

New Milford Board of Education
 Revised Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes
 August 6, 2024
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center

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NEW MILFORD, CT

Present:	Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Chairperson Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Sarah Herring Mr. Dean Barile
Also Present:	Dr. Janet Parlato, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Mrs. Diane Johnson, 5th Grade Teacher, Sarah Noble Intermediate School Mrs. Christine Benson, Health Teacher, New Milford High School
Absent:	

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 The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.
2.	Public Comment None	Public Comment None
3.	<p>Items for Discussion and Approval</p> <p>A. Curriculum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Art Appreciation 2. Basic Life Support 3. Concert Chorus 4. ESL 1 5. Exercise Physiology 6. Explorations in Science 7. French I CP 8. French IV/V College Prep 9. Integrated Science CP 10. Integrated Science Honors 11. Math Grade 7A 12. Nutrition and Wellness 13. PE Bootcamp 14. Physics CP 15. AP Physics 1 16. Spanish 1 CP <p>Art Appreciation: Ms. Hollander stated this is a new .5 (half year) offering for 10th - 12th grade students. This course will introduce visual arts and a variety of art mediums and techniques to create 2-D and 3-D works of art. Students will analyze historical and cultural context</p>	<p>Items for Discussion and Approval</p> <p>A. Curriculum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Art Appreciation 2. Basic Life Support 3. Concert Chorus 4. ESL 1 5. Exercise Physiology 6. Explorations in Science 7. French I CP 8. French IV/V College Prep 9. Integrated Science CP 10. Integrated Science Honors 11. Math Grade 7A 12. Nutrition and Wellness 13. PE Bootcamp 14. Physics CP 15. AP Physics 1 16. Spanish 1 CP

through writing and discussion and will also create art in each unit.

Basic Life Support:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new .5 (half year) offering that will be available for 10th - 12th grade students. Some of the highlights of this course include students learning about first responder careers and acquiring essential life saving skills for cardiac and respiratory emergencies. Students will learn about first aid and participate in the Red Cross Basic Life Support Course.

Mrs. McInerney asked if the students will receive Red Cross certification. Mrs. Benson replied, yes.

Concert Chorus:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new course in which 9th - 12th grade students can earn one credit. This course provides a sequential approach for choral students to create, connect, respond, and perform in the ensemble setting. There is no audition for this offering. This curriculum differs from the current one semester offering as it consists of the addition of a fifth unit and altered performance tasks. The course will go into greater depth of the skills and concepts in each phase of the unit. Because of the half-year course popularity (which is still an option), it was decided to offer a full year course.

ESL 1:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new offering. It is a full year course that addresses the needs of students who do not speak English. The goals are to support a Multi Language (ML) learner to acquire English language skills that are necessary for social interactions with peers, academic success in the classroom, and becoming a productive citizen. Students will focus on four modalities of language acquisition: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

Exercise Physiology:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new full-year course offering for 10th -12th graders. Students will delve into the science behind physical activity and the impact on the body. Through a blended approach, theory and practical application, students will enhance their performance as athletes as well as prepare them for a

potential career in the field of Exercise Science. Topics include body responses to exercise including adaptation in cardiovascular, endocrine, and muscular systems. Students will analyze the role of nutrition in fueling physical activity and performance. Students will learn the principles of training and conditioning. By the end of the course, students will have a deeper understanding of how the body responds to exercise by being equipped with practical tools and increased knowledge that will support their own athletic pursuits or a career in the field.

Explorations in Science:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new offering for Juniors and Seniors. This .5 course offering will provide students with an opportunity to explore science topics across the three major disciplines of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) – Life, Physical, and Earth Exploration – and will be student centered and focused on providing hands-on learning activities that reinforce the vision of NGSS. It will include discipline standards, science, and engineering practices and cross cutting concepts.

French I CP:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a revision. It is a one credit course offering available for 9th - 12th grade students. It is an introductory course that exposes students to grammar and vocabulary through themes such as school, preferred leisure activities, sports, music, etc.

French IV/V College Prep:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new one credit offering to support 11th - 12th grade students. French IV expands the communication functions developed in previous French courses and uses authentic resources, storytelling, and cinema from French speaking countries. French V is an alternative to the AP track that is currently in place.

Integrated Science CP:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new offering for 9th graders. This course is broken into two semesters and is one credit. The focus is on the study of major earth science concepts with an emphasis on the environment including astronomy, cycling of matter, atmospheric pollution, and climate and resource management.

Integrated Science Honors:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a revised course offered to 9th graders and is one credit. It is now broken into two semesters. Areas of study include properties of stars, the big bang theory, cycling of matter, and the Earth's history. Content and instruction align with the intention of NGSS through the content of science, the "doing" of science, and thinking about science.

Math Grade 7A:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new offering. It is a unique course that focuses on the critical areas that build upon accelerated 6th grade math. It extends learning further into 7th and 8th grade content that builds on topics such as geometry, linear relationships, and the system of equations and functions. Successful completion allows students to develop the critical foundational knowledge to continue their work in 8th grade with an Algebra I path following the high school model. This is a very fast-paced course to allow students to build concepts with meaning, while keeping the integrity of the prerequisite content needed for a successful completion of a future Algebra course.

Mrs. McInerney asked if this course is similar to the current Pre-Algebra course. Mrs. Herring stated it is similar to what is considered Pre-Algebra.

Nutrition and Wellness:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new offering (0.5 credits). It is available for 10th - 12th grade students. Students gain knowledge regarding the impact of nutrition on an individual's health and wellness. Upon successful completion of the Health 1 offering, students have an option to select an elective that aligns with their personal interest. This class is one such offering. The course aims to empower individuals to prioritize health by enhancing their understanding of nutrition and wellness

Mrs. Benson explained that in Health 1, there is a basic nutrition unit. Teachers struggle to fit all the information into the class. This class is meant to expose students to learning about health and wellness. Not just the physical aspect of it, but the mental and social aspects as well. It helps students learn to make healthy choices, which can be daunting. It empowers students to make informed decisions and have a

positive relationship with food.

Mrs. McInerney stated she appreciates this course offering and anticipates students involved in athletics may want to take the class. Mrs. McInerney asked how the enrollment was going. Mrs. Benson stated there was a lot of interest. The one fall section that is offered is full.

Mr. Barile asked what guidelines are followed and if it is based on the USDA food pyramid. Mrs. Benson explained it is not based on the food pyramid. She was inspired to offer this course after they were visited by guest speakers to the Allied Health course. She began by studying the Harvard Plate as well as utilizing Dr. Mark Hyman, a functional medicine doctor, who is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to nutrition. Mrs. Benson stated she also used Dr. Barker, a professor at WestConn, to give guidance. Mr. Barile asked if there was meal planning involved. Mrs. Benson stated there is, at the end of the unit. It also includes how to navigate social settings, which can be stressful. It is important to have those skills and a healthy relationship with food. Mr. Barile asked if the course promotes any trends or fad diets. Mrs. Benson stated no, as those are not sustainable. Once students understand how the body works, it helps them understand the purpose of food/nutrients and its importance.

PE Bootcamp:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a new semester offering, open to 10th - 12th grade students. This course is designed to physically prepare students that are interested in police, firefighting, or military careers. Units will give students a focus on building strength, endurance, and agility through exercises and drills that tailor to the specific requirements of the professions.

Mrs. McInerney asked about the interest level of the course and number of sections. Mrs. Benson stated there is one section. The thought is if students take Basic Life Support and then PE Bootcamp, the two will compliment each other. Ms. Hollander added that they take a pulse for what students are interested in and try to cycle that in.

Physics CP:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a revised, full year, one credit curriculum. This offering is open to 11th and 12th grade students. Highlights of this course include a process that has students look at the given, unknown, equation, set-up, and problem solving. It includes real world tasks while they research, develop, and engage in prototype testing. Topics include motion, force, energy, sound, light, electricity, and magnetism. A math background is required, including Algebra principles and some Geometry and Trigonometry.

AP Physics 1:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a revised one credit offering for students in 11th and 12th grade. Highlights from this revised offering include:

- Algebra based offering that is aligned to an introductory college level physics course.
- Inquiry based learning.
- Emphasis on students learning how to solve problems and to present information in a variety of ways.
- Students build their understanding of physical models as they explore and solve problems in content areas such as kinematics, force and translational dynamics, work, energy, and power.
- The design of the course enables students to develop the ability to reason about physical phenomena using practices such as explained relationships, designing experiments, analyzing data, etc.

Spanish 1 CP:

Ms. Hollander stated this is a revision. This one year, one credit, offering is available for 9th - 12th grade students. It is an introductory course that exposes students to the grammar and vocabulary through themes such as school, preferred leisure activities, sports, music, etc.

General Questions:

Mrs. Herring asked about students enrolled in French class at Schaghticoke Middle School (SMS). Dr. Parlato stated there are five sections and they are full. There are over 100 students in French at the high school.

Mr. Barile asked if the students are reaching a conversational level. Ms. Hollander stated that happens more with the AP classes.

	<p>Mr. McCauley asked about the ESL 1 course, and if students are identified for it. Ms. Hollander stated yes, and there are pathways to it through assessments.</p> <p><i>Mr. McCauley moved for the Curricula in 3A to be brought to the full board for approval. Seconded by Mrs. Herring. Vote passed unanimously.</i></p>	<p>Motion made and passed unanimously for the Curricula listed in 3A to be brought before the full board for approval.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Items of Information A. Report Card Revision B. 6-12 Grading Practices</p> <p>Report Card Revision: Ms. Hollander stated the Grades K-5 report card is a tool for the community. It is a source of information for parents to know how students are doing. The report card should communicate what students are expected to learn, and if the performance aligns with learning expectations.</p> <p>Mrs. Johnson stated it has been a collaborative effort. The report card should contain parent-friendly language and define how a student's performance is measured. It should also ensure that standards-based ratings are aligned. The action plan is very systematic and the result of a collective effort. After looking at other districts and utilizing what they have implemented, the goal is to rework New Milford's report card. The current report card was rolled out by the Superintendent's office in the 2015/2016 school year. Over the years, indicators have lost their meaning. The goal is to give parents a much clearer picture of how their students are doing, and increase parent engagement. Also, there is a need to support the ML students and their families.</p> <p>Mrs. Johnson explained that a report card is meant to provide data so it gives a complete story of a student, with the hope of promoting student success. Engagement right now is low for the current report card.</p> <p>Ms. Hollander stated they have been sharing report card revision work along the way, so teachers are</p>	<p>Items of Information A. Report Card Revision B. 6-12 Grading Practices</p>

informed. The process will be done over six phases. The hope is to roll out the new report cards this time next year. In the end, over 100 teachers will have been part of the process.

Mr. Barile asked if there was any documentation on how report cards were done previously. Mrs. Johnson stated there wasn't, but that won't be the case going forward. This plan will leave a legacy. Mr. Barile asked about learning expectations for the level of each course and how that is set. Ms. Hollander stated they use course standards as guide posts.

Dr. Parlato added they will address the challenges of defining what is "Meeting Expectations," "Progressing," "Beginning," etc.

Mrs. Johnson stated creating the indicators that measure how students are performing can be subjective, so the calibration and alignment is only as valuable as the people who are utilizing it. It is continuous professional learning.

6-12 Grading Practices:

Dr. Parlato stated grading is a method of communication. Grades are determined by participation, assessments, and work assignments. Mrs. McNerney added project-based learning should also be an important part of grading.

Mr. Barile stated he thinks project-based learning is not the answer, especially with the availability of A.I. Testing is a better way to measure knowledge of a subject. He understands students may feel pressure during a test but it is a way for a student to learn how to handle pressure.

Mr. McCauley stated it is all parts. The students do projects and tests.

Mr. Barlie stated he agreed, and overall the goal of the course is to see what you have learned and testing is the best way to measure that.

Mrs. McNerney stated there are kids that are just good test takers. It's about being productive and showing what you know in different ways. Doing poorly on a

	<p>test does not necessarily mean a student does not know the material. Some students struggle with test anxiety.</p> <p>Mr. Barlie stated they need to address the anxiety and help the students overcome their fear. There is data on this.</p> <p>Mr. McCauley stated everyone learns differently and the data is clear on that too. You have to assess kids in many different ways because sometimes the smartest kid in the class is the kid getting an F on a test. I have seen that many times. It's not always anxiety. It is learning differences, there is a lot involved and lots of research out there.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato noted that any discussion of grading raises the question, what does the grade mean and how can we assess students differently.</p> <p>Mr. Barile asked if grading categories are the teacher's discretion. Dr. Parlato replied it is usually determined by grade level, department, or by the course.</p> <p>Mrs. Herring noted that when she moved to 7th grade, she noticed that was when grades started becoming important. A teacher can identify a student with anxiety, take that student aside, and work with them. Testing is still a necessary step. It may be that homework is 10% and student participation is 10%, but she would not penalize a quiet student.</p> <p>Mr. Barile stated, when 50% of students are not meeting their mathematical grade level and they are graduating, we are doing them a disservice. Mrs. Herring stated grade level standards may need adjusting because of how students are living. It is a different world than previous generations.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Public Comment None</p>	<p>Public Comment None</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Adjourn <i>Mr. McCauley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Barile, with all voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.</i></p>	<p>Adjourn The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.</p>

Respectfully submitted:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tammy McInerney', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Committee on Learning