New Milford Board of Education
Special Meeting Motions and Minutes
October 20, 2026 - 5:15 pm
Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center

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NEW MILFORD, CT

Present:	Mrs. Leslie Sarich, Chairperson Mr. Eric Hansell, Vice Chairperson *arrived 5:18pm* Mrs. Sarah Herring, Secretary Mr. Joseph Failla *arrived 6:05pm* Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. Brian McCauley *arrived 5:19pm* Mr. Tom O'Brien
Absent:	Mrs. Tammy McInerney, Assistant Secretary
Also Present:	Dr. Janet Parlato, Superintendent Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Matthew Cunningham, Director of Facilities Mrs. Linda Demeyer, Director of Human Resources Mr. Jeffrey Turner, Director of Technology Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations Dr. Kimberly Culkin, Director of Student Services

1.	**Call to Order** The special meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 5:19 p.m. by Mrs. Leslie Sarich, Chairperson.	**Call to Order**
2.	**Public Comment**	**Public Comment**
3.	**<u>DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION</u>**	**<u>DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION</u>**
A.	**Student Performance Workshop** Dr. Parlato provided an overview of district performance metrics, including ELA, math, science, arts, physical fitness, graduation rates, academic growth, chronic absenteeism and more. Although slight declines occurred in some areas, gains were made in physical fitness and on-track graduation rates. AP pass rates reached a five-year high. Disaggregated data indicated that non-high needs students scored higher than high needs peers. Demographic trends show an increase in English Learners from 2.7% in 2014 to 9.3% in 2026. Chronic absenteeism has dropped from its post-pandemic peak to 17.4% districtwide with NMHS remaining high at	**A. Student Performance Workshop**

	27%. Both remain above state averages. Dr. Parlato emphasized that the district is evolving to support an increasing number of high-needs students. Dr. Parlato outlined seven high-impact strategies to enhance student achievement, emphasizing the need for a written curriculum aligned with Connecticut Core Standards and implemented with fidelity across all grade levels. K–2 reading standards are established, Bookworms is expanding into 5th grade, and Savvas middle school math aligns with the Portrait of a Lifelong Learner framework. However, teacher-created curricula in grades 6–12 ELA, math, science, and high school social studies require further development to ensure full alignment. Additionally, a comprehensive PK–12 special education curriculum must be established to support students who cannot participate in general education mathematics and science programming. In response to Mrs. Sarich's inquiry regarding the discontinuation of the Columbia Units of Study, Dr. Parlato noted that the curriculum fell out of favor three to four years ago, leading to the introduction of Bookworms. Addressing concerns raised by Mrs. Faulenbach regarding declining third-grade metrics despite higher prior budgets, Dr. Parlato highlighted central office staffing constraints, while Mrs. Faulenbach emphasized that academic outcomes depend on strategic resource allocation rather than overall spending. Dr. Parlato emphasized using 12 high-impact instructional strategies to support the district's instructional core and maintain curriculum consistency. Priorities include increasing math instructional minutes for grades 3–8, using secondary-level strategies consistently, encouraging student reflection and peer feedback, and strengthening K–12 small group instruction. The district plans to improve assessments and use results to guide instruction. Practice Smarter Balanced items and PSATs will be used to identify learning gaps, while consistent common assessments will be established for grades 6–12 alongside expanded student pathways. Assessment data will also inform	

	teacher and administrator goals. Mrs. Sarich inquired whether administrators hold teachers accountable for poor test scores during annual reviews, emphasizing a moral obligation to students, to which Dr. Parlato clarified that evaluation is not based solely on test scores. Mrs. Faulenbach expressed concern over the declining performance numbers and noted that the district previously achieved higher scores with fewer financial resources. Mrs. Sarich suggested the reinstatement of eliminated instructional coaches. Dr. Parlato outlined current professional development efforts, including Science of Reading and iReady training, while highlighting the need for additional learning focused on small group instruction, CT Core standards, unified classroom feedback, and relational trust. Addressing attendance, Dr. Parlato noted that action plans, analysis of student attendance through PowerSchool, and a staff attendance dashboard are being developed, emphasizing that every student deserves a year of academic growth annually, and consistent attendance is one important way for student achievement to increase. Regarding early childhood achievement gaps, Dr. Parlato reported that many K–2 students enter a year behind and recommended early identification of vulnerable learners alongside optimized personnel deployment. Dr. Parlato stressed the importance of collective efficacy, urgent action over conversation, and prioritizing sustainable school improvement over a sole focus upon test scores. Mrs. Faulenbach emphasized the importance of evaluating comprehensive achievement data to inform curriculum decisions, noting that both the Superintendent and the Board of Education remain fully accountable for student outcomes. She expressed concern regarding the district's ranking at the bottom of its District Reference Group (DRG) and highlighted that a significant percentage of students are currently unprepared to advance, calling for further analysis to identify underlying gaps.	
4.	**Adjourn**	**Adjourn**

	Mr. O'Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m., seconded by Mr. McCauley.	*Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:23pm.*

Respectfully submitted:

Sarah E Herring

Sarah Herring
Secretary
New Milford Board of Education