

**New Milford Board of Education
Committee on Learning Minutes
October 3, 2017
Lillis Administration Building, Room 2**

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
2017 OCT -5 P 12:58

NEW MILFORD, CT

Present: Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Mr. Bill Dahl
Mr. Dave Littlefield
Mr. J.T. Schemm

Also Present: Mr. Joshua Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Yvonne de St. Croix, Talented and Gifted teacher
Mr. Michael Abraham, Social Studies teacher
Mr. Patrick Smith, Social Studies teacher
Ms. Tracy Olmsted, Social Studies teacher
Ms. Linda Scoralick, Co-Chair Professional Development Evaluation Committee

1.	Call to Order The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Mrs. McInerney.	Call to Order
2.	Public Comment Bob Coppola said he has been very impressed with the TAG program work done by Ms. de St. Croix and Ms. DiCorpo and he wanted to publicly acknowledge them.	Public Comment
3.	Presentation A. Updated TAG Requirements Ms. de St. Croix said she was happy to follow up on her August presentation to the Committee. She said students are already engaged in many varied activities this school year. Under the program's current structure, the following best practices are followed: Identify students with high potential, then develop or modify enrichments and curriculum extensions in response to their needs. Nurture the social and emotional well-being of talented and gifted students by recognizing their	Presentation A. Updated TAG Requirements

	individual strengths and learning styles. Design sustainable standards-based programs that connect and overlap with fine arts and subject-based curriculum. Empower families and stakeholders with necessary and timely resources regarding TAG. • Under the current referral process, students are referred by teachers, parents, and/or through historical testing data. Considerations presently include use of language, memory skills, math characteristics, and non-verbal ability. Students are tested with parental consent by the school psychologist using the WASI/WISC assessment and the results are reviewed with the parent. • Ms. DiCorpo said the current process leaves gaps in the identification process. • Ms. de St. Croix and Ms. DiCorpo are proposing the use of the CogAt (Cognitive Abilities Test), a nationally normed assessment tool, as the universal screener for all students in third grade, as well as students transferring into district. The 30-minute test would be given in the classroom in late fall. Use of CogAt will broaden access, increase inclusivity, and offer equitable opportunities for all NMPS students regarding TAG. It will increase the potential for identification of students instead of testing only some students based on the recommendations of teachers, parents, and/or historical achievement data. It will provide a fast, reliable, valid data point when determining eligibility for the program and can anchor other measures to inform decisions on student placement in accelerated coursework. • Students exhibiting a 98th percentile (verbal, quantitative, non-verbal or equivalent, or composite) on the CogAt, a nationally normed aptitude assessment/indicator, as a stand-alone score, will be considered candidates for identification as highly gifted. The top 2% of students tested will fall into the category of highly gifted. Students who score 95% on CogAt screener on the verbal portion and consistently score at a 95% or higher on reading MAP data will be identified as Talented and Gifted in Academic	
--	---	--

	Reading. Students who score 95% on CogAt screener on the mathematical portion and consistently score at a 95% or higher on mathematical MAP data will be identified as Talented and Gifted in Academic Mathematics. • Ms. DiCorpo said the use of CogAt will also help identify ELL students, unlike the current process which has a heavy reading/language component. • Mr. Dahl expressed concern about adding more students to the program with only one teacher. Ms. de St. Croix said the new referral tool would still only identify about 2% of students based on the national norm but would find that 2% more equitably than now. In addition, the screener will allow her to tailor her instruction more.	
4.	Discussion and Possible Action A. Review and Approval of Curriculum 1. Honor's Freshman World History • Mr. Abraham said this honors course is a foundation for the AP World History course which is offered in sophomore year. It covers from the first peoples through 1492. It uses a rigorous text approved by the College Board and foreshadows content themes and performance skills. 2. AP World History • Mr. Abraham said this is a very challenging course and exam. The course begins with a review of the first people and continues up to 21st century globalization. It prepares students for the AP test but also works in district and common core standards in the areas of proper credit of sources, communication, presentation and performance based tasks. • Mr. Schemm asked about current enrollment and Mr. Abraham said it was at 32. Mr. Abraham said the course is not only for the advanced student but is good exposure for all.	Discussion and Possible Action A. Review and Approval of Curriculum 1. Honor's Freshman World History 2. AP World History

3. Grade 6 Social Studies 4. Grade 7 Social Studies • SMS teacher Mr. Patrick Smith said he wrote these curriculums in collaboration with Ms. Mary Maloney with input from Mrs. Taborsak and Ms. de St. Croix. The courses make up a two-year study of world regions with the western hemisphere and Europe in Grade 6 and the eastern hemisphere in Grade 7. He said the curriculums are truly living documents and this year's professional development will focus on their review and evolution. • Ms. DiCorpo said the curriculums integrate the new Social Studies framework and the performance assessments are aligned. • Mr. Dahl said he is really pleased with the general progression of curriculum in the district and finds the use of one template very helpful. • Mrs. McInerney asked how many Grade 6 Social Studies teachers there are and how the new curriculum is rolled out to them. Mr. Smith said there are three and they discuss this and other topics in their joint Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings which happen once every six days.	3. Grade 6 Social Studies 4. Grade 7 Social Studies
5. Grade 8 Social Studies • Ms. Olmsted said the Grade 8 curriculum has changed quite a bit with the new framework. Prior, the focus was on topics in U.S. History, now it is more of a survey course from the revolution to immigration. Teachers are very pleased with the increased rigor and outstanding performance tasks. • Ms. DiCorpo said the textbook is over 27 years old so now that the curriculum has been written to not be reliant on any one resource, they will be bringing a textbook request forward for approval as a curriculum resource. • Mr. Schemm said the textbook can be just one tool in this day and age. Ms. Olmsted said they also use Chromebooks frequently as well as Internet links and video sources.	5. Grade 8 Social Studies

- Mr. Smith said most textbooks include an annual subscription fee for online resources. He said there are approximately 750 Chromebooks at SMS with a little over 1000 students. Now the emphasis is on increasing access to the infrastructure.
- Ms. DiCorpo said the district is beginning to curate resources internally as well.

Mr. Dahl moved to bring the following curricula:

1. Honor's Freshman World History
2. AP World History
3. Grade 6 Social Studies
4. Grade 7 Social Studies
5. Grade 8 Social Studies

to the full Board for approval, seconded by Mrs. McInerney and passed unanimously.

B. Teacher Evaluation Plan

- Ms. DiCorpo said this document includes minor suggested revisions from the state and she is expecting final approval this week.
- The goal of the plan is to improve teacher practice and support development over time of all teachers in all phases of their careers.
- The rationale for suggested revisions relates to the desire of Administration and the Professional Development Evaluation Committee's desire to improve teacher practice focused on specific, meaningful feedback; Administrators desire to move from the management aspects of their positions into more instructional leadership roles; The need for the overall time for evaluations to be lessened so that administrators can spend more time planning for and leading instructional work; and to tie directly the work of Jen Michno and ReVision into practice in a way that works for our TEVAL implementation.
- The revised plan will include three formal (two announced, one unannounced) observations for first and second year teachers and those new to the

Motion made and passed unanimously to bring the following curriculum to the full Board for approval:

1. Honor's Freshman World History
2. AP World History
3. Grade 6 Social Studies
4. Grade 7 Social Studies
5. Grade 8 Social Studies

B. Teacher Evaluation Plan

	district, a savings of approximately 145 minutes per teacher from the current plan; One formal (unannounced), one informal, and one review of practice for teachers rated proficient or exemplary for two consecutive years by NMPS, a savings of approximately 28 minutes per teacher; Three formal (two announced, one unannounced) and two informal observations for teachers rated below standard or developing, a savings of approximately 95 minutes per teacher. This includes a stipulation that work will be linked to professional growth and development plan(s) for teachers rated below standard or developing. • For all teachers, additional observations can be mutually agreed upon any time after the first formal observation. • Feedback will be targeted and directly connected to: The Performance and Practice Focus Areas; School & District Goals (if different); Other feedback which can be collected and tagged, if there is another focus that should be added due to what is seen in observations. • The Performance and Practice Focus areas should be developed through mutual agreement and be aligned with previous evaluations and recommendations and current school & district goals. If a teacher is completing TEAM, the focus areas should align to the PGAP. If a teacher is on an intervention plan, the focus areas should align to the PGDP. • The Improvement/Remediation Plan is divided into three phases. Phase 1: Area of focus and plan for sustained and targeted teacher support over time-tied to the CCT. Phase 2: Meeting log-Dates of meetings with administrator and other professionals who may provide support in a specific area. Phase 3: Documentation of student achievement and teacher improvement in order to be exited from remediation. • Mr. Smith said Ms. DiCorpo and the Committee have worked hard to stay within state statutes while creatively adjusting the plan to make it a better fit for New Milford. • Mr. Dahl asked for a copy of the rubric and Ms.	
--	---	--

	DiCorpo said that was in a separate state document which she would provide. • Ms. Scoralick said the work administrators are doing with ReVision has been very valuable in creating a common language for all. This is a continuing shift from “box checking” to help in growing learning. • Mr. Smith said the goal is to give ongoing feedback so that teachers can grow in their effectiveness with students. This plan is a tool to coach teachers to do a better job, not a punitive measure. • Mr. Dahl asked if Department Chairs do any evaluation and if so how they are trained. Ms. Scoralick said at the high school they do informal observations and they are beginning to share the ReVision learning at this time. • Mr. Littlefield asked what happens if an administrator goes to do an unannounced observation and students are taking a test for example. Ms. Scoralick said the administrator would just move on to another classroom. Ms. DiCorpo said the curriculum pacing guides also help because the administrator can look to see where a teacher should be in the curriculum. • Mr. Schemm asked for clarification on “in class” observations for certified staff such as counselors. Ms. Scoralick said they may observe group sessions. If it is a one-on-one situation, they will ask the student for permission to observe. • Ms. DiCorpo also wanted the Board to note page 15 where it has been clarified that state data can be used to set a goal but not used as a measurement device at the end since results take too long to receive. • Mr. Dahl said he remains concerned that there are not enough administrators in the buildings to do all these evaluations. • Mr. Littlefield thanked the committee for all its work and asked to see a copy of the CCT. • Mr. Schemm asked if this was a waiver from SEED and Ms. DiCorpo said it is considered an addendum to the existing plan.	
--	--	--

	Mr. Schemm said he thinks it is important to get buy in from veteran teachers and recognize their years of experience. He also suggested that a highlight pamphlet be developed for when the plan is rolled out since this is a lengthy document. Mr. Littlefield moved to bring the Teacher Evaluation Plan to the full Board for approval, seconded by Mr. Dahl and passed unanimously.	Motion made and passed unanimously to bring the Teacher Evaluation Plan to the full Board for approval.
5.	Public Comment There was none.	Public Comment
6.	Adjourn Mr. Dahl moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m., seconded by Mr. Littlefield and passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Tammy McInerney, Chairperson
Committee on Learning