

**New Milford Board of Education
Committee on Learning Minutes
September 4, 2018
Lillis Administration Building, Room 2**

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

Also Present: Dr. Stephen Tracy, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Shana Bergonzelli-Graham, NMHS Business teacher
Mrs. Kristie O'Neill, NMHS Business teacher
Mr. Eric Williams, NMHS Assistant Principal

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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 7:30 p.m. by Mrs. McInerney.	Call to Order
2.	Public Comment - NES Grade 2 teacher Doranne Koval said she was speaking for the NES second grade team regarding concerns they have about large class sizes. She said there are currently six teachers, five with classes of 23 students each and one of 24 students. NES dropped a second grade class this year and there is now a disparity between the two K-2 schools in numbers. She said they are concerned about meeting the needs of disparate learners and achieving the same student growth as at their sister school, HPS, which has lower class sizes. She said the benefits of smaller class sizes are well known. They are respectfully asking the Board to add an additional second grade teacher at NES, or at least additional instructional tutors and/or paraeducators. She suggested that the second grade classes could be redistricted, saying it is a tough choice to disrupt current classes but worth it in the end for the students. - Mrs. McInerney said this topic was on the agenda for discussion later in the evening.	Public Comment

3.	Discussion and Possible Action	Discussion and Possible Action
	• Mr. Failla suggested moving up item 3B on the agenda. There was no objection. B. NES Grade 2 Enrollment/Class Size • Mrs. McInerney said she asked for this item to be put on the agenda so that the disparities between the schools could be addressed. • Dr. Tracy distributed background material from the budget season when the enrollment and class sizes were discussed, and a NES second grade class reduced. He said NES is just slightly over projection and HPS has been lower than anticipated and that is what is creating the gap. • Mrs. McInerney asked why NES was reduced during budget and not HPS. She understands that things can change from January and asked when the administration realized that NES was higher. She said that even with adding a teacher to NES, their second grade class sizes would still be higher than at HPS. She said she feels there is a need to provide support to NES. She is concerned about including paraeducators in any solution, since the district currently has issues filling those positions. • Mr. Dahl said he doesn't like the comparison of schools. He said the committee should be talking about what is best for educating the students in the class. If that is a lower number, then how can we bring that number down or support the educators with the ones they have. • Mrs. McInerney said she wants to ensure equitable learning. • Mr. Schemm said he is an advocate of parity across schools. The total school numbers are not balanced at the moment, with NES' population much higher. He said he doesn't know the solution for that mid-stream. He asked about the number of out of zone students. • Ms. DiCorpo said it is not a large number and they were already in projections at budget time with the exception of two kindergarteners.	B. NES Grade 2 Enrollment/Class Size

• Mr. Failla said projections aren't perfect; they are estimates. He said in looking at the monthly report, there was no slight in allocation, with the district actually under projection total. He asked what can be done to help now. • Dr. Tracy said he will work with Ms. DiCorpo and Human Resources to identify options regarding any learning issues and parity keeping in mind disruption and cost factors. He can bring those to the Board meeting on September 18 for further discussion. • Mrs. McNerney said if those options are going to include adding a teacher or moving students then she did not think it could wait until the end of the month. She asked if the superintendent needed full Board approval to add a teacher. • Dr. Tracy said he would determine the right process and whether or not it can be expedited. He said the Board should be cautious about setting a precedent regarding moves or class sizes before the next budget season begins. • Mr. Schemm said he would like to know more about our current cohorts. Where did the enrollment go? Are there more coming? He said the enrollment report is always a fluid document. • Ms. DiCorpo said there were four new registrations at HPS just today.	
A. Review and Approval of Curriculum • Mrs. McNerney thanked the presenters for their patience. • Ms. DiCorpo gave a brief presentation regarding the Practical Arts Pathways – Integrating Computer Literacy and AP Computer Science Principles. • Mr. Williams provided a handout which specified the pathways for the computer courses. He said there is a renewed emphasis to communicate with counselors and students as to where one course flows to another.	A. Review and Approval of Curriculum
1. Computer Literacy 2. AP Computer Science Principles	1. Computer Literacy 2. AP Computer Science

	• Mrs. O'Neill said Computer Literacy replaces the Keyboarding class at the high school. It provides more authentic work with typing and real-world applications. • Ms. Bergonzelli-Graham said it is rare for students entering high school to be able to type without looking so this motor skill needs repetition. Students need to "unlearn" wrong behavior. • Mrs. O'Neill said students do keyboarding work as a warm up at the beginning of each class before moving on to other work. The class is designed as a survey course that gives students a taste of work and see if they have an interest that can be developed going forward in other classes. • Mrs. McInerney said she thought it was great to see the emphasis on what career paths interests can lead to. • Mrs. O'Neill said career discussion is integral to each unit. • Mr. Failla said he was concerned with the emphasis on Google Docs since Microsoft Word proficiency is so necessary in the business environment. • Mr. Williams said the BCA computer course focuses on the Microsoft suite. He said this is a half year survey course which covers lots of topics; Google Docs is one. The subject matter is flexible based on student pre-assessments. • Mrs. O'Neill said this class serves the student need for Google Docs which is what they use at the middle school, high school and often in college. They try to teach the students how to tie the two worlds together, for example by changing a resume done in Google Docs to Microsoft Word. • Ms. Bergonzelli-Graham said collaboration is important and Google Docs has many tools for that. • Mr. Schemm said there was a great deal of discussion when this course was proposed last year, and he was happy to see how it turned out. He suggested keeping some placeholders for any new technology that develops. • Mr. Williams said they are hopeful the redesign	Principles
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	will lead to increased enrollment, including from the female population, as well as interest in post-secondary options related to computer programming. • Ms. DiCorpo said current enrollment is 75 spread across four sections, spring has 80 enrolled over four sections. • Mr. Failla asked what the female population numbers were now. Ms. Bergonzelli-Graham said Intro to Programming is ¼ female, but AP Programming has three females out of 23 total students. • Ms. Bergonzelli-Graham said her goal is to get female, and all, students interested to see what they are good at in the field. She said AP Computer Science Principles is good for that because it stresses the creative aspects of programming. The course utilizes APPinventor, which was developed by MIT to create apps. The course is all portfolio based so that is helpful for college. • Ms. DiCorpo said this course was a good example of an introductory AP course that can lead to more difficult AP courses. It is accessible for all students. • Mr. Schemm said the course has the highest adoption rate of any AP course offered. • Mr. Schemm said he was aware that the course was based in the Business department now and asked if there was any consideration to cross listing it with other departments and certifications. • Ms. DiCorpo said perhaps they could look at that as enrollment builds; there are lots of different models in other districts. • Mr. Williams said one advantage of having it in the Business department now is that they can tie in to Perkins grant funding. Mr. Schemm moved to bring the curriculum for Computer Literacy and for AP Computer Science Principles to the full Board for approval, seconded by Mr. Dahl and passed unanimously.	Motion made and passed unanimously to bring the curriculum for Computer Literacy and for AP Computer Science Principles to the full Board for approval.
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4. A.	Item of Information Theories of Action Progress • Ms. DiCorpo gave a presentation on the progress being made. She said she presented information in this area at the administrative retreat, convocation, and for the new teachers. She said the focus is to develop instructional capacity so that administrators can lead the work in their buildings. There will be an ongoing review of professional learning being implemented in the district. • Mr. Dahl asked if each principal developed goals with their individual buildings. Ms. DiCorpo said they do but in collaboration with the other administrators so that there is consistency within the district. • Dr. Tracy said the emphasis is on making sure the principals see themselves as leaders in their building's professional development. • Ms. DiCorpo said the Head/Lead teacher job description has been redesigned so that they can help lead professional learning as well. The emphasis is on collaboration and creating collective teacher efficacy. She said the role of coaches is shifting towards this area as well. They will help with individual growth. • Dr. Tracy said that can be key since there is sometimes a reluctance on the part of the educator to collaborate. He said it is the hallmark of a professional to show a willingness to be subject to critique and assistance from colleagues. He said the goal is to help them see the value. • Mr. Dahl said he is concerned with the amount of time out of the classroom that is needed to get all the work done. Ms. DiCorpo said it is less than six days total.	Item of Information A. Theories of Action Progress
5.	Public Comment • There was none.	Public Comment

6.	Adjourn Mr. Dahl moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m., seconded by Mr. Schemm and passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m.
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Respectfully submitted:



Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Committee on Learning