


**New Milford Board of Education
 Committee on Learning Meeting Motion & Minutes
 April 7, 2026
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

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 2026 APR -9 A 10:16
 NEW MILFORD, CT

Present:	Mrs. Sarah Herring, Chairperson Mrs. Tammy McInerney Mr. Joseph Failla
Also Present:	Dr. Janet Parlato, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Mrs. Linda Demeyer, Principal, Schaghticoke Middle School Mrs. Nancy Stover, French Teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School
Absent:	Mr. Dean Barile

1.	Call to Order The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 6:30 pm by Mrs. Sarah Herring.	Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2.	Public Comment None	Public Comment None
3.	Items of Information A. SMS Update - Cultural Connections Mrs. Stover stated Cultural Connections is a new program for 8th grade students to take in lieu of world languages. Cultural Connections is meant for students who are struggling and below grade level, who may not feel ready for a foreign language. Students are recommended by their teachers based upon SBA and iReady scores. Cultural Connections gives students exposure to German, French and Spanish cultures, as well as some language. The class focuses on reading for information, organization, note taking skills and synthesizes a lot of learning. Mrs. McInerney asked if parents could push for their child to enroll in a language course if recommended for Cultural Connections. Mrs. Demeyer stated it is dependent on capacity. Most of the world language classes are full each year. Mrs. Stover stated this is a good option for students not ready to dive into a new language. Mrs. Stover reviewed statistics on 8th graders, stating, in October 2025, students in Cultural Connections had a 5.17 average grade level. Once enrolled in Cultural Connections, the students showed improvement, and as	Items of Information A. SMS Update - Cultural Connections

of February 2026 were at a grade 6 level. The same improvement was seen for all reading skills. Mrs. Stover stated they work to keep the class interesting for kids.

Mr. Failla asked if the grade level statistics Mrs. Stover shared were for English, and by introducing other languages, their English proficiency went up. Mrs. Stover stated yes.

Mrs. McInerney asked how many students are enrolled in Cultural Connections. Mrs. Stover stated, for next year, there are approximately 90 students. Next year's number is a little higher because not as many teachers recommended students for a world language, but it is generally more than ½ of the grade level.

B. Supporting Student Success in Grades 6 and 8 - The Navigator Series

Mrs. Demeyer stated they are happy to announce the new Navigator Series. The Navigator Series aligns with the key points of transition in school. Freshman Academy launched about 4 years ago, and was set to help students in high school. The Navigator Series is a pilot course designed to complement Freshman Academy and help students transition from 5th to 6th grade as well into high school. The focus is on areas of executive functioning, digital citizenship, self discovery and career exploration.

Mr. Failla noted Mrs. Demeyer has experience in the high school, and asked if she thought this was a helpful program. Mrs. Demeyer stated it will be tremendously helpful. Students will prepare for the next grade level. There can be a focus on the importance of effort and building structure.

Mrs. McInerney noted it is important to have transition not just from 8th to 9th grade, but also from 5th to 6th. Ms. Hollander stated the middle school also works and helps with that.


Mrs. Demeyer stated Level Up is for 5th into 6th grade and has four main concepts: tactical navigation, digital citizenship, resilient mindset, and actionable goal setting. It helps students manage stress and setbacks. Navigator 8 would replace Intro to Career Readiness. It would be offered to 8th graders in the 2nd semester.

B. Supporting Student Success in Grades 6 and 8 - The Navigator Series

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	<p>The focus would be to help with energy management. Digital citizenship would be geared towards use of things like AI. Executive functioning and self advocacy would help students learn how to manage relationships. Academic resilience teaches students to be accountable for their grades. The final piece is Freshman Academy, which is already in existence.</p> <p>Mrs. Demeyer stated the Navigator Series is meant to be part of the Portrait of a Lifelong Learner. Level Up is set to launch in fall of 2026, Navigator 8 in 2027, and Freshman Academy is already in place.</p> <p>Mr. Failla stated high school students are not as prepared for graduation as they should be at their age.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato stated there is lots of brain science behind this work.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Public Comment None</p>	<p>Public Comment None</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Adjourn <i>Mrs. McInerney moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Failla, with all voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.</i></p>	<p>Adjourn The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.</p>

Respectfully submitted:



Sarah Herring, Chairperson
 Committee on Learning