

**New Milford Board of Education  
 Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes  
 November 5, 2024  
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

RECEIVED  
 TOWN CLERK 

Present:	Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Chairperson Mrs. Sarah Herring Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach, <i>ex-officio</i>	2024 NOV -7 A 8:35 NEW MILFORD, CT
Also Present:	Dr. Janet Parlato, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal Sarah Noble Intermediate School Mr. Raymond Manka, Principal New Milford High School Mrs. Cathay Calabrese, Principal Hill & Plain School Mrs. Gwen Gallagher, Principal Northville Elementary School Mrs. Linda Scoralick, Principal Schaghticoke Middle School Mrs. Karen Bosco, District Data Coach	
Absent:	Mr. Brian McCauley Mr. Dean Barile	

1.	<b>Call to Order</b> The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:30 pm by Mrs. Tammy McInerney.	<b>Call to Order</b> The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.
2.	<b>Public Comment</b> None	<b>Public Comment</b> None
3.	<b>Items of Information</b> <b>A. K-12 Data Presentation</b> Mrs. McInerney seated Mrs. Faulenbach and thanked her for adjusting her schedule to attend.  Dr. Parlato stated they wanted the principals to share the good work they were doing but there is also improvement to be done in the district. The goal is to create conditions so all students reach grade level standards. It is about increasing student achievement through quality curriculum, instruction, assessment, and programing.  Ms. Hollander stated when coming out of Covid, there was inconsistent instruction. There were inconsistencies in how the district collected data and prior to that, trouble using the data. It was a siloed structure without continuity. It was clear there needed to be a recalibration of behaviors to help students move forward and meet grade level expectations.  Mrs. Bosco began the presentation by displaying data	<b>Items of Information</b> <b>A. K-12 Data Presentation</b>

	<p>on New Milford Public School students by cohort. The data was explained as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Current Grade 1: in Kindergarten, 49% of students met Grade Level Standards (GLS) for ELA iReady, and 43% of students met GLS for Math iReady.</li><li>● Current Grade 2: in Kindergarten, 51% of students met GLS for ELA iReady and 42% of students met GLS for Math iReady. While in 1st grade, 54% of students met GLS for ELA iReady and 33% of students met GLS for Math iReady.</li><li>● Current Grade 3: in 1st grade, 56% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 29% of students met GLS for Math iReady. In 2nd grade, 51% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 24% of students met GLS for Math iReady.</li><li>● Current Grade 4: in 2nd grade, 44% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 21% of students met GLS for Math iReady. In 3rd grade, 39% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 25% of students met GLS for Math iReady. Also while in 3rd grade, 35% of students met GLS for ELA SBA (Smarter Balanced Assessment), and 35% of students met GLS for Math SBA.</li><li>● Current Grade 5: in 3rd grade, 30% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 17% of students met GLS for Math iReady. In 4th grade, 28% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 20% of students met GLS for Math iReady. While in 3rd grade, 31% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 28% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 4th grade, 38% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 33% of students met GLS for Math SBA.</li><li>● Current Grade 6: in 4th grade, 29% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 25% of students met GLS for Math iReady. In 5th grade, 28% of students met GLS for ELA iReady and 28% of students met GLS for Math iReady. While in 3rd grade, 41% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 41% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 4th grade, 40% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 34% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 5th grade, 51% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 36% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 5th grade, 52% of students met the NGSS (Next</li></ul>	
--	--	--

	<p>Generation Science Standards).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Current Grade 7: in 5th grade, 20% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 29% of students met GLS for Math iReady. In 6th grade, 24% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 18% of students met GLS for Math iReady. While in 4th grade, 43% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 39% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 5th grade, 46% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 33% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 6th grade, 44% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 32% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 5th grade, 44% of students met the NGSS.</li><li>● Current Grade 8: in 6th grade, 30% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 22% of students met GLS for Math iReady. In 7th grade, 29% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 17% of students met GLS for Math iReady. While in 5th grade, 51% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 35% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 6th grade, 43% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 35% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 7th grade, 48% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 37% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 5th grade, 54% of students met the NGSS.</li><li>● Current Grade 9: in 7th grade, 20% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 12% of students met GLS for Math iReady. In 8th grade, 20% of students met Grade Level Standards (GLS) for ELA iReady, and 11% of students met GLS for Math iReady. While in 6th grade, 43% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 35% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 7th grade, 35% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 30% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 8th grade, 35% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 24% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 8th grade, 35% of students met the NGSS.</li><li>● Current Grade 10: in 8th grade, 28% of students met GLS for ELA iReady, and 15% of students met GLS for Math iReady. While in 7th grade, 50% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 34% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 8th grade, 44% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 30% of students met GLS for Math</li></ul>	
--	---	--

SBA. While in 8th grade, 51% of students met the NGSS. While in 9th grade, 49% of students met PSAT for ELA, and 23% met PSAT for Math.

- Current Grade 11: in 8th grade, 40% of students met GLS for ELA SBA, and 26% of students met GLS for Math SBA. While in 9th grade, 58% of students met PSAT for ELA, and 34% met PSAT for Math. While in 10th grade, 52% of students met PSAT for ELA, and 26% met PSAT for Math. While in 8th grade, 47% of students met the NGSS.
- Current Grade 12: in 10th grade, 58% of students met PSAT for ELA, and 34% met PSAT for Math. While in 11th grade, 54% of students met PSAT for ELA, and 24% met PSAT for Math. While in 11th grade, 45% of students met the NGSS. While in 11th grade, 65% of students met SAT for ELA, and 24% met SAT for Math.

During the presentation Dr. Parlato noted that Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) is the public facing score, and students are doing better on that than on iReady. Where there are large increases in performance, the district will dig deeper and duplicate those efforts. Mrs. McInerney asked why the iReady results are so different from SBA. Mrs. Bosco stated it could be the wording of the questions. SBA is more application with different skills and concepts being addressed in different formats. SBA is taken earlier than iReady.

Mrs. Bosco continued with displaying the 4 year graduation rate:

- In 2018-2019 it was 91.8%.
- In 2019-2020 it was 90.2%.
- In 2020-2021 it was 92%.
- In 2021-2022 it was 82.8%
- In 2022-2023 it was 88.4%.

Mrs. Herring asked if the displayed graduation rate was specifically for students who graduate in four years. Dr. Parlato stated yes. Mrs. McInerney noted that it does not include students who take longer than four years, or who are adult education students.

Dr. Parlato continued the presentation by breaking

down the numbers for High Needs students:

- Students who are English Learners is 328 students, which is 9.4% of the total student population of 3,498 students.
- Students who qualify for free/reduced is 1,160 total students, which is 33.2% of the total student population.
- Students with IEPs is 632 students, which is 18% of the total student population.

Mrs. McInerney asked if all students are taking the assessments. Dr. Parlato stated at least 95% of them. Dr. Parlato's takeaway was that the district has fewer enrolled students in the district over the last 10 years, but a higher percentage of students with needs.

Mrs. Herring asked what the definition of an English learner is. Mrs. Dovale (from the public), stated English Learners are now referred to as Multi Language Learners (MLL), and are identified when parents register and choose a language other than English. Those students are then tested and it is determined if they qualify for language services.

Mrs. McInerney noted the slide for High Needs can help explain why students may not be mastering grade level standards. This helps put it all into perspective. There are difficulties taking a test with a language barrier. Mrs. Faulenbach stated there are many elements that need to be quantified because there are so many other factors that play into instruction.

Ms. Hollander explained the district is now doing monthly data points. Prior to that it was done a few times a year. Students also move from where they are at the beginning of the school year, to where they are at the end.

Mrs. Herring asked how long the district has been using iReady. Mrs. Bosco stated it has been 3-4 years. Mrs. Herring stated she heard it is difficult to work with, whereas SBA is something more familiar. Mrs. Herring stated the SBA program helped provide positive feedback to the student in real time, while taking the test.

Ms. Hollander stated the district is now looking at how

to best use that data. It is only as good as what you use it for. They are looking at strategies and curriculum to support the students. Mrs. Faulenbach asked what Ms. Hollander and her team does once they have the data. Ms. Hollander stated they look at it as a collective effort and utilize it to create more structured programs, such as the K-2 literacy program.

Ms. Hollander continued the presentation, speaking to the programs and platforms being utilized: Educlimber, Dibels, and iReady. These will help the district assess, identify, and monitor progress. Additionally, there is the MTSS (Multi Tiered System of Support), the MLs and 504s. There is a K-12 process in place and they are working hard on a curriculum that gives a seamless transition grade by grade. Leadership roles also play a large part.

Mrs. Herring stated she was wondering about the comfort level with iReady and the scores. With math, the language is so important. Without consistency, it confuses students. A fact that can be overlooked. Ms. Hollander agreed and noted with special education students, the district is ensuring that the small group settings are aligned with what is happening in the classroom. Mrs. Bilko added, it is important to know if underlying skills are missing. iReady gives a path to those underlying skills. This helps teachers feel armed and ready. Mrs. Bilko noted the staff are embracing the program and this year there is more comfort with it.

Dr. Parlato stated the District Reference Slide (DRG), shows Performance Index numbers. New Milford's performance is 61.6 for ELA, and math is 56.3. Both are below state average, and in math, New Milford is at the bottom of the DRG. Mrs. McInerney asked if New Milford could be placed in the wrong DRG. Dr. Parlato stated, the DRG is looked at yearly, and New Milford is still in D. The upcoming workshop will address New Milford being at the bottom in math. Mrs. Faulenbach stated, sadly, this is not good. It's not about the number but it is indicative of the challenges we have. It screams to how, and what is going on. It's important to know we are doing good things, and being transparent on where we are.

Continuing on, Mrs. Gallagher and Mrs. Calabrese

	<p>presented their K-2 update. The focus is on building confidence and perseverance. It's about asking questions, giving/accepting feedback, and teaching self advocacy skills. Emotions are also a factor, including practicing patience. Setting learning targets and objectives, so the students have something to work towards. Along with differentiated instruction and timely feedback for all students.</p> <p>Mrs. Bilko stated the 3-5 grades are focusing on preparedness, academically, emotionally, socially, and start the day with a "ready to learn" mindset. It's important to regulate emotions and ensure the students have what they need. The goal is to pass the students on to middle school as independent learners. The iReady assessments help identify kids who need extra support with developmental guidance. One area of improvement is the connection with families. Mrs. Faulenbach asked Mrs. Bilko how she is working on that connection. Mrs. Bilko stated it is about communication. Parent Square helps with that. They are also looking at homework differently. Students are now going home with their daily work and reading it to family members as part of their homework.</p> <p>Mrs. Herring asked what percentage of parents signed up for conferences. Mrs. Bilko stated she will not know that until next week, but noted it has dwindled over the last five years. They are hoping with conferences being available through zoom or even a phone call, that number will increase again.</p> <p>Mrs. Bilko, Mrs. Gallagher, and Mrs. Calabrese all stated that for K-5 development, there are cognitive, social, language and physical domains of child development. K-2 is working on preparing students for grades 3-5 who are focusing on group work and collaboration to build strength in those ages. The professional learning for K-5 is working on instructional play, analyzing data, and has created problem solving teams to help students who are not progressing. There is also a strong effort to look at students struggling or not making progress. Adding in head teachers and lab classrooms is an opportunity to build the Professional Development support for each other.</p>	
--	---	--

**New Milford Board of Education  
Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes  
November 5, 2024**

**Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

Mrs. Herring asked if Kindergarten teachers are noticing a difference with the new age cutoff. Ms. Hollander stated they are not because they accepted waivers, but will next year.

Mrs. Scoralick began her portion of the presentation by stating the next steps are to make sure students are present, have basic needs met, understand expectations, and are supported. It's important to ensure instruction is engaging, relevant, and rigorous. There has been a lot of work done over the last four years. Some things are more in infancy and others are stronger. There are things put in place to make sure students are supported and school is a place they want to be. Middle school students are trying to figure out who they are and what's important to them. It's our job to give instruction that meets them where they are emotionally, culturally, and academically. Currently, the middle school is working on refining courses and updating core materials. They are trying to send a message that they are working hard to do right by the kids.

Mrs. Faulenbach asked where we are with the process of initiatives. It would be good to know what's been initiated and what is to be rolled out. Mrs. Scoralick stated the initiatives are all in place, but are works in progress. It's all a process of revamping subjects, working on where students are now, and how to get them where they need to be. It's about a strong foundation, community, connection, and relationships. They are focused on providing quality Tier 1 instruction that meets the needs of all students. For example, explicit instruction of vocabulary, what it means to read and write in the context you are studying. Mrs. Herring stated she is excited to see how things go with the new phone policy. It should have a very positive impact.

Mr. Manka began his portion of the presentation, stating the need is to make sure students are present, needs are met, there is a clear criterion for success, and support. Mrs. Faulenbach asked where they were with truancy. Dr. Parlato stated the district is down 4%. Mrs. Herring asked for the definition of truancy. Dr. Parlato stated it is four unexcused absences a month, or 10% of the school year. Mrs. McInerney stated she believes e-hall pass is an important part of keeping students



<p>accountable. Mr. Manka agreed, and that to have students present is a goal of his. Four years ago, truancy was nearing 40%, which included quarantine numbers. Last year it was in the teens. So there have been dramatic improvements. When physically and mentally present in the classroom, students can have their needs met. The high school has been utilizing school handbooks, weekly communications, and reorganized Advisory into FLEX time for students. In fact, the feedback from teachers is that lessons are taking longer because kids are more engaged.</p> <p>Mr. Manka continued, stating they are focused on trusted relationships with adults, making sure social and emotional learning are a focus with a CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) standard, such as the Wingman program. They are working with the middle school with the Peer to Peer program. There are biweekly MTSS meetings as well as best practices for MLL students. The Summit program is something for students that are overage and under credit, and it has been quite successful.</p> <p>Mr. Manka was happy to state the graduation rate is back to pre-Covid. The high school is using data to make decisions to guide what they do. There is a learning of personal growth and walk-throughs converted into instructional rounds. Elements of keystones are evident in classrooms. They have also brought back the student-of-the-month awards, and Staff Wave Awards.</p> <p>Mrs. Herring asked if a student “quits” school, is there paperwork filled out or do they just stop showing up. Mr. Manka stated there is an Attendance Committee that oversees this. It starts off with a series of actions. A letter is sent home, there can be a home visit and there could be a call to DCF (Department of Children and Families). The family is notified that the child isn’t going to school and will do what they can to remove obstacles for that. Unfortunately, it is not always successful. Students are requiring smaller learning environments. The high school encourages the Peer to Peer program so there is a fellow student for someone to talk to. The school based health center provides help as well.</p>	
---	--

	<p>Mrs. Herring asked if a student is over 16, does DCF get involved. Mr. Manka stated they will up to 18 years of age. Mrs. Herring stated educational neglect is difficult to address. Dr. Parlato stated it used to be considered “Youth in Crisis” but now it is a non-emergent DCF referral.</p> <p>Mrs. Faulenbach asked if we have data on the students that have graduated. Dr. Parlato stated there is Persistence data for students who stay in education a year following graduation. There is also Clearing House data that can be purchased for a small amount of money that would track students for longer and give a clearer picture.</p> <p>Mr. Manka concluded his portion of the presentation by stating there is an increasing number of IEPs and a need for co-teaching. They are working on comprehensible input for MLL students and world language classes. There is a focus on school-based culture and climate, so there can be collaboration for what is happening in the classroom.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato gave the final takeaways and stated New Milford students are growing academically, but the district is underperforming when it comes to achievement on the grade-level standards. There are reasons for the underperformance, but not excuses. The district is working to create an instructional culture that consistently employs research-based best practices in each classroom. Systems and structures matter tremendously, and we are building them. Students with high needs require our immediate attention and curricular and instructional focus. It’s important to minimize distractions and focus on students’ learning.</p> <p>Mrs. Herring asked if the DRG ranking takes into account non-English speaking students. Dr. Parlato stated it does. New Milford’s wealth rank is 96 out of 169 towns, and have been part of DRG D since 1996.</p> <p>Mrs. Faulenbach stated it was great work. Mrs. McInerney thanked everyone.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Public Comment</b> None</p>	<p><b>Public Comment</b> None</p>

**New Milford Board of Education  
Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes  
November 5, 2024  
Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

<b>5.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b> <i>Mrs. Herring moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Faulenbach, with all voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:52pm.</i>	<b>Adjourn</b> The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.
-----------	---	--

Respectfully submitted:



Tammy McInerney, Chairperson  
Committee on Learning