

**New Milford Board of Education
Committee on Learning Minutes
May 5, 2020
By Zoom Virtual Meeting**

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2020 MAY -7 A 8:45

NEW MILFORD, CT

Present: Mr. Joseph Failla, Chairperson
Mr. Brian McCauley
Mrs. Tammy McInerney
Mrs. Cynthia Nabozny

Also Present: Dr. Kerry Parker, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal, New Milford High School

1.	<p>Call to Order</p> <p>The meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Committee on Learning was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mr. Failla, via Zoom Virtual Meeting.</p>	<p>Call to Order</p>
2.	<p>Public Comment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Beck, a student at NMHS, asked the Board to consider both a Pass/Fail and letter grade option for classes this year to benefit all students. 	<p>Public Comment</p>
3.	<p>Discussion</p> <p>A. NMPS Distance Learning Grading Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. DiCorpo said this draft is a reflection of discussions with administration, and a review of state guidelines and other districts' plans. There is still work to do but the draft is a summary of where the district is heading. It captures the first three marking periods and describes how the 4th marking period will be incorporated to reflect the realities of distance learning. Mrs. McInerney noted that the public has not seen the draft yet and asked if it could be posted for view, because it answers a lot of questions. Dr. Parker said they wanted to share the working plan with the Board first to get their 	<p>Discussion</p> <p>A. NMPS Distance Learning Grading Plan</p>

	<p>feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the elementary level, Ms. DiCorpo said the focus is on the “do no harm” philosophy and providing feedback on student work. The middle school and high school plans are similar to each other; there is a slight calculation difference for year long and semester classes at the two levels. At the middle and high school, there are two options: either Pass/Pass +/Fail or numerical grade. Students who wish to take the option to receive a numerical grade for a course must indicate that choice by June 5 at the middle school and June 8 at the high school; otherwise, the default is Pass/Pass +/Fail. The request must be in writing by email so that the district has a receipt of the request. Middle school courses that offer high school credit if criteria is met will still work that way.• Mr. Failla suggested that the deadline to choose the numerical option be strongly emphasized so students and parents are well aware.• Ms. DiCorpo said if a student has not been able to access content, teachers will issue an incomplete. Students will have through September of 2020 to complete the content. The district will work on a case by case basis to see what the obstacles are and offer support.• Mr. Failla said the plan reflects tremendous work and effort to meet the variety of student needs. It is fair and provides options.• Mrs. McNerney said she appreciates the two options offered to students. She asked why there is no Honor Roll for the 4th marking period.• Ms. DiCorpo said they looked at other surrounding area schools and they are also not doing a 4th quarter Honor Roll. Based on the inequities of distance learning under COVID-19, they don’t want to penalize students due to circumstances out of their control.• Mr. Shugrue agreed, saying some students who would normally be high powered in a	
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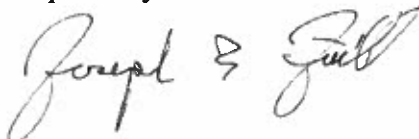
	<p>brick and mortar classroom are struggling in distance learning. The absence of the Honor Roll aligns with the state motto of “no harm” grading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The committee discussed the various scenarios relating to student choice of option 1 or 2.• Dr. Parker clarified that the Pass/Pass +/-Fail or numeric choice is by course so if a student grade is not as high in one class, the student may choose Pass/Pass +/-Fail for that class only, and still elect numerical grades for other classes.• Mrs. McNerney said she thinks the fact that it is not “all or nothing” is helpful. She said students must also weigh that all grades may not be in by the beginning of June.• Ms. DiCorpo said there are no final exams to factor in under this plan and they are working with teachers and administrators to keep grades up to date in the portal, so that should not be a factor in the decision.• Dr. Parker said the overall intent of the plan is to be fair and give credit, while not penalizing students due to the closure of schools. The focus is on supporting students and teachers.• Mr. Failla said colleges and universities are also well aware of the struggle, and have said they will be more flexible in their thought processes regarding grades for admissions.• Mr. McCauley asked if the district is tracking students who are not participating. Dr. Parker said they are. In general, participation for all schools is in the high 90%. She had sent the Board a snapshot of distance learning attendance previously, and will provide an update.• Mr. McCauley asked if there is follow up for the students who are not participating. Ms. DiCorpo said there is. Counselors and social workers, as well as teachers, reach out to the family to offer support. She said live interactions are also helping with that. She said these cases are why the incomplete option	
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	<p>is so important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. McInerney asked who will grade the incompletes and when. Ms. DiCorpo said they are working through the structure with administrators, but it will be the teacher of record who will review, with support. <p>B. NMHS Graduation for the Class of 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Shugrue said he feels horrible both for the teachers retiring this year and for the senior students who are missing out on the many rites of passage that senior year provides. He said the intent of the proposed graduation plan is to provide a celebratory personal touch within the confines of the pandemic. He held a virtual meeting with representatives from the Grad Party, PTO, and Band Boosters last week regarding the “senior experience”. He is meeting with the NM Chief of Police on Wednesday to discuss a graduation parade that will incorporate families and the community. • The plan is to distribute caps and gowns ahead of time to graduates who will, at a date still to be determined, line up in one car each with their family at SNIS to participate in a motor parade down Route 7 to the high school where they will be presented with their diploma and graduation program. The car may be decorated however the graduate wishes. Speeches will be recorded and available on Youtube. Students will be instructed to tune to an FM channel when they arrive at the high school that will be broadcasting graduates’ names. There will be a camera crew at both SNIS and NMHS recording the event. Adult Education graduates will be incorporated the same way. • Mrs. McInerney said she thinks the proposal sounds great. She said she hopes that the Class can get together sometime in the future for a structured in person celebration of some kind. 	<p>B. NMHS Graduation for the Class of 2020</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Public Comment</p>	<p>Public Comment</p>

- Lisa Mosey, an SMS teacher, said teachers are working hard but it is difficult. She said at SMS teachers have no way of emailing students directly, and it would be helpful if they did. She said she is also concerned about the Fall and how school will look then.
- Sandi asked how honor society cords will be distributed.
- Mr. Failla said Public Comment is not structured for question and answer but, in light of the pandemic, he would allow it tonight if answers are available.
- Dr. Parker said times for pick up of any needed items will be worked out over the next few weeks.
- Sandi suggested the electronic billboard at the high school be utilized to display graduate names and that the local paper be contacted to do the same along with graduate pictures. Mr. Shugrue said he would look into both.
- Wendy Faulenbach said she found the grading presentation very impressive. She likes the flexibility and that it encompasses all students. She suggested that anything in the draft that parents and students need to do be put in bold and highlighted, to make sure it is not missed. She suggested that a rain date be considered for the graduation parade for full enjoyment, since it is an outdoor event.
- Kim Foss, a teacher, suggested the district consider a form that students/parents can use to designate grading options for all classes. That way the requests are all in one place and there is less chance of a teacher missing a request.
- Olga Rella spoke on behalf of the Grad Party. She thanked Mr. Shugrue for including them in the graduation plan and she said they are looking forward to enhancing the senior experience with as many activities as they can.
- Jen Lipari asked if the parade is the only option. Mr. Shugrue said they have been talking about possibilities for weeks but

	<p>holding off until the governor made his decision not to reopen schools for this year. With the size of the Class, over 340 students, and the wish to include the greater community in the celebration while maintaining social distancing, this seems like the best celebration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Chamberlin asked about plans for awards nights and senior scholarship presentations. Mr. Shugrue said they will be in touch with plans to celebrate the events as best they can so that students are recognized. • In response to Ms. Mosey’s comment regarding SMS student emails, Mr. Rush said he is working out the details with Principal Longo now. • Dr. Parker said tonight is just a snapshot of the in depth work that the district team K-12 has been working so hard at every day. She said the principals have done an amazing job. More details will follow as they work through the processes. • Mr. Failla thanked all of tonight’s participants. 	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Adjourn</p> <p>Mrs. McInerney moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m., seconded by Mr. McCauley and passed unanimously.</p>	<p>Adjourn</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m.</p>

Respectfully submitted:



Joseph Failla, Chairperson
 Committee on Learning