

**New Milford Board of Education
Committee on Learning Minutes
April 3, 2018
Lillis Administration Building, Room 2**

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
Mr. Kelly Duncan, New Milford High School teacher

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NEW MILFORD, CT

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 asked if the order of presentation for the curriculums could be switched so Mr. Duncan could present first. There was no objection. 2. Writing Research and Workshop • Mr. Duncan said this course is a half year senior elective and includes a wide variety of student levels, from honors to ELL. They look at the process of writing including revising, editing, and organizing. Critical thinking is stressed along with the connection between reading and writing. Students work on several drafts of material, which include a resume and college essay. Their two best writing samples are placed in a formal portfolio. • Ms. DiCorpo said the high school is having ongoing professional learning discussions about what the student portfolio should look like at that	Discussion and Possible Action A. Review and Approval of Curriculum 2. Writing Research and Workshop

	level. In the elementary grades, the Columbia Reading and Writing Units, which have been adopted, include the same skill development. At SNIS, they are starting to collect evidence into portfolios which will go forward with students. • Mr. Dahl said he thinks the course should be a requirement for all students because it is so important to learn to write. Regarding the college essay, he asked if it would be better to have the course in the fall versus the spring. Mr. Duncan said many colleges have rolling admissions into the spring. • Ms. DiCorpo said other courses also include a college essay component. • Mrs. McNerney asked if the portfolio contains different types of writing samples. Mr. Duncan said it does and that they are also looking into including visual representations too. • Mrs. McNerney asked why the course is only offered to seniors. Ms. DiCorpo said students need four credits of English to graduate and grades 9-11 offer more standard year-long core classes. • Mr. Schemm asked for current enrollment. Mr. Duncan said he had 11 students in the fall and 9 this spring, which is low historically. Ms. DiCorpo said last year there were 40 total students enrolled. • Mr. Smith said there are lots of choices and options for senior electives, which is good for student interest and engagement but can affect enrollment. It is a constant balancing act. • Mr. Dahl asked if the block schedule could be a problem for student choice. Mr. Smith said it offers more choice than traditional because there is a greater variety of options offered in the same time slot from which students may choose. • Mr. Failla said he would like to see the course opened to juniors. Mr. Smith said juniors can take it, but it would be a second half year course on top of their year-long 11th grade English class. • Mr. Failla wanted to be sure that counselors were at least conveying it as an option. Mr. Smith said he would ask.	
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	1. AP Language and Composition • Ms. DiCorpo said English teacher Jennie Cox who wrote this revision could not be here tonight so Ms. DiCorpo would summarize. • The revision aligns with College Board guidelines and with an introductory college course for writing and research standards. The course is open to juniors and seniors. • Mr. Failla asked for clarification that this is a revision to an existing course and not a new course because he is concerned that we have too many AP courses, creating a scheduling problem for the non-AP student. He worries that middle-level students will get locked out of courses while the focus is on students who excel. • Ms. DiCorpo said counselors can use an AP Predictor tool to guide students based on their past courses taken and interest. She said the high school offers 20 AP courses and 155 non-AP courses. • Mr. Schemm said the College Board released a report last week that showed New Milford was actually lower in AP percentage than most of the surrounding communities. • Mr. Smith said New Milford was significantly lower even a few years ago before additions to AP were made. He said AP is not just about rigor but about preparing students for college expectations. He compared AP classes to training wheels on a bike; students get a chance to practice riding the bike before college. He said the College Board has also offered courses such as AP Environmental Science and AP Human Geography to appeal more to the middle-level student. He said studies show that AP helps success at college. Students who take at least one AP class in high school come back for sophomore year at a higher percentage than those who haven't. • Mr. Dahl said if AP is not causing scheduling problems, perhaps a Guidance audit is in order to see what is. Mr. Smith said they have begun to track how many students don't get first or second choices now to see if they can find a pattern.	1. AP Language and Composition
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	Mr. Dahl moved to bring the following curricula: 1. AP Language and Composition 2. Writing Research and Workshop to the full Board for approval, seconded by Mrs. McNerney and passed unanimously.	Motion made and passed unanimously to bring the following curriculum to the full Board for approval: 1. AP Language and Composition 2. Writing Research and Workshop
4.	Presentation • Ms. DiCorpo said as an aside before the presentation, she wanted Board members to know about a program that took place at the high school today. All grade 11 students attended <i>The Truth About Hate</i>, a presentation through the ADL that extends the NAMES program offered to grade 9 students. She said it was a wonderful first move towards tackling bias and will help to create a common terminology for change. • Mrs. McNerney asked if there is any thought to bringing the program to the middle school level. Ms. DiCorpo said the ADL does not recommend this program for that level, but they have other programming that may be suitable. She and Dr. Longo are reviewing them. A. TEAM Review of Practice • Ms. DiCorpo said TEAM is the support for new teacher induction. There was a change at the state level and the state no longer provides funding, so districts have had to come up with their own program. She said the district is working with EdAdvance on a Review of Practice model that includes collecting evidence, analyzing, processing and action on the teacher's part. The goal is three cycles within two years. There is a TEAM Committee that is working through the process. Ms. DiCorpo co-chairs with Mr. Jeff Bronn. She said so far, the new program has been very well received, with new mentors signing up to participate.	Presentation A. TEAM Review of Practice

	• Mrs. McInerney asked what the qualifications are to mentor and what percent of staff qualify. Ms. DiCorpo said any teacher who has taught for three years, two in district, qualifies. Sometimes the younger teachers are uniquely qualified because the process is still fresh for them. She said they are also looking at marrying mentor training with the revision training administrators have been receiving. Monthly building-level meetings have also been instituted. In the future, she hopes to build a consortium approach with other districts for support and dollar savings. • Mr. Smith said it is unfortunate that districts are having to reinvent the program now that the state has stopped supporting it, because CT had a model program that was nationally regarded. Now we have lost that consistency from district to district. • Mr. Dahl asked if teachers with significant experience, who are new to the district, had to participate in TEAM. Ms. DiCorpo said not if they can show evidence of completed modules. • Mr. Schemm asked if mentors are paid. Ms. DiCorpo said yes; the state sets the rate of \$500 per mentee, but does not provide the funding.	
5.	Public Comment • There was none.	Public Comment
6.	Adjourn Mr. Dahl moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m., seconded by Mrs. McInerney and passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Committee on Learning