

**New Milford Board of Education
 Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes
 September 5, 2023
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

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 NEW MILFORD, CT

Present:	Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Chairperson Mrs. Sarah Herring Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Leslie Sarich
Also Present:	Dr. Janet Parlato, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Mrs. Teresa Kavanagh, Director of Human Services Mrs. Linda Scoralick, Principal SMS Mrs. Jessica Ward, World Language Dept. Chair NMHS Mrs. Megan Sylvester, K-5 Literacy Coordinator
Absent:	

1.	Call to Order The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:42 pm by Mrs. McInerney.	Call to Order
2.	Public Comment None	Public Comment None
3.	Items for Discussion and Approval A. Curriculum <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ceramics 2. AP Art & Design 3. Traditional Crafts <p>Ceramics: Ms. Hollander stated it is a half year course and open to any students in grades 9 - 12.</p> <p>AP Art & Design: Mrs. McInerney stated this course used to be called Studio Art. Mrs. Hollander stated it is a full year course that is offered to grades 11 and 12.</p> <p>Traditional Crafts: Ms. Hollander stated that this is a revised curriculum and open to all students 9 - 12 grade.</p> <p>Ms. Hollander asked if there were any questions regarding the curriculum described. Mrs. McInerney asked how the Art Department was handling classes overall, especially since in previous years there was a shortage in teachers which caused confusion for both</p>	Items for Discussion and Approval Curriculum <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ceramics 2. AP Art & Design 3. Traditional Crafts

	<p>teachers and students. Ms. Hollander stated that there are new staff that have come onboard to alleviate those issues. They are working together as a department to bring cohesiveness.</p> <p><i>Mr. McCauley moved to bring the following Curricula for the full board for final approval, seconded by Mrs. McNerney and passed unanimously.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ceramics 2. AP Art & Design 3. Traditional Crafts <p>B. Five Year Curriculum Plan</p> <p>Ms. Hollander stated they review this curriculum plan every year at this time. Ms. Hollander explained she reaches out to department chairs for feedback, and makes changes accordingly. Once the Board approves, the curriculum will be written and the process started. Mrs. McNerney asked for clarification that the three curricula just approved will not be reviewed again for five years, and it is five years from the time the class has begun, not when it is approved. Ms. Hollander stated that was correct, and sometimes they will review and change a curriculum sooner than that since it is a living document. Mrs. McNerney noted usually curricula approval is done as a whole for each department and some of the curricula from the Art Department are not included. Ms. Hollander stated since the department was still coming together, she wanted to give time for certain classes to be looked at more closely before putting them before the Board. Ms. Hollander stated the approval of curricula for the year is finishing up and going forward it will be on a tighter schedule.</p> <p><i>Mr. McCauley moved to bring the Five Year Curriculum Plan to the full board for final approval, seconded by Mrs. Herring and passed unanimously.</i></p>	<p>Motion made and passed unanimously for the full board to review the following curricula:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ceramics 2. AP Art & Design 3. Traditional Crafts <p>B. Five Year Curriculum Plan</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously for the full board to review the Five Year Curriculum Plan.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>A.</p>	<p>Items of Information</p> <p>Science of Reading Update</p> <p>Ms. Hollander stated there has been a lot of work put forward with specific goals in mind. Her team has been</p>	<p>4. Items of Information</p> <p>A. Science of Reading Update B. Schaghticoke Middle School World Language Program 2023-2024 Update</p>

working on areas of improvement in elementary, especially older elementary students. Ms. Hollander stated Mrs. Sylvester worked over the summer to create the New Milford Unit of Studies where she and her colleagues did an analysis to determine what is missing and then worked to fill those gaps as needed, with budget in mind. Mrs. Sylvester stated this year the focus is on quality of instruction as well as accountability and follow through. She stated she is hoping to see a decrease in students needing extra intervention because of the increased quality of instruction in the classroom and increased communication with the parents. Mrs. Sylvester stated they are also working to include this in professional development for the teachers with live feedback so that they can make running changes as needed. This reading plan began with team leaders that participate in master classes. The team leaders then branch out to make decisions and create consistency. The other component is the building level, and as it expands, it begins to include parents and the teachers. Ms. Hollander stated creating this web of communication has led to great success for the program. Mrs. McInerney asked what the feedback has been. Mrs. Sylvester stated the feedback has been positive, especially for the UFLI program. Some drawbacks have included not having the communication go out swiftly enough. They are working on making it easier to find and ensure it is clear to all. Mrs. Sylvester stated the district grew in assessment results in grades K-3. Students are being brought up to grade level or above, and the students still below are the ones who will be assisted throughout the year to bring them to grade level as well.

Mrs. Sylvester stated the Summer Learning Lab utilized the UFLI program and the district saw great success with it. Students in just 12 days increased their phonics and reading skills by 50%. Utilizing UFLI, the district is doing three model classrooms, demo lessons, whole group instruction and small group instruction, and has a new coach. With this information, the district will be aligning the students' work with the iReady diagnostics streamlining the assessment process.

Ms. Hollander commended the teacher leaders for all that has been taken on. It is important to know what the students need to know and bring awareness as to best

support the teachers and students.

Mrs. McInerney asked when the next iReady test was happening. Ms. Hollander stated it is coming up soon and parents will have ample notification.

B. Schaghticoke Middle School World Language Program 2023-2024 Update

Mrs. Scoralick stated there was movement of staff at the end of last year that led to the four Spanish teacher vacancies for various reasons. The jobs were posted immediately and since had eight applicants, but four were immediately recognized as not viable candidates. Mrs. Kavanaugh stated the district cast a wide net to find candidates. Recruitment for world language teachers has been challenging, with less candidates going into the profession. There are openings within Connecticut schools constantly being posted. Mrs. Scoralick stated the district was able to hire one teacher for French and one for Spanish. Mrs. Scoralick stated a decision was made collectively by herself, Dr. Parlato, Ms. Hollander, and Mrs. Kavanaugh to go in a different direction. The world language classes will no longer be offered as core classes but as Unified Arts format, and meet every other day for 45 minutes. Mathematically, it is a little more than half the time than they would meet at the high school. All 7th and 8th grade students will be able to take a world language class. The 3 full time employee salaries that could not be hired for Spanish were transferred to focus on a Humanities course, allowing to hire Social Studies and ELA teachers. The idea is to focus on talking, dialogue, and conversation – essentially core skills that tie back to the Portrait of a Graduate that instill important skills. Ms. Hollander stated it is a pilot program and next month they will put forth a proper proposal so there is a more concrete plan.

Mrs. McInerney stated 7th and 8th graders, in the past, took French or Spanish every day and now that is not happening. Therefore, is the curricula being modified to accommodate this loss, and how will students be prepared for the next level. Mrs. Scoralick stated the district is working together this year to address the 24/25 school year and beyond to help support the needed growth.

Mrs. Ward stated the course final will be more of an

assessment to see where the students' needs are going into high school. Mrs. Scoralick clarified the 8th graders taking Spanish or French will pick up where they left off going into high school. Mrs. McInerney asked if there is a way to combine some of the high school world language classes so that a teacher can be moved to the middle school. Mrs. Scoralick stated it was looked at, but given the fact world language teachers can easily move to another district, they did not want to overload the high school, and create an issue with more teachers leaving, which could lead to a bigger hole. Ms. Hollander added that this all transpired over the summer when the high school schedule was already set.

Mrs. Scoralick stated with the planned approach, it works mathematically with the necessary instruction time leading up to high school. The district is still committed to providing students with language of choice, even though 7th graders are taking French and Spanish is not an option until 8th grade. Ms. Hollander stated they will work with students to make sure they are receiving the instruction necessary. The department is focused on giving deeper understanding of the language rather than memorization. Mrs. McInerney suggested with world language no longer considered a core class, the district could look to supplement with something else other than Humanities such as engineering. This would give more variety to students and help those who may want to go into a specific pathway earlier rather than later.

Mrs. Herring stated even given the situation, the level of instruction needed can still be accomplished.

Mrs. McInerney stated she would like to see different courses offered for students who choose to not take a world language in 7th and/or 8th grade.

Ms. Hollander stated her team will come forward during the curriculum revision process with other course proposals for middle school.

Mrs. Scoralick stated students are finding their passions early on and the district is committed to helping them find that path, even as early as the middle school level.

	<p>Mrs. Herring asked if the teachers teaching Humanities are just teaching Humanities or are they also teaching something else. Mrs. Scoralick stated they are just teaching Humanities.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato stated there was a lot of effort and thought that went into all of this to make it happen.</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney stated what is currently being offered is beneficial for students and is looking forward to other courses being offered in the near future that will pique students’ interests. Dr. Parlato thanked Mrs. Ward for all she has done.</p> <p>Mrs. Ward stated she is noticing students are taking a world language but once they are no longer required, they pivot to something else. Mrs. McInerney pointed out that German is offered in the high school and those students are starting out at level 1 because German is not offered in the middle school, and the students can still take AP German, so there is still a pathway.</p> <p>Mrs. Scoralick stated the challenge for 6th graders going into 7th grade is the district has to anticipate what the world language staff will look like next year and accommodate students based off of that. It is important to offer a world language but it is important to diversify as well.</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney thanked them for all their work.</p> <p>Mrs. Herring asked regarding the curricula approved tonight, if the list of Board members will be updated as some listed there were on the board during each curriculum’s previous approval. Ms. Hollander stated it would be updated to reflect current Board members.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Public Comment None</p>	<p>Public Comment None</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Adjourn <i>Mr. McCauley moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Sarich with all voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.</i></p>	<p>Adjourn The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.</p>

Respectfully submitted:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. McInerney', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
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