is certainly a big part of today's educational and real world. The Gates foundation did sponsor the MET study on effective schools and some link Bill Gates to school reform efforts around evaluation because of this study.</li><li>• Mr. Costa noted that the districts have always collected data and nothing has changed with the common core.</li><li>• Mr. Shaffer asked if the smarter balanced testing scores would go on a child's transcripts and Mr. Costa said that was up to the district.</li><li>• Mr. Shaffer asked if a parent opts their child out of the test does that effect their ability to graduate and Mr. Costa said that is a Board decision. He said most Boards have a policy that a child must pass this test or a reasonable alternative.</li><li>• Mr. Shaffer asked if a child takes an easier test with fewer points based on the answers he gives, how does that score compare to a child who takes a test with harder questions. Mr. Costa said the scale will be a vertical scale and so a child will fall within a level versus the CMT results of below expectations, meets or exceeds expectations. He said the smarter balanced score will allow a more specific</li></ul>	
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proficiency rating and a more accurate score. This will also allow better data to determine a child's growth over a period of time.

- The new smarter balanced test allows students to take the test in as long or short a time period as they need. Normally, extra time on a test had to be granted through a special education IEP, but the way this test is structured in that no student can know what questions will be asked on any test there does not need to be a set time.
- Mr. Shaffer asked about the pilot test which was conducted last year and Mr. Costa said that test was more to test the items and see what questions may or may not fit; it was not designed so much to test the students.
- Mr. Shaffer asked about kids who might be slower typists for instance and Mr. Costa said that the technology of the test is not the problem as these kids are being prepared for life beyond school.
- Mr. Coppola asked about the CAPT testing and graduation. Mr. Smith said the policy was updated to allow for the state assessment or an alternative and also said the smarter balanced testing may move from testing 11<sup>th</sup> graders to testing 10<sup>th</sup> graders but he felt the policy was written to allow this without needing to change the actual policy.
- Mr. Costa also noted that most of the people in the educational world think the K-8 testing is now set in stone but that the high school testing most likely will change in the next legislative session.
- Mr. Coppola asked if there would be an exit test to graduate and Mr. Costa said there would not be a regents like exit exam. He also said there is a proliferation of assessments right now to create data for teacher performance.
- Mr. Costa said of the parents who felt their students were under stress due to these testing issues and common core, he said the children are only stressed because the adults are stressed. He suggested the district use this two year window of no standardized testing to determine what assessments it felt were

important for the children in this district.

- Mr. Costa said he felt the common core was a step in the right direction but felt there are still too many standards, that the digital tools have to be used for learning too and not just testing, that the core is too text heavy, and finally that we need to do a better job of communicating with the parents.
- Mr. Littlefield noted in the Committee on Learning meeting, Mr. Smith had done a presentation with the data coach on district assessments and asked if that was going to be incorporated into the smarter balanced assessment. Mr. Smith said usually the annual testing results came from the CMT and CAPT results. There will be no results from the pilot, so next year's results will be incorporated back into the Committee on Learning. He said this year will be phase two of the pilot with the adaptive testing and the scaled scores. It will be a baseline to start.
- Mr. Smith also noted that the instructional part of New Milford's program is much stronger today regardless of the common core. He said the local assessments do not all fit into growth charts as they will look at the whole child and not just one data point.
- Mr. Shaffer said the test done last spring did not count and the kids taking the test knew it and blew it off. He asked how that would affect the results. Mr. Costa said the data has not been released and he wasn't sure if it would be or if so in what format. He said again the test was a test of the test more than a test of the student.
- Mrs. Shook explained that her school was a pilot school for the test and the teachers first took the test and had problems with the technology so they were worried about the kids – she realized pretty quickly that the kids had no problems with the technology and know more about it than most adults.
- Mrs. Shook thanked Mr. Costa for coming to the Board and explaining common core.

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Page 7

3.	<b>Adjourn</b>  <b>Mr. Coppola moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m., seconded by Mr. Littlefield and passed unanimously.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>  <b>Motion made and passed to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.</b>
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Respectfully submitted:



Angela Chastain  
Secretary  
New Milford Board of Education