

**New Milford Board of Education
Committee on Learning Minutes
March 6, 2018
Lillis Administration Building, Room 2**

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NEW MILFORD, CT

Present: Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Mr. Bill Dahl
Mr. Joseph Failla
Mr. J.T. Schemm

Also Present: Mr. Joshua Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Suzanne Andrews, New Milford High School teacher
Mrs. Terri Sokaitis, New Milford High School teacher
Mrs. Catherine Gardner, New Milford High School teacher
Mrs. Sara Del Mastro, New Milford High School teacher

1.	Call to Order The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:36 p.m. by Mrs. McInerney.	Call to Order
2.	Public Comment There was none.	Public Comment
3.	Discussion and Possible Action A. Review and Approval of Curriculum - Ms. DiCorpo said the curriculums for these three AP courses were written over the summer. The required College Board framework was imbedded into each curriculum. AP Geography and AP Environmental Science are new courses approved last year. AP US History is a revision. 1. AP Human Geography - Mrs. Suzanne Andrews said this is a full year, one credit course open to students in grades 9-12. It covers many different topics leading to high student interest. There is a strong focus on current events and concerns, and includes areas of population, immigration, manufacturing, business	Discussion and Possible Action A. Review and Approval of Curriculum 1. AP Human Geography

- and economics including history. There are currently 72 students enrolled across three sections.
- Mr. Dahl asked if 9th grade students are finding it a struggle. Mrs. Andrews said it is challenging, and several 9th graders have dropped the course. A strong application of World History is required and 9th graders don't have as much background as the students in higher grades.
 - Mrs. McInerney noticed that the middle school social studies curriculum uses similar themes and terminology consistent with this curriculum.
 - Ms. DiCorpo agreed and said the social studies framework at the middle school level has just been revised so this should become less of an issue going forward. There was also discussion this summer about mapping the progression of courses and their alignment to help.
 - Mr. Failla said he thought this was a fascinating course and he could see why it would appeal to students.

3. AP US History

- Mrs. Sokaitis said this is a revision to a full year, one credit course for 11th grade students. It aligns with a rewrite from the College Board. There are currently three sections of 66 students total. It is a popular choice for students wishing to try an AP class as many feel they already have a basic background in US History.
- Mr. Dahl asked if the number of snow days is creating an issue. Mrs. Sokaitis said it is a challenge since the date of the AP exam is fixed for early May. She said the students do supplemental work at home.
- Mr. Dahl asked if teachers ever get paid extra to offer review sessions after school hours. Mrs. Sokaitis said she does not receive an extra stipend, but does offer review sessions after school now and they are well attended.
- Mr. Schemm said he was aware that AP requires teachers to do a lengthy audit as well. Mrs.

3. AP US History

Sokaitis said that is imbedded in the curriculum.

2. AP Environmental Science

- Mrs. Gardner said this full year, one credit course was offered to juniors and seniors this year, with only one junior electing the course. The course connects learning with what going on in the world near and far. Students identify and analyze environmental issues, collect data, seek alternate solutions and learn to think outside the box.
- Mr. Failla said he found it very realistic and tied in to real world topics.
- Mrs. Del Mastro said there are two sections this year with 30 students total. Juniors may have been deterred from electing by the fact that the class competes with AP Physics.
- Mr. Dahl asked if it was a scheduling problem. Mrs. Del Mastro said it was more an issue that there are several AP courses offered for students to choose from, so the students must decide what fits best for them.
- Mr. Dahl asked if there was any thought to opening it up to grade 10 students. Mrs. Gardner said no as they need other sciences, particularly chemistry, first.
- Mr. Dahl asked if they thought offering the course every other year might help enrollment. Mrs. Del Mastro said she did not think it was needed and in fact might mean some students who want the class would miss out.
- Mr. Failla said it was good to see different, unique courses being offered to students.
- Mr. Schemm asked if the class connected to Project Clear. Mrs. Gardner said Project Clear dissolved when the grant money was exhausted but that she still had connections for Candlewood Lake work in the spring.
- Mr. Schemm asked if UConn Early College Credit was offered for this course as that might encourage enrollment. Mrs. Del Mastro said not at this time and that the credit varied by course.
- Ms. DiCorpo said the current legislative session is

2. AP Environmental Science

	having some discussion about mandatory credit acceptance for any student getting a 3 or higher on the AP test. Mr. Dahl moved to bring the following curricula: 1. AP Human Geography 2. AP Environmental Science 3. AP US History to the full Board for approval, seconded by Mr. Failla and passed unanimously.	Motion made and passed unanimously to bring the following curriculum to the full Board for approval: 1. AP Human Geography 2. AP Environmental Science 3. AP US History
4. A. Kindergarten Registration	Presentation • Mrs. McInerney said she and Mr. Failla were pleased to see kindergarten registration in action at HPS last week when they visited. She is excited about the new inclusive, interactive process being developed for students. She said it was her understanding that incoming students would be visiting the current classes during the day and asked if there was any negative feedback from parents who could not attend due to work obligations. Ms. DiCorpo said there had not been; parents sign up for a block of time, so it is not a big commitment. • Ms. DiCorpo said the process had been reviewed and revised after consultation with building administrators, the social/emotional consultant and current kindergarten teachers. The forms requested of parents have been revised and are available on the district website. The plan is to involve area preschools in the placement process with release from the parents. Registration dates were offered during the day and in the evening and scheduled earlier in the year to help gather a head count. Posters advertising the event were displayed throughout town. Follow up will be done with day cares and preschools to identify incoming kindergarteners who have not yet registered. • Mr. Failla asked if the ultimate goal of the revamp	Presentation A. Kindergarten Registration

was to capture numbers. Mr. Smith said the primarily goal was to make it a comfortable transition for students where they can meet the principal, see the school and teachers in a kindergarten classroom, and ride the bus. Capturing the head count is secondary. The kindergarten numbers are the most volatile in the budget process so capturing head count earlier can alert to any concerns.

- Ms. DiCorpo said the current head count is 119 students at NES, where 130 were projected, and 80 at HPS, where 139 were projected.
- Mrs. McInerney mentioned that while NES is close to their projected number, there is a much larger gap to fill at HPS to meet their projected enrollment.
- Mr. Smith said the projections are based on birth rates from the last study which is now 5 years old. This is the last cohort of that projection. He said the HPS kindergarten projections are usually more difficult as there are more rental properties in that area.
- Ms. DiCorpo said the district also offered registration materials in other languages this year which helped. Mr. Failla suggested advertising on Spanish radio stations as well.
- Ms. DiCorpo said that as part of the process they have partnered with community groups such as the PTO and Youth Agency. The CT Community Foundation grant provides funding for gift bags which will be given to students. She distributed a draft email to parents which explains the 90-minute kindergarten orientation experience for incoming kindergarteners and their parents. She said the dates for HPS are May 26-28 and for NES it will be April 2, 3, and 5.
- Mr. Failla said he thinks the bus safety piece was done in the past and thinks it is a great help in easing anxiety.
- Mr. Schemm asked when other districts offer registration. Ms. DiCorpo said she had investigated that and most did in February which was one push to get the changes up and running. She will fine tune for next year.

	• Mrs. McInerney said she thought the revised kindergarten entry process provided a much better experience for parents and well as students who were usually not included in the past. The idea to involve the incoming students in visiting a current class in action would also cut down on student and parent anxiety. • Mr. Schemm said the district already does transition events for students in grades 2 and 5 so it was fitting to see it being added here. • Mr. Dahl thanked Ms. DiCorpo for her work here. He said she "wears lots of hats" and does it all well.	
5.	Public Comment • There was none.	Public Comment
6.	Adjourn Mr. Dahl moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m., seconded by Mrs. McInerney and passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Committee on Learning