

**New Milford Board of Education
 Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes
 May 2, 2023
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

Present:	Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Chairperson Mrs. Sarah Herring Mr. Brian McCauley
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 Interventionist
Absent:	Mrs. Leslie Sarich Ms. Oglia I. Rella

1.	Call to Order The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:30 pm by Mrs. McInerney.	Call to Order
2.	Public Comment None	Public Comment None
3.	<p>Items for Information and Discussion</p> <p>A. Programming and Support for Multi-Language Learners (ELL)</p> <p>Ms. Hollander discussed her presentation (<i>the entire presentation is attached</i>).</p> <p>Tonight's Topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Science of Reading - Phonics Instruction 2. Summer School - Summer Learning Lab and Credit Recovery <p>Science of Reading - Phonics Instruction Update</p> <p>Ms. Hollander introduced Mrs. Megan Silverster and Mrs. Nicole Heering. Ms. Hollander stated that both teachers had taken a lead in moving forward with a Master Class and putting systems in place for consistency and coherence in</p>	<p>Items for Information and Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> RECEIVED TOWN CLERK 2023 MAY -5 A 7:59 NEW MILFORD, CT </p>

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kindergarten-fifth grade, bridging over to secondary. Ms. Hollander then took the Board through her Committee on Learning May 2023 presentation. Ms. Hollander described the curriculum and prefaced the presentation to state the process to purchase a new curriculum program was not rushed, and great thought was taken. Ms. Hollander stated that there are five pillars to insure core reading. Science of Reading is a kindergarten through third grade initiative but her team is expanding it to kindergarten through fifth grade and today's presentation focuses on the phonics piece. Ms. Hollander then asked Mrs. Sylvester to walk through the presentation. Mrs. Sylvester stated that an audit was done on phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. It was decided that phonics needed systematic instruction. Ms. Hollander stated it will mean incurring cost, but a strict decision process was happening by using existing TC units to save on cost. Mrs. Sylvester stated the i-Ready results gave a more sufficient look at the data and showed that with kindergarten through second grade students, 42% are one grade level below or more. Grades third through fifth are two grade levels below or more in phonics. Ms. Hollander stated there were a few reasons for this, the pandemic was one of the biggest ones. Ms. Hollander added New Milford Public Schools were not teaching phonics in a thoughtful and systematic way as much as we will in the future. Since this report is kindergarten through fifth grade, they are already addressing the concern at the middle school level. Ms. Hollander stated there was always a need to focus on phonics but it was exacerbated with the pandemic. Mrs. Sylvester stated students' writing was not keeping up with their reading and once they reach middle school, it only gets worse. Mrs. McInerney asked since the focus is on kindergarten through fifth, what about middle school. Ms. Hollander stated each school building now has its own literacy team and her team is looking into and addressing those needs. As soon as the next round of diagnostics comes in, it will be covered more in their Master Class. Mrs. Sylvester stated some of this has been covered in Professional Development and the Master Class. The teachers have also done phonics training, requiring phonics

to be taught in a sequence. If by third grade a student is not at grade level, it will affect their whole educational life. Mrs. Sylvester stated the background they looked into showed that the brain does not know how to read automatically. Mrs. Sylvester displayed a diagram of the brain with a word next to it, and stated there are processors in the brain and the brain follows a path to get to what the right word is. The idea is to get the left side of the brain to fire instead of the right. Ms. Hollander looked into three potential resources to move forward with this initiative: Foundations, UFLI, and TC. Mrs. Sylvester stated they had gathered information from various areas and two programs stood out. Foundations was one, but at a high cost and the training was program specific. The second option was UFLI, one manual for all the grades and easy to implement. It is not only cost effective, but an adaptive program, so it can change as the teacher is teaching. Ms. Hollander stated after looking at everything and trying to be thoughtful, even though Foundations is being used by Special Education, it is costly. The fee would run close to \$100,000. UFLI is much more manageable at \$9,000. Considering what the teachers need, the goal is to figure out the best course of action. Ms. Hollander does not want teachers paying out of their own pocket. UFLI has been well received with the staff and this process has been done thoughtfully. Mrs. McInerney asked if UFLI will start at the beginning of next school year. Ms. Hollander stated yes. Her team solicited feedback before considering roll out. Mrs. Heering stated the program is approachable and doable. Mrs. Sylvester stated the corrective feedback is handed to teachers and for literacy, which is vital. Ms. Hollander stated this has been done thoughtfully by going into small groups, getting feedback and making sure building leaders are acclimated as well. Mrs. Sylvester stated UFLI is out of University of Florida and was well received. Mrs. Sylvester broke down the phonics program, gave bullet points on the daily/weekly layout, and added what each lesson includes and the flow of steps. Mrs. Sylvester displayed each UFLI step. Mrs. Heering stated this will be embedded into curriculum documents, putting the information all in one place. Mrs. Sylvester gave a

demonstration of an actual lesson for the Board to experience real time. The demonstration included a visual drill, noted how teachers have specific feedback on each lesson, and the amount of repetitive practice. Mrs. Sylvester then walked through a blending drill through a consonant digraph, noting everything is provided to the teachers, including animation. The program embeds the lesson for the students through routine and consciousness. UFLI encourages spelling, articulation, and repetition. The rollout work will happen in May/June 2023, with a little work done at the beginning of the 2023/2024 school year. Mrs. McInerney thanked Mrs. Sylvester for the information and her enthusiasm. Ms. Hollander believes UFLI will address the need for special needs students, help with spelling, and is an appropriate next step. Students like repetition and the program will be met with great enthusiasm. Mrs. McInerney noted there are a lot of resources with this program. It helps staff to deliver, provides appropriate feedback, as well as consistency across the schools and grades. Ms. Hollander is aware of remedial reading and is addressing the fifth grade needs, including the needs of the SRBI personnel and coaches. The team is working on remedial spelling and i-Ready is providing more granular data on the needs for kindergarten through ninth grade. Mrs. McInerney thanked Ms. Hollander, Mrs. Sylvester, and Mrs. Heering for the presentation. Ms. Hollander added core materials are still in place as well as comprehension strategies. Her team is adopting this program to make it tailored to New Milford.

B. Summer School - Summer Learning Lab and Credit Recovery Update

Ms. Hollander reviewed the Summer Learning Lab presentation. The math program for grades second through fourth will consist of the Three Reads Language Routine. Mrs. McInerney asked what students are being targeted. Ms. Hollander stated the target is students that are a little lower than the 50th percentile. Mrs. McInerney asked if the students have to be below 50th percentile for both math and literacy. Ms. Hollander stated they focused on literacy. Invitations for the Summer

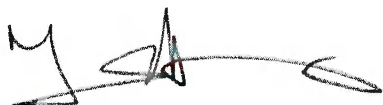
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	<p>Learning Lab are out and the youth agencies, etc. are looped in as well. There are currently 116 invitations out with 40 responses. The goal is 90 responses, a second round of invitations are going out to more students and building leaders have sent out reminders. Curriculum has been developed and summer school faculty will have an orientation once the school year dismisses. Mrs. McInerney asked if the program is five weeks long. Ms. Hollander stated it is twelve sessions starting the week after July 4th and running until the end of July. Mrs. McInerney reiterated it is three weeks from 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Ms. Hollander stated yes. Ms. Hollander moved on to Credit Recovery and stated all 50 spots were registered. Some students had to be removed due to lack of attendance or behavioral issues. The program purposely has a limited number of courses offered, so students can focus on the credits they need to graduate. The behavior expectations are clear. Mrs. McInerney asked, should there be open spots, can they be offered to out of district students for a fee. Ms. Hollander stated not at this time. The goal is to be sure New Milford students are not turned away because a spot is already taken from a non-resident student. There were no further questions.</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. Herring with all voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.</i></p>	<p>Adjourn The meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.</p>

Respectfully submitted:



Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Committee on Learning