

**New Milford Board of Education
Committee on Learning Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2006**

Board Members Present:	*Mr. Bill McLachlan, Committee Chair
	Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach, Board Chairperson
	*Dr. Lawrence Stillman
	*Dr. Lisa Diamond (7:08 pm)
	*Mrs. Julie Turk
	*Ms. Jennifer Oliveira
	*Mr. David A. Lawson
	Mr. Joseph Failla

Administration Present:	Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Superintendent
	Mr. Thomas Mulvihill, Assistant Superintendent
	Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal New Milford High School
	Mrs. Diane Osborne-Miller, World Language Department Chair
	Dr. Kathy Delmonico, English Department Chair

1.	The Committee on Learning meeting was Called to Order at 7:02 p.m.	Call to Order
2.	There was no public participation.	Public Comment
	Item #4 on the agenda was moved to the beginning of the meeting.	
4A.	<p>Dr. Delmonico gave a brief description of the poetry course being brought before the committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The course will be a senior elective at the academic level. ➤ The course is directed toward students who have an interest in a dedicated course focused on poetry. ➤ The course enables students to develop their literacy, critical thinking and problem solving skills. ➤ The course will not impact staffing, since it will be a scheduling decision. For example, a section of an English elective will be dropped in order to add a section of Poetry. ➤ Student enrollment will determine how many sections of Poetry will be offered. <p>Motion by Dr. Stillman: Move that the Committee on Learning bring to the full Board for approval the development of the poetry course at New Milford High School. Seconded by: Ms. Oliveira</p> <p>Discussion: The motion going forward to the Board will be for the development of the course. Once the course is fully developed, the curriculum for the course will be brought back to the Committee on Learning for recommendation to the full Board for approval. It is anticipated that the curriculum could be written by August, 2006.</p>	<p>Request for Approval of Poetry</p> <p>Motion made and passed to bring the development of a poetry course for New Milford High School to the full Board for approval.</p>

	<p>Aye: Mr. McLachlan, Dr. Stillman, Ms. Oliveira, Mr. Lawson, Mrs. Turk, Dr. Diamond</p> <p>Nay:</p> <p>Abstain:</p> <p>Motion Passed – Unanimously</p>	
<p>4A.</p>	<p>Mrs. Miller-Osborne gave a brief description of the Conversational Spanish I course being brought before the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This course will target a group of students who may not choose to study a language because of the academic level of the subject. ➤ The classes will be small to begin with in order to monitor the courses’ success. ➤ This course would have a high level of interaction, a more oral approach to Spanish. ➤ The course would be a one credit course and be included on a student’s transcript. It would then be up to the individual universities to determine whether the university will give credit for the course. ➤ No additional staffing costs would be incurred with the offering of this course. <p>Motion by Dr. Stillman: Move that the Committee on Learning bring to the full Board for approval the development of Conversational Spanish I at New Milford High School. Seconded by: Mrs. Turk</p> <p>Discussion: The motion going forward to the full Board is for the development of Conversational Spanish I. Once the curriculum is written, pending Board approval, the course will be brought back to the Committee on Learning. The Committee on Learning may, at that time, recommend the course to the full Board for approval.</p> <p>Aye: Mr. McLachlan, Dr. Stillman, Mrs. Turk, Mr. Lawson, Dr. Diamond, Ms. Oliveira.</p> <p>Nay:</p> <p>Abstain:</p> <p>Motion Passed – Unanimously</p>	<p>Request for Approval of Conversational Spanish I</p> <p>Motion made and passed to bring to the full Board for approval the development of Conversational Spanish I.</p>
<p>3A.</p>	<p>Mr. Shugrue, Principal of New Milford High School gave a power point presentation of the status of the NEASC Accreditation, highlighting the following areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The timeline; covering the start and current status of the NESAC accreditation. ➤ The accreditation process. There have been subcommittees assigned to respond to 68 NEASC 	<p>Discussion Items Update on NEASC Accreditation Status</p>

	<p>recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The follow-up committee responded to 13 highlighted recommendations and 7 additional questions. ➤ There are five ways to respond to the recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed the task • The task is in progress • There is a future plan to address the task • The task was rejected by the district • The recommendation is valid, but has not yet been addressed ➤ A status report of the recommendations was reviewed. ➤ Mr. Shugrue discussed the tasks that were completed, in progress, have a future plan and the tasks that have been rejected by the district. ➤ Mr. Shugrue concluded his presentation by discussing the areas that need to be focused on: Instruction, Assessment, Curriculum, Rubrics, Staff and the Library Media Center. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The question arose as to whether scheduling was the issue driving 53 sections to have over 30 students. This could be viewed as part of the reason for the courses that take place during the lunch waves, however, this affects a small number of classes. ➤ The classes that are 25 or more students are at the honors level. The students in the honors classes also suffer when the class size increases. ➤ Mr. Shugrue decides how many sections of a course will be offered. His decision is based on information from the guidance counselors, student course sign-up and department chairs. ➤ Parents are involved with the decision making, via the PTO, Parent Informational Seminars, Coffee with the Principal, Freshman Orientation, student course selection, etc. ➤ Email communication to parents should be encouraged. ➤ Look at the possibility of emailing a publications such as the Grapevine to parents. ➤ Of the tasks in progress, approximately 10% are close to completion. 	
<p>3B.</p>	<p>The Committee Chair explained that there was an abundant amount of information in the COL packet regarding All Day Kindergarten and it was now up the committee to decide where to go from here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presently we have 9 kindergarten teachers and another 9 teachers would be necessary to offer all day kindergarten to all students. ➤ Space is currently available to host all day kindergarten, 	<p>All Day Kindergarten</p>

- but there was a concern expressed regarding future space.
- The student capacity at the elementary schools is approximately 725, including space for programs such as art, music, etc.
 - Two things fill our schools: students and programs. We lose space when we add additional programs.
 - Kindergarten classrooms are required to have their own bathrooms and this would incur additional costs.
 - Some districts presently have all day kindergarten for everyone while others offer all day kindergarten to a certain portion of their student population.
 - Districts that offer all day kindergarten to a specific student population also use a lottery system to fill any vacant seats.
 - It was mentioned that the magnet school offers all day kindergarten and New Milford is part of that partnership.
 - Redistricting should be considered when investigating all day kindergarten.
 - Financial benefits were discussed including the elimination of a mid day bus run at an approximate cost of \$85,000 to \$90,000; there would be an increase in per pupil state aid (although that figure is difficult to predict) and there would be a reduction in special ed referrals (again hard to predict an actual cost savings).
 - Presently 36-40% of New Milford students entering kindergarten do not have any pre-school experience.
 - Head Start fills up quickly. There seems to be a segment of the population that is not able to provide pre-school.
 - The question arose if the Board of Ed is prepared to handle up-front costs. Does the Board want to put the expense of all day kindergarten in the budget?

Discussion:

- It was the consensus of the committee that all day kindergarten should be investigated further, possibly for a portion of the student population.
- The question arose if this discussion could be part of the strategic plan?
- Another question was, what program(s) might possibly have to be eliminated to provide all day kindergarten?
- The benefits of all day kindergarten seem to level out after third grade.
- Other districts that provide all day kindergarten to a select portion of their student population should be contacted as to how they make their decisions on who will attend all day kindergarten?
- Another issue arose as to who would be gathering all this information?
- The questions that came up need to be satisfied at the committee level before bringing all day kindergarten to

	<p>the full Board for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A timeline and what data is expected needs to be determined. ➤ The Board had a commitment to the community, as well as the students. <p>Mr. Mulvihill agreed he would investigate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The procedure that Danbury utilizes to select students for its All Day program. ➤ The costs and projections of numbers of students benefiting from a longer day. ➤ In addition, all day kindergarten will be placed on the Five Year Plan for the Board of Education's consideration. 	
3C.	<p>Mr. Mulvihill gave a brief description of an on-line program that is being piloted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presently the program is being piloted with students who are in need of off-site tutoring. ➤ The program is being piloted as an educational, and a cost-saving measure. ➤ Students use laptops which can access 50 curricula via internet connection. ➤ The program is being used 3 days a week for 3 ½ hours a day. ➤ There will be an update in spring. 	On-line Learning Program Pilot
5.	<p>There was much discussion regarding the date of the next Committee on Learning meeting. One suggestion was to have the Committee on Learning meet just before or after the Policy Committee meeting on November 21, 2006.</p>	Next Meeting
6.	<p>Motion by Dr. Stillman: Move that the Committee on Learning adjourn. Seconded by: Mrs. Turk</p> <p>Aye: Mr. McLachlan, Dr. Stillman, Mrs. Turk, Mr. Lawson, Ms. Oliveira, Dr. Diamond. Nay: Abstain:</p> <p>Motion Passed – Unanimously</p>	Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Bill McLachlan,
 Committee Chair