

**New Milford Board of Education
Committee on Learning Special Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2016
Lillis Administration Building, Room 2**

Present: Mr. William R. Dahl, Chairperson
Mr. Dave Littlefield
Mr. Brian McCauley
Mrs. Tammy McInerney

Also Present: Mr. Joshua Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Alessandro Amenta, Teacher, New Milford High School
Mrs. Suzanne Andrews, Teacher, New Milford High School
Mr. Jeffrey Bronn, Teacher, New Milford High School
Mrs. Sara Del Mastro, Science Department Chair, New Milford High School
Mrs. Denise Duggan, Teacher, New Milford High School
Mr. Ryan Fitzsimmons, Teacher, New Milford High School
Mrs. Cortni Muir, Math Coach
Mrs. Mariann Schirizzo, Health Teacher, K-8

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1.	Call to Order The special meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Mr. Dahl.	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 between 30-35 curriculum were written over the summer and she will be bringing them forward by topic for continuity. They are in the pilot stage for this year. 1. Sixth Grade Health - Mrs. Schirizzo said this course includes topics on decision making, emotional health, self-esteem, stress management, and staying safe on social media while showing respect for others. There is a unit on the six pillars of character that	Discussion and Possible Action A. Review and Approval of Curriculum 1. Sixth Grade Health

dovetails with the district's character education program. The drug abuse education unit includes the topics of inhalant and alcohol abuse and a refusal skills portion where students learn eight different ways to say no. Later in the year, students do a unit on nutrition and on the components of fitness. They study environmental health in the spring and end with a unit on sexuality which focuses on puberty.

- Mr. Dahl said he taught health for over 40 years and was very impressed with this curriculum. He asked if the state mandates any topics. Mrs. Schirizzo said there are no mandates in 6th grade health, only recommendations, though they do take national and state standards into account.
- Mrs. McNerney asked what happens if a parent has an issue with a particular unit. Mrs. Schirizzo said they try and answer any parental concerns ahead of time. Parents can preview videos etc. if they wish. She will be inviting parents in during parent conferences to stop in and view materials. Parents can also opt out students from units but that happens very seldom.

2. Health II

- Mrs. Duggan said this an option offered to juniors and seniors who were not able to get their needed credit from Health I. She said CPR training is mandated by the state and New Milford has been ahead of the curve in that we can give certification in this area as our instructors are certified. The nutrition unit includes wellness goals including apps for nutrition consumers and food choices which is important as students move on to post-secondary life. There is a unit on physical fitness for a healthy person. There are also units on mental health: resources if in crisis, anger management and conflict resolution and substance abuse prevention. Sexuality is discussed at this level too with the emphasis on relationships and boundary setting.

2. Health II

	3. Introduction to Video Production 4. Advanced Video Production • Mr. Bronn and Mr. Amenta said these courses were proposed last year as a split out from the original course. The split has allowed an increase in student enrollment from about a dozen last year to over 60 total this year. • Mr. Bronn said the Introductory course is focused on the technical aspects of film making, including equipment use and the elements of photography. They also discuss the ethical nature of film making including the appropriate use of music and humor. • Mr. Amenta said they stress to the students that this is a craft, not just turning a camera on to record. The idea of film as motion pictures is explored through photography. This is used to begin the students' introduction to the complex software they will use. In the Advanced course, students take their learned skills and move to production, including pre and post editing and script writing. Students create product for a variety of purposes and for a variety of audiences. This is the course out of which comes Green Wave TV. Students also create a long term individual video project chosen based on individual interest. • Mr. Bronn said they were very appreciative of the upgraded equipment and lab. • Mrs. McInerney said she loves this course and asked if there was ever a case where a student would take the intro course and then have a semester gap before they were able to take the advanced course and Mr. Bronn said that could happen. • Mrs. McInerney said she was excited to see that the Advanced course provides and English credit as well and is a great alternative within the English curriculum. Mr. Amenta said writing is a large component. He gave the example of a class project where students write their college essay and then turn it into a video.	3. Introduction to Video Production 4. Advanced Video Production
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5. Grade 6 Mathematics 6. Grade 7 Mathematics 7. Grade 7 Pre-Algebra • Mrs. Muir Grades 6 and 7 Mathematics use the Connected Math series as the vehicle to teach the major areas. The focus is on common core standards and math practices with some emphasis on standardized testing. For the Grade 7 Pre-Algebra course, Mrs. Muir looked at the Connected Math series and pulled important units from 7th and 8th grade that would best prepare the students for Algebra and combined them into a condensed course. Common end of unit assessments aligned to standards were added as well as performance tasks for each marking period. In Pre-Algebra, students utilize Desmos, an online graphing calculator. There is talk of adding this for SBAC at the state level, so New Milford students would already be familiar with the tool. • Ms. DiCorpo said Mrs. Muir is working with the Chair of the high school math department to continue the flow of curriculum and instruction from the middle school to the high school level. 8. Algebra 1 Honors • Mr. Fitzsimmons said this course is uses a great textbook series and is fully aligned with common core. It has an Honors pace and students work faster and at a deeper level than in other courses. Assessments are correlated to hit all standards. • Mr. Littlefield asked how it ties in with 8th grade Algebra and Mr. Fitzsimmons said the 8th grade course is essentially Honors level as well. 9. Practical Math – Applications of Probability 10. Practical Math – Applications of Statistics 11. Practical Math – Applications of Percents 12. Practical Math – Applications of Measurement • Mr. Dahl said he was very happy to see the real	5. Grade 6 Mathematics 6. Grade 7 Mathematics 7. Grade 7 Pre-Algebra 8. Algebra 1 Honors 9. Practical Math – Applications of Probability 10. Practical Math – Applications of Statistics 11. Practical Math – Applications of Percents 12. Practical Math – Applications of Measurement
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	life applications used in this series of courses. • Mr. Fitzsimmons said these courses were designed to help with the increased credit requirement for math and to reach the group of students who may struggle with other math courses. These courses stress real world applications to teach theory. Topics may include baking using a recipe, buying a car, using a credit card, budgeting for clothes and food or playing the stock market. • Mr. McCauley said the courses teach skills that the students will be able to use across a number of courses. Mrs. McInerney moved to bring the following curricula: 1. Sixth Grade Health 2. Health II 3. Introduction to Video Production 4. Advanced Video Production 5. Grade 6 Mathematics 6. Grade 7 Mathematics 7. Grade 7 Pre-Algebra 8. Algebra 1 Honors 9. Practical Math – Applications of Probability 10. Practical Math – Applications of Statistics 11. Practical Math – Applications of Percents 12. Practical Math – Applications of Measurement to the full Board for approval, seconded by Mr. McCauley and passed unanimously.	Motion made and passed unanimously to bring the following curriculum to the full Board for approval: 1. Sixth Grade Health 2. Health II 3. Introduction to Video Production 4. Advanced Video Production 5. Grade 6 Mathematics 6. Grade 7 Mathematics 7. Grade 7 Pre-Algebra 8. Algebra 1 Honors 9. Practical Math – Applications of Probability 10. Practical Math – Applications of Statistics 11. Practical Math – Applications of Percents 12. Practical Math – Applications of Measurement
4.	Items of Information A. Request for New Program or Course 1. AP Human Geography • Mrs. Andrews said this course will also stress real world applications. Students will look at such things as how the actual land has effected civilization over time and how we as people affect the land. Topics will include migration	Items of Information A. Request for New Program or Course 1. AP Human Geography

and political struggles, population trends, cultural patterns, climate change, food production and urban land use. It is a year-long course with no prerequisite.

- Ms. DiCorpo said other courses at the high school which touch on these topics are Middle East Studies and AP World History which both have high enrollment. This bodes well for the popularity of this course.
- Mr. Dahl asked if Danbury currently offered this course and Mr. Smith said yes, multiple sections. He said it tends to appeal to the non-traditional AP student as well and there is high interest. It will offer another avenue for more students to be exposed to a college level course in high school to get a taste of college expectations and pace.
- Mrs. McNerney asked what the budget implications are and Mr. Smith said the plan is to bring it back for approval following discussion tonight and then include it in budget planning. He said they may try to find dollars this year for the actual curriculum writing so that the class will be fully good to go in September. Mr. Dahl agreed that was a good idea.
- Mrs. McNerney asked about the addition preps that may be required of the teacher. Mr. Dahl said the teacher contract does not specify a maximum number of preps. Mr. Smith said they would try to be sensitive and balance the load.
- Mr. Smith said offering additional options to students that do not require prerequisites is helpful for flexibility of scheduling too.

2. AP Environmental Science

- Mrs. Del Mastro said she taught this course in her previous district and it was her favorite. It is truly interdisciplinary and appeals to many students. The study is on environmental issues and the science behind them and includes a true science lab component. She said it will complement very well what the department already offers.

2. AP Environmental Science

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Page 7

	• Mr. Littlefield said he was intrigued by the field work component. Mrs. Del Mastro said the budget will include transportation funds so the students could experiment with resources in their natural setting, for example through water quality testing. She said there were many local possibilities. • Mrs. McNerney noted a typo in the chart total and Mr. Smith said it would be corrected. • Mrs. Del Mastro said the Science department is also looking at streamlining AP Chemistry and Biology to one block classes to allow more flexibility with other courses. • Mr. Dahl asked Mrs. Del Mastro if the block schedule helps or hurts AP courses in her opinion. She said though AP science courses did lose minutes in going to the block, she loves teaching in it and the extended labs it allows. • Ms. DiCorpo said the high school is planning to survey students regarding their interest in courses and course content at the high school, both current and in the future. The information will be used to inform discussions regarding curriculum development.	
5.	Public Comment • There was none.	Public Comment
6.	Adjourn Mrs. McNerney moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. seconded by Mr. Littlefield and passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

William R. Dahl

William R. Dahl, Chairperson
Committee on Learning