


**New Milford Board of Education
 Regular Meeting Minutes
 February 15, 2022
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

Present:	Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. Eric Hansell Mr. Pete Helmus Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Tammy McNerney Mr. Tom O'Brien Mrs. Olga I. Rella Mrs. Leslie Sarich Mr. Keith A. Swanhall Jr.
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Also Present:	Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Superintendent Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services Mr. Matthew Cunningham, Facilities Director Mr. Nestor Aparicio, Assistant Facilities Director Mr. Jeffrey Turner, Technology Director Mrs. Anne Bilko, Sarah Noble Intermediate School Principal Mrs. Gwen Gallagher, Northville Elementary School Principal Mr. Raymond Manka, New Milford High School Principal Ms. Linda Scoralick, Schaghticoke Middle School Interim Principal Mr. Eric Williams, Hill and Plain Elementary School Principal Nicholas Carroccio, Student Representative Ishaani Pradeep, Student Representative
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1. A.	Call to Order Pledge of Allegiance The regular meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mrs. Faulenbach. The Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed.	Call to Order A. Pledge of Allegiance
2.	PTO Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megan Byrd reported for the PTO: • Townwide - The TWPTO will be hosting their first big event since COVID - our Summer Expo will take place on Saturday, 3/5 from 10AM to 2PM. Families may stop in and see all the 	PTO Report  RECEIVED TOWN CLERK 2022 FEB 18 A 8 36

	<p>various camps and activities that are available for their children this summer in New Milford and surrounding towns. All proceeds will benefit the NMPTO Senior Scholarship Fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NMHS – The month of February the NMHS PTO will be raising funds for planned senior activities that include: Hot Chocolate for Seniors in February or March, Breakfast in the Bleachers in May, Ice Cream Social in May or June, Senior Picnic in June and a Senior Walk. ● SMS - The SMS PTO is desperately looking for volunteers to take on some of the leadership roles in their PTO - secretary, chairperson for events and for fundraising, as well as President(s) and Vice President(s) for next year. ● SNIS - The SNIS PTO is holding a “Do you wanna build a snowman” competition in January & February. ● HPS - The HPS PTO set up a Kindness Tree Bulletin Board where the students wrote or drew pictures of kindness on paper hearts that were then put up on the bulletin board. Read-a-thon began January 31st and continues through the month of February. The Family Fun Night Kick Off was held on February 4th. Guest readers sat at different camp sites throughout the school and there was a craft table where attendees were able to make their own bookmarks. ● NES - The NES PTO will be doing a Kids Kreation fundraiser where students’ artwork is transferred to various gift items like mugs, note cards, mousepads, etc. Items should be in before Mother’s Day. ● Grad Party - The Grad Party’s raffle was held on January 10th. Grad Party also will be hosting a wine tasting this spring - date TBD. 	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Student Representatives’ Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ishaani Pradeep and Nicholas Carroccio, student representatives, reported on happenings in the schools this month. 	<p>Student Representatives’ Report</p>

- NES: The students created a poster to thank our New Milford police department for their commitment to our school and our town. The students also created Valentine cards for the health care heroes at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Now they are collecting items to distribute to the Marine Corps overseas. Mrs. Calabrese and Ms. Gallagher continue to make Good News Calls home monthly and celebrate CARES citizens. During February, Northville school was chosen for a dental survey of our Kindergarten students to help the state of CT improve health services in the community. Recently the 2nd grade celebrated Halfway to Hawaiian Day on the 90th day. Kindergarten celebrated the 100th day and first grade celebrated the 101 day! They want to extend a thank you to the PTO for their continued support and are looking forward to the next Book Fair in March and celebrating Read Across America on March 2nd.
- HPS: Kindergarten registration for the 2022-2023 school year is now open and families have begun the process of registering their kindergarten aged children for next school year. We recently had our 100th day of school and kindergarten celebrated the fun milestone with a day of fun activities and crafts. Teachers take this time to reflect upon goals set at the beginning of the year and discuss strategies and next steps to help all children meet classroom and building goals. Hill and Plain staff are looking forward to meeting with parents at the beginning of next month during conferences to discuss the progress students are making in their classes.
- SNIS: Two historical figures visited SNIS, Ben Franklin in 4th and Abe Lincoln in 5th, for students to learn about their lives and ask questions. Students are participating in Jump Rope for Heart and have collected more than \$7000 in donations!
- SMS: Students at SMS participated in String

	<p>Fest, a joint performance with students at SNIS and NMHS, on Feb 10th.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMHS: The following Teams won their SWC Championships: Boys Indoor Track, Gymnastics and Wrestling. Parent Conferences will be held March 9 and 10. Today was a Wingman Day. February 17 is an Activity Day. February 19 will be the Wind, Percussion and Guard Show. February 24 is an Advanced Chorus, Jazz and Orchestra Concert. March 23 and 24 is SAT for Juniors. 	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Board Chairman’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Faulenbach said she would like to outline the protocols for public comment in order to set the tone for the evening and ensure an orderly meeting. All will be provided with an opportunity to speak, limited to 3 minutes each. There are serious issues under discussion and all opinions will be respected. The Board is thankful to have the public’s participation. • Mrs. Faulenbach said she also expects to hear from the Mayor this evening regarding a budget update and will share if received. 	<p>Board Chairman’s Report</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Superintendent’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. DiCorpo reported the following: • Monthly Fundraising: 8 - NMHS: Class of 2023 (2), Class of 2024, National Honor Society, NMHS Theater (4); 1 - HPS PTO; 1 - NES • The Strategic Planning Committee met on Monday, February 7. I have requested an update on the progress, to be held for the BOE/public in early March. • The high school scoreboard that was damaged in the microburst several years ago, was repaired on February 10. This was paid for from money provided by the insurance company for the fix. • I’d like to set the tone for the evening’s discussion by sharing some data. The NMPS positivity number for December was 101, 	<p>Superintendent’s Report</p>

	<p>January was 576 and so far in February it is 47. Vaccination rates are provided by Ms. Morrissey's office and I thank her for attending this evening. The 12-17 age group has a current vaccination rate of 70.46%. The 5-11 age group has a current vaccination rate of 30%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I want to thank the community for their patience as we navigate the masking discussion this evening as well as several other policies that have been affected by the Governor's recent announcement to end masking in schools, effective February 28, 2022. No doubt about it, the world is torn and New Milford is no different. The emails I have received demonstrate strong support for masking and unmasking as well as the decision to have this decision be a personal choice. No matter the outcome of this evening's meeting, we will continue to keep staff and children's health, and most especially their mental health, at the heart of all that we do as we work to transition students, including some students who have only known social distancing and masking in schools, into a new reality. We will continue to monitor when mitigation measures must be implemented and when they can be relaxed, working closely with our DPH official and school medical advisor, and will communicate as necessary. Thank you. 	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Public Comment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mrs. Faulenbach asked spectators to refrain from applause or other distractions. She wants to make sure all members of the community feel welcome to express their opinions. ● Roger Shaw, a 5th grade student, said it is time to help students who are suffering with mask wearing. ● Jen Freed said masks should be parent choice. ● Gabriel Goncalves said masks bring a false sense of security and are not effective. Masks should be optional. 	<p>Public Comment</p>

- Suzanne Stalvey said it is time to end mandates in schools and let families make their own choices.
- Grace Stalvey, a 6th grade student, said masks are extremely uncomfortable and the mandate should be lifted. She misses the faces of her friends and teachers.
- David Stalvey commended the district for following guidance at every turn and said they should do so now and end the mandate.
- Natacha Vanegas read a letter from NMHS teacher Lisa Lee who said we need to return to normal for the children's well being and that current measures are hurting children.
- Joe Bittner thanked the district for efforts to teach children and keep them safe. He said we have more data now than at the beginning of COVID and it is now time to unmask children. Let it be a parent's choice without judgment.
- Adriana Fairchild, 9th grade student, said protocols keep changing and are different from school to school. She said schools are the only place that masks are required and that should end.
- Rebecca Anderson said parents' freedom to choose should never have been taken away. She said children are not okay and mask wearing should be by choice.
- Sabina Schermer said children are being traumatized by mask wearing. They interfere with development and cause anxiety and fear.
- Sarah Parker said masks are harmful and wrong and have a negative impact on children.
- Quinn Parker, a 12 year old, said masks should not be mandated and that they impact mental health, learning and speech.
- Caroline Hyde said she works for Headstart at HPS and asked about the federal mandate for buses as well as what happens if there is more spread in the future.
- Megan Byrd said we are forgetting a lot of kids by assuming that they all want to unmask. We are a community and should take care of each

	<p>other. If the choice is to unmask, the district should be prepared for those children who have school avoidance to come. Also, preschool age is not eligible for the vaccine yet so she thinks this action is premature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amy Eliason said masks should be optional and parent choice. ● Marianne Andumar said one of her children has a speech delay and the mask mandate has been devastating to him. ● Bill Bucknell said we should support the community by putting children’s mental health first and make masks optional. ● Anne Arcoli said masks should be optional; let the children breathe. ● Jennifer Fairchild said she has seen an increase in mental health issues, absenteeism and declining grades with her children and others. They are all suffering with COVID. Make masks optional. ● Mrs. Faulenbach thanked all for speaking respectfully. ● Mrs. Faulenbach said she had just received notice from the Mayor that the BOE budget is being brought forward with no recommended reductions. 	
<p>7.</p> <p>A.</p>	<p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>Approval of the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes:</p> <p>1. Budget Hearing Minutes of January 18, 19, 25 and 26</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney moved to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Budget Hearing Minutes of January 18, 19, 25 and 26, seconded by Mrs. Rella.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>A. Approval of the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes:</p> <p>1. Budget Hearing Minutes of January 18, 19, 25 and 26</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Budget Hearing Minutes of January 18, 19, 25 and 26.</p>

<p>8.</p>	<p>Discussion and Possible Action</p> <p>A. Discussion and possible action on policies governing COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates, including but not limited to policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1900.4900.5900.6900 Wearing Masks and Face Coverings During the COVID-19 Pandemic 2. 4300 Mandatory Staff COVID-19 Vaccination Policy 3. 1212 School Volunteers <p>Mr. Helmus moved to repeal Board Policy 1900.4900.5900.6900 Wearing Masks and Face Coverings During the COVID-19 Pandemic effective March 1, 2022 and to further move that as of March 1, 2022 masks shall not be required to be worn by individuals on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities unless otherwise required by law.</p> <p>Seconded by Mrs. Rella.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mrs. Faulenbach said they worked closely with the legal team to draft the motion. If it passes, mask wearing will be optional as a result of repealing the current policy. ● Mrs. Rella said she is in favor of parent choice. She asked if partitions will be removed as well. ● Ms. DiCorpo said not right away. They want to consider student mental health with the change. Partitions are used when students work in close groups and in the cafeteria. It will also take time to get them all down. The plan right now is to do that during April vacation. ● Mrs. Faulenbach asked for confirmation that masks must continue to be worn on school transportation per federal law. Ms. DiCorpo said that is correct. 	<p>Discussion and Possible Action</p> <p>A. Discussion and possible action on policies governing COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates, including but not limited to policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1900.4900.5900.6900 Wearing Masks and Face Coverings During the COVID-19 Pandemic 2. 4300 Mandatory Staff COVID-19 Vaccination Policy 3. 1212 School Volunteers <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to repeal Board Policy 1900.4900.5900.6900 Wearing Masks and Face Coverings During the COVID-19 Pandemic effective March 1, 2022 and to further move that as of March 1, 2022 masks shall not be required to be worn by individuals on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities unless otherwise required by law.</p>
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- Mr. McCauley said he would like to hear from Ms. Morrissey regarding where New Milford stands as a community.
- Ms. Morrissey said her office puts out a report every Friday that looks at case trends, positivity rates and comparisons to other communities in the state. COVID numbers are higher than a year ago, but are falling rapidly over the last few weeks. Mitigating strategies help.
- Mr. Helmus asked when they can expect to receive the promised guidance from DPH and the State.
- Ms. DiCorpo said superintendents are getting announcements at the same time as the public in most cases. She noted that there are several addendums still in play, such as those tied to quarantine, that will need guidance.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said DPH and the SDE can still weigh in with new requirements at any time.
- Mr. Helmus said he thinks it is important for the public to understand that the Board is following state law mandated by Governor Lamont and that the state can reinstate mandates at any time. He urged the public to correspond at the state level.
- Ms. Morrissey said they are waiting on metrics from the state. If the vote tonight is to make masks optional as of March 1, 2022 there is no guarantee that choice will hold should legal standards change.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said that is why the motion is crafted to contain the phrase “unless otherwise required by law”.
- Mr. O’Brien asked that the district be mindful of any potential conflicts among children over choice.
- Ms. DiCorpo said they have absolutely been thinking about what this means for students and the Assistant Superintendent, Health department staff and principals will be working together.
- Mrs. McInerney thanked speakers for sharing their thoughts. She said she would prefer to wait until the end of March when the weather is better

but she is prepared to vote for choice tonight. Numbers are going down. She said there are many people in the community who will need to continue to wear masks and she hopes that choice is respected as well.

- Mr. McCauley said the Board has a responsibility to staff as well as students and he asked if the teachers had been surveyed as to their preference.
- Ms. DiCorpo said no but she has heard from several passionate staff members on both sides of the issue.
- Mr. Swanhall said he thinks choice is important and he asked if the future guidance will be just that or a mandate.
- Ms. DiCorpo said she will enact the charge of the Board unless legally mandated by the State otherwise. She believes new addendums may be more to bring things back to pre-pandemic structure versus the other way around.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Helmus moved to repeal Board Policy 4300 COVID-19 Staff Vaccination effective February 16, 2022 and to further move that as of February 16, 2022 New Milford Public Schools' staff shall not be subject to mandatory COVID-19 vaccination or testing requirements unless otherwise required by law.

Seconded by Mrs. Rella.

- Ms. DiCorpo said this executive order was not extended beyond February 15, 2022 and that is why the date of February 16, 2022 is used.
- Mr. O'Brien said the district is complying with state law by repealing this policy.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion made and passed unanimously to repeal Board Policy 4300 COVID-19 Staff Vaccination effective February 16, 2022 and to further move that as of February 16, 2022 New Milford Public Schools' staff shall not be subject to mandatory COVID-19 vaccination or testing requirements unless otherwise required by law.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Faulenbach said this next recommended motion will allow the next policy amendment to come to the table. <p>Mrs. Rella moved that the Board suspend Board Bylaw 9311’s requirement of second review of the proposed amendment to policy 1212 School Volunteers.</p> <p>Seconded by Mrs. McInerney.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney moved to amend policy 1212 School Volunteers as proposed, reverting back to the wording of the November 6, 2018 version of policy.</p> <p>Seconded by Mrs. Rella.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Faulenbach said this revision was not driven by law but was a Board action. This action will allow the policy to go back to pre-COVID requirements. • Mrs. McInerney said this will align the policy to match the staff action taken and she is in favor. • Mrs. Faulenbach said this is the last of the COVID related motions for this evening. She hopes that the community will continue to work together respectfully going forward. • Mrs. McInerney asked when the change would go into effect. • Ms. DiCorpo said on February 16, 2022. <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>B. Exhibit A: Personnel – Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence dated February 15, 2022 (Revised)</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney moved to approve Revised Exhibit A: Personnel – Certified, Non-Certified</p>	<p>Motion made and passed unanimously that the Board suspend Board Bylaw 9311’s requirement of second review of the proposed amendment to policy 1212 School Volunteers.</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to amend policy 1212 School Volunteers as proposed, reverting back to the wording of the November 6, 2018 version of policy.</p> <p>B. Exhibit A: Personnel – Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence dated February 15, 2022 (Revised)</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve Revised Exhibit A: Personnel – Certified,</p>
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<p>Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence dated February 15, 2022, seconded by Mrs. Rella.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>C. Monthly Reports</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget Position dated January 31, 2022 2. Purchase Resolution: D-755 3. Request for Budget Transfers <p>Mrs. Rella moved to approve Monthly Reports: Budget Position dated January 31, 2022, Purchase Resolution D-755 and Request for Budget Transfers, seconded by Mrs. McInerney.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mrs. Faulenbach asked if the transfer to the capital reserve had taken place. Mr. Giovannone said it is in process and will be reflected on the March report. ● Mr. Helmus praised Mr. Giovannone on the successful audit. <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>D. Attitudes and Behaviors Survey</p> <p>Mrs. Rella moved to approve the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey, seconded by Mr. Hansell.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Board thanked Mr. Jason O'Connor for his collaboration on this. <p>E. New Course Proposal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freshman Seminar for CTE Pathways <p>Mrs. Rella moved to approve the Freshman Seminar for CTE Pathways, seconded by Mr. Hansell.</p>	<p>Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence dated February 15, 2022.</p> <p>C. Monthly Reports</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget Position dated January 31, 2022 2. Purchase Resolution: D-755 3. Request for Budget Transfers <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve Monthly Reports: Budget Position dated January 31, 2022, Purchase Resolution D-755 and Request for Budget Transfers.</p> <p>D. Attitudes and Behaviors Survey</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey.</p> <p>E. New Course Proposal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freshman Seminar for CTE Pathways <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the Freshman Seminar for CTE Pathways.</p>
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- Mrs. Faulenbach asked about the budgetary impact.
- Ms. DiCorpo said the original intention is to pilot this course, develop the curriculum and see where it goes data-wise and with pathway planning. There is no budgetary impact the first year but there will be if it is continued into future years. The Board will weigh in on that decision.
- Mrs. McInerney asked for confirmation that it is not a required course.
- Mrs. Hollander said the pilot is only for interested students.

The motion passed unanimously.

F. Policies/Regulations for First Review:

- 1. 3321 Requesting Goods and Services (Requisitions)**
 - 2. 3324.1 Contracts - Regulation**
 - 3. 3432/3433 Budget & Expense Report/Annual Financial Statement**
- Mrs. Rella said policy 3321 is recommended for deletion.
 - Mr. Hansell asked what the meaning of alienage is as it pertains to regulation/policy 3324.1. He said he would appreciate context.
 - Ms. DiCorpo said they will check with counsel regarding its specific legal definition and report at the next Policy meeting.
 - Ms. DiCorpo said the Policy committee had follow up with legal regarding policy 3432/3433. Regarding the use of two numbers, legal said there was no definitive answer and suggested using just 3432. Regarding the addition of language referencing the Operations subcommittee, legal said the Board was free to make the addition if it reflects practice.
 - The policies will go back to the Policy subcommittee for second review in March.

F. Policies/Regulations for First Review:

- 1. 3321 Requesting Goods and Services (Requisitions)**
- 2. 3324.1 Contracts - Regulation**
- 3. 3432/3433 Budget & Expense Report/Annual Financial Statement**

9.	Adjourn Mrs. Rella moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Mr. McCauley. The motion passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.
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Respectfully submitted:



Olga I. Rella, Secretary
New Milford Board of Education