

Board of Education  
Newtown, Connecticut

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, December 6, 2011 in the board room at 3 Primrose Street.

W. Hart, Chair	J. Robinson
D. Leidlein, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
R. Gaines	R. Bienkowski
K. Alexander	8 Staff
L. Roche	30 Public
J. Vouros	4 Press
C. McCubbin	

Mr. Hart called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed the new members.

Item 1 – Election of Officers

Mrs. Roche nominated Mrs. Leidlein for Chair. Mr. McCubbin seconded.

Mrs. Roche felt Mrs. Leidlein would be honest, open and fair. Mr. Alexander was pleased with Mrs. Leidlein's service and hopes, if elected, it would continue.

Vote: Mr. McCubbin – aye	Mr. Gaines - aye
Mr. Vouros – aye	Mrs. Leidlein - aye
Mrs. Roche – aye	Mr. Hart - aye
Mr. Alexander – aye	

Mrs. Leidlein was named Chair.

Mr. Gaines nominated Mr. Alexander for Vice Chair. Mr. Hart seconded.

Mr. Gaines felt Mr. Alexander has proven to be a thoughtful member and has knowledge of the working board.

Vote: Mr. McCubbin – nay	Mr. Gaines - aye
Mr. Vouros – nay	Mrs. Leidlein - nay
Mrs. Roche – nay	Mr. Hart - aye
Mr. Alexander – aye	

Mr. Vouros nominated Mrs. Roche for Vice Chair. Mr. McCubbin seconded.

Mr. Vouros said Mrs. Roche was very knowledgeable and honest.

Mrs. Leidlein said she is an active member in our educational community, is a team player and goal driven.

Vote: Mr. McCubbin – aye	Mr. Gaines - nay
Mr. Vouros – aye	Mrs. Leidlein - aye
Mrs. Roche – aye	Mr. Hart - nay
Mr. Alexander – nay	

Mrs. Roche was named Vice Chair.

Mr. Alexander nominated Mr. Gaines for Secretary. Mr. Hart seconded.

Mr. Alexander said Mr. Gaines was a clearly spoken person and hoped we would do a little more in responding to the public who writes to us. Mr. Hart agreed and stated that Mr. Gaines was the most senior member and most experienced on the Board.

Vote for Mr. Gaines:

Mr. McCubbin – nay	Mr. Gaines - aye
Mr. Vouros – nay	Mrs. Leidlein - nay
Mrs. Roche – nay	Mr. Hart - aye
Mr. Alexander – aye	

Mrs. Roche nominated Mr. McCubbin for Secretary. Mr. Vouros seconded. Mrs. Roche said he will be open with the public and keep the correspondence to the Board.

Vote for Mr. McCubbin:

Mr. McCubbin – aye	Mr. Gaines - nay
Mr. Vouros – aye	Mrs. Leidlein - aye
Mrs. Roche – aye	Mr. Hart - nay
Mr. Alexander – nay	

Mr. McCubbin was named Secretary

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to approve the minutes of November 15, 2011. Mr. Alexander seconded. Vote: 4 ayes

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to approve the consent agenda donation and resignation items. Mr. Alexander seconded.

Mr. Hart brought attention to Fred Ryan’s \$3,000 donation per semester to the N.I.C.E. program at the high school. This is an ongoing donation for the foreseeable future and thanked him for his generosity.

Mr. Vouros said it was a wonderful donation. Mr. Hiruo was also going to try to encourage corporate sponsorship for this program.

Vote: 7 ayes

Item 3 – Public Participation

Joe Borst, 10 Beechwood Drive, congratulated the new members of the Board, representing taxpayers, citizens of Newtown and their children

Item 4 – Reports

Correspondence:

Mr. Vouros read a letter to the Board from he and Mrs. Roche requesting the following items be added to future agendas: PR firm hired, transfer policy, special education, bus contract, legal fees spent, teacher evaluation policy, Superintendent’s evaluation policy, budget workshop for new BOE members, the Newtown International Center for Education Program, Reed School reports from the schedule consultant and Donna Page, PLC time and professional development , curriculum development, discussion on the calendar, bullying policy for All Star, GATES program, and full day kindergarten.

Mr. McCubbin read a letter to the Board from Kevin Fitzgerald in favor of Mr. Hart continuing as chair.

Mrs. Leidlein received a letter from Sam Mihailoff regarding the administration.

Mr. Gaines received a letter from the owner/operator who received a penalty for not having a working video in his bus

Chair Report:

Mr. Hart attended the CABE convention which Dr. Robinson will cover in her report.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Robinson commended Mr. Hart as Chair for the last 16 months and happy he will continue to be on the Board. She congratulated Mrs. Leidlein, Mrs. Roche and Mr. McCubbin.

Dr. Robinson just returned from China along with Mr. Dumais and Mr. Hiruo to establish a relationship with Jincal Elementary School and Jincal Experimental School in Shanghai. We now have a partnership and Sandy Hook School was awarded a Hanban grant. Our travel expenses were part of a grant. Never were Board of Education funds even considered. We are proud of establishing this partnership.

The high school and middle school were recognized by ConnCan for recognition of achievement of low income students.

Tomorrow Superintendents from the Connecticut Center for School Change will be visiting Sandy Hook School engaging in the rounds practice.

It has been on the Boards list of goals to improve communications as an initiative. We are a member of CABE and Ann Baldwin is contracted by CABE to do this for us. Since July we have made a great deal of progress. She is coordinating with students to tape programs for Channel 21. In spite of our successes we are bombarded with negative communication and she will help with that.

Dr. Robinson and Mr. Hart attended the CABE Convention which was very informative.

Mr. Vouros doesn't feel we need a PR position. Video production equipment needs to be updated at the high school for the students to be able to video tape. Not many people knew anything about this. It needs to be reevaluated.

Mr. McCubbin asked what the main driver was to have a PR person.

Dr. Robinson said it was one of the top goals from the strategic plan that was developed four years ago. The action team recommended that we have a district communication person. We could not have someone previously because of the budget situation. We need assistance to help people see what is going on. Rumors circulate and we constantly get phone calls with misinformation. Our work as educators is working with the children. We don't have the ability in the district to get the information to the public.

Mr. Gaines said communications was an issue when he joined the Board. We've tried taping and broadcasting on Channel 17. He commended Dr. Robinson on stepping up to contact this person. We have not been able to afford to have a director of communications. We discussed this trip to China months ago but people thought the Board of Education paid for the trip. There is no one in our district who could put out an effective communications campaign.

Mr. Hart said a major goal of the strategic plan was increasing communications in the community. This takes focused work. The action plan called for a director of

communications. We can't expect Dr. Robinson to do it all. Mrs. Llodra expressed a desire to have someone also and share that position with us.

Mrs. Roche said every year we are cutting positions. We didn't hear about this position and she asked for a full report.

Mrs. Leidlein didn't know why the entire Board didn't know. She wants to know what the agreement was for, the cost for additional services, what activities have taken place, and a product out of the activities. She asked for where the funding will come from to be answered at the next meeting.

Item 5 – Old Business – none

Item 6 – New Business

Dr. Robinson introduced Jay Daly, high school teacher and Fine and Applied Arts Department Chair. He introduced teachers Melissa Casioppo, Vivian Sheen and Jolene Swann. They presented the personal financial literacy course as a graduation requirement.

Mr. Gaines asked the number of students in the course.

Mr. Daly said there were 48 students in two sections. We would need 18 sessions of 25 students over each year with the current staff. We will consolidate courses that are not at capacity.

Mr. Gaines would like to see more detail on how the course would be taught. He'd also like to see if former students are using the information.

Mrs. Leidlein asked for the curriculum to be sent to the Board. Dr. Gejda said it was on the website.

Mr. Hart asked if this will change the total number of credits for graduation. Mr. Daly said it would.

Mr. Hart didn't see how we wouldn't need more teachers and wants to be sure we understand what it might cost.

Reed's Plan to Address Adequate Yearly Progress School Improvement Plan:

Dr. Robinson said that under NCLB students have to meet certain requirements. We've had a challenge to make AYP at Reed. Not making AYP for a couple of years running requires the development of a State of Connecticut school improvement plan. It is for the sub group of special education students. The rest of the school made all the target goals.

Dr. Epple said that Reed was also recognized by ConnCan for their high achievement of low income students. They developed the school improvement plan for the sub group special education students that didn't make AYP in reading.

Mr. Vouros asked how this program meshed with the middle school.

Dr. Epple said our increase is almost equivalent with the time at the middle school.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if we are addressing these in the elementary schools.

Dr. Gejda said the principals in the elementary schools meet with the Reed principal to identify students.

Student Representative to the Board:

Dr. Robinson referred to the sample policies for the Board to consider.

Mrs. Leidlein said for the next meeting we would have a limited agenda to review the goals and approve them with the new Board members and form sub committees based on the goals.

Mr. Hart said it was important to develop the committees. We also need to review our records retention policy, particularly for our emails.

Approve 2012 Schedule of Board of Education Meetings:

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to approve the 2012 schedule of Board of Education meetings. Mr. Gaines seconded. Mr. Alexander said there was a conflict on February 14.

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to postpone approving the 2012 schedule of meetings until the next meeting. Mr. Alexander seconded. Vote: 7 ayes

Item 7 – Public Participation

Carla Kron, 4 Clapboard Ridge Road, looked at an Iowa City, Iowa district website that had a link to their budget which allows for input on the budget. It would be helpful for people considering moving here.

Karen Viska, 30 Mile Hill South, spoke about the burden of proof which will make it difficult for parents to get services. We don't need a PR person.

Susan Getzinger, 31 Little Brook Lane, congratulated the new members and agreed that we don't need a PR person.

Joe Borst, 10 Beechwood Drive, said the financial literacy course is an excellent idea. Regarding the Reed report, NCLB is a waste of time. The burden of proof is a bad move by the Board and should be removed.

Christine Hermies, 99 Brushy Hill Road, said that she is upset about the PR person.

MOTION: Mr. Alexander moved to adjourn. Mrs. Roche seconded. Vote: 7 ayes

Item 8 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Cody McCubbin  
Secretary

# **Personal Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement Proposal**

**Prepared by:**

Melissa Cacioppo

Vivian Sheen

Jolene Swann

## The Need

- **55%** of parents with children aged 16-24 voiced concern over their children's ability to become financially independent without monetary assistance from them.

The 2009 annual back-to-school survey of more than 1,150 parents and teens from Capital One

## The Need

- **84%** of undergraduates indicated they needed more education on financial management topics. In fact, **64%** would have liked to receive information in high school.

Sallie Mae's 2008 survey of how undergraduate students use credit cards

## The Need

- **33%** of surveyed students said that they were either unsure or unprepared to manage their own banking and personal finances.

A 2010 survey by the College Savings Foundation

## The Need

- **50%** of surveyed teens expressed an interest in learning more about money.
- **70%** of surveyed teens wanted to learn more about financing for large purchases such as a car or home.

The 2009 annual back-to-school survey of more than 1,150 parents and teens from Capital One

## Federal Response

# United States Advisory Council on Financial Literacy

- "I think the challenge we face now is that we don't have a financially literate population . . . as important as reading and math and social studies and science, I think today more than ever financial literacy has to be part of that." Education Secretary A. Duncan, November 2011
- "All of us—parents, educators, policymakers and students—share the responsibility to ensure that young people in our country learn a set of practical skills that will help them navigate important personal financial decisions." Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner
- April has been declared National Financial Literacy month by President Obama
- National Financial Capability Challenge

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/obama-administration-announces-start-student-exam-window-2011-national-financial>

## State Response

- Currently, 13 states require students to take a Personal Finance course as a graduation requirement.
  - *Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia*

## CT Response

- In 2010, the CT legislature increased the minimum number of credits in various subjects that students must earn to graduate from high school effective with the class of 2020.
- Among other things, the new law requires students to have at least two credits in career and life skill electives and specifies that these electives could include courses in Personal Finance.

State of CT Legislative Research Report 2010

## CT Response

- CT Department of Education has a reform plan that recommends that students take a Personal Finance course as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills requirements.
- Connecticut currently has 10 high schools that require Personal Finance as a graduation requirement
  - *Career Hill Regional High School, Granby Memorial High School, Griswold High School, Metropolitan Business Academy, Montville High School, New Fairfield High School, Seymour High School, Simsbury High School, Stonington High School, & Wheeler High School*

## Local Response

- Newtown High School's Personal Financial Literacy course was first offered as a half-credit course in the Business Department in 2006.
- Topics include:
  - financial decisions and goals
  - money management strategies
  - banking and financial institutions
  - credit and debt
  - housing finance
  - insurance

## 2011 NHS Alumni Study

- **67%** of students surveyed stated they were inadequately prepared to make informed money management decisions.

## Local Response

- In 2011, parents and students were surveyed about their position on Personal Financial Literacy as a graduation requirement at NHS.

## Local Response

### Parents ranked the following as very important upon graduation:

- **89%** - opening and managing bank accounts
- **87%** - understanding student and car loans
- **91%** - creating and maintaining a budget
- **89%** - long and short financial goals
- **91%** - establishing good credit

# Survey results

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- **96%** of parents feel that a financial literacy program would benefit their child's chance for a successful future.
- **69%** have concerns that their child will be able to become financially independent and responsible.

# Parent comments:

- “I fully support this program...and think it is essential.”
- “I think a personal finance course should be required for graduation.”
- “I think this type of course deals with real life issues students face immediately upon graduation and we should do all possible to prepare them to be financially responsible.”
- “This is one of the most important initiatives I have seen from the school district in years. Broad and deep implications for students, their parents and the future of all. We are in a different global economy, going forward, than any of us have seen in our lifetimes. Please do this!!!!!!”

## Local Response

### Student Survey results showed that:

- **58%** - do not feel prepared to handle finances on their own after graduation.
- **77%** - plan on having student loans and credit cards.
- **66%** - do not understand the factors that determine their credit score.
- **86%** - feel they would benefit from taking a Personal Finance course.

## Local Response

# Students stated:

- “We will all face this in the real world and it would help us to get ready for what's to come, it will benefit us all in the long run.”
- “I think requiring a personal finance class as a graduation requirement is an excellent idea. Kids are living on their own once they get to college, and having some sense of financial literacy will benefit them greatly.”
- “I know that a personal finance course is mandatory at other schools. I think we could definitely benefit from it in the long run.”

## Our Proposal

**The Newtown Board of Education Should:**

**Endorse  
Personal Financial Literacy  
as a  
Graduation Requirement**

## Our Proposal

### **Alignment with: Newtown Success-Oriented School Model**

- This course helps students to meet their basic human needs by providing the tools and opportunities to practice and prepare for their financial futures and overcome any obstacles that they may encounter.
- Students will experience how critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making will affect their ability to be financially independent.

## Our Proposal

# Alignment with: NHS Mission Statement

- Academic expectations
  - Demonstrate strategies to identify, locate, and interpret information.
  - Relate and apply new knowledge using a variety of resources including technology.
  - Convey information and ideas to others in a presentation using spoken language, non-verbal language and multimedia.
- Civic expectations
  - Develop informed opinions on a variety of issues
- Social expectations
  - Value personal integrity, respect of others, and appreciation for diversity.

## Our Proposal

### Alignment with: NHS Graduation Standards

- All students will have the opportunity to meet all graduation standards:
  - Problem solving
  - Spoken Communication
  - Information Literacy
  - Written Communication

## Our Proposal

# College Career Pathways Program

- Involved in discussions with Naugatuck Valley Community College to offer college credit for completion of the course.

# What Will This Mean For Our Students?

- **100%** of students will master basic financial literacy skills.
- Students will be prepared to accept their roles as informed consumers, evaluate financial risks and opportunities.
- Subsequent choices that students make will best position them for financial success regardless of post graduation plans.

## Our Proposal

**How much additional cost?**

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● **\$0.00**

# CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REED INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2011-2012

## COVER PAGE

School Name: Reed Intermediate School

School District: Newtown Public Schools

Name of Principal: Dr. Sharon K. Epple

*Please check all applicable boxes below:*

Needs Improvement:      X N/A    Yr 1    Yr 2    Yr 3    Yr 4    Yr 5    Yr 6    Yr 7

Whole School:               Reading       Mathematics    Participation

Subgroup Reading:        X Students with Disabilities       English Language Learners  
    Black                               Hispanic                               Economically Disadvantaged

Subgroup Mathematics:    Students with Disabilities       English Language Learners  
    Black                               Hispanic                               Economically Disadvantaged

Title I:                         School-Wide Program               Targeted Assistance

Principal's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: October 25, 2011

Superintendent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: October 25, 2011

The mission of the Newtown Public Schools, a partnership of students, families, educators and community, is to INSPIRE EACH STUDENT TO EXCEL in attaining and applying the knowledge, skills and attributes that lead to personal success while becoming a contributing member of a dynamic global community. We accomplish this by creating an unparalleled learning environment characterized by:

- High expectations
- Quality instruction
- Continuous improvement
- Civic responsibility

*Members of the Reading School Wide Data Team authored this plan and will be the body ultimately responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the School Improvement Plan. Its members include representatives from central office, school administration and school faculty:*

**School Administration:**

Dr. Sharon Epple  
*Principal*  
Miss Jennifer Sinal  
*Assistant Principal*

**Faculty:**

Mrs. Pamela Kohn  
*Reading Specialist*  
Mrs. Nancy Cedor  
*Special Education Teacher*

**Central Office Representatives:**

Dr. Linda Gejda  
*Assistant Superintendent*  
Dr. Michael Regan  
*Director of Pupil Services*

**REED INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  
**for MEETING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS**  
**2011-2012**

**GOAL:** Increase the reading level of *all* students to proficiency or above as measured by the March 2012 Connecticut Mastery Reading Test. (AYP target is 89% at or above proficiency.)

**Identified Need(s)**

**CMT 2011 \*Reading Levels for our current 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders:**

**Gr 6 students with disabilities (n=38)**

28 Standard Administration: (11)=1, (4)=2, (9)=3, (4)=4

5 MAS: (1)=1, (4)=2

5 Checklist [teacher fills in survey with team/reading levels do not apply]

**Gr 5 students with disabilities (n=32)**

17 Standard Administration: (4)=1, (2)=2, (2)=3, (8)=4, (1)=5

9 MAS: (0)=1, (2)=2, (7)=3

6 Checklist [teacher fills in survey with team/reading levels do not apply]

**Gr 6 regular education students who scored below proficient in reading on the CMT (n=21)**

21 Standard Administration: (10)=1, (11)=2

**Gr 5 regular education students who scored below proficient in reading on the CMT (n=27)**

27 Standard Administration: (7)=1, (20)=2

\*1= below basic, 2= basic, 3= proficient, 4= goal or 5= advanced

## Action Steps

**Step 1:** Data on all 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students scoring at level 1 or 2 on the CMT was individually analyzed; this included special education AND regular education students.

- ▶ CMT (by strand)
- ▶ DRA
- ▶ Phonemic awareness and phonics assessments
- ▶ AIMSweb fluency and comprehension benchmarks

**Step 2:** All students below targets on Step 1 Data Analysis were then screened using the *Language!* Program protocol.

**Step 3:** Students were placed in intervention programs based on individual need (as identified above).

- ▶ Students who require explicit, specialized literacy instruction have been placed in the *Language!* program. Students receive small group instruction an average of one hour/day with a *Language!*-trained teacher.
- ▶ Students who are below proficiency but did not qualify for the *Language!* program receive one hour/day of regular education reading instruction. Students receive small class (10-15 students) instruction targeting comprehension, vocabulary and fluency.

**Step 4:** All students below proficiency are placed in *additional* Literacy Center remedial comprehension groups (includes DRP-specific remediation) twice every six days (during Learning Lab or rotation classes).

**Step 5:** Any student not demonstrating growth from planned interventions over the course of 4-6 weeks, as measured by AIMSweb progress monitoring, are assigned to *additional* remediation, ideally 1:1 or in a group less than 5.

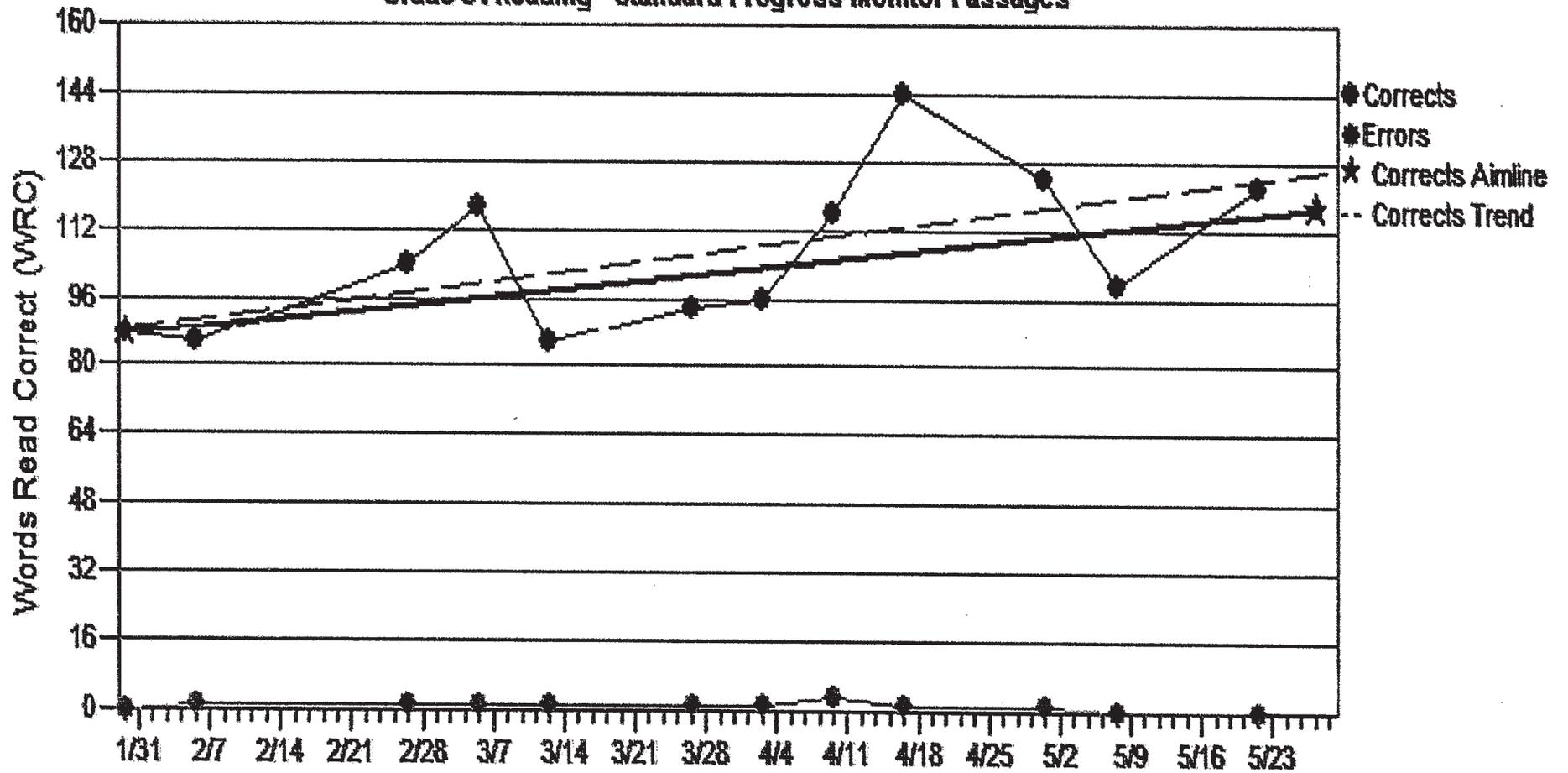
## Additional Steps:

1. All students receive Social Studies content (nonfiction) reading in the regular education classroom.
2. All special education students receive Language Arts (writing, word study, grammar) instruction in the regular education classroom with support as per IEPs.
3. All students are deliberately monitored, supported and coached by their reading teacher in their independent reading for fluency and comprehension.
4. All students identified to take the modified version of the CMT (MAS) will be familiarized with the MAS test November through March for at least one practice session per month.
5. Teachers progress-monitor students below proficiency weekly with AIMSweb.
6. Teachers administer, collect and analyze additional formative reading assessment results as scheduled.
7. Teachers implement instructional accommodations and modifications aligned with IEPs.
8. The Reading School Wide Data Team (principal, assistant principal, literacy specialist, special education teachers, literacy teacher, school psychologist, school counselors) use AIMSweb progress monitoring data to set short-term goals for students below goal.
9. Special education team meets once per week. (Literacy Specialist attends as needed.) Topics include program updates, AIMSweb updates, sharing of resources, CMT updates and AIMSweb data analysis.
10. Through professional collaboration, teachers from the Literacy Center, Science and Social Studies departments identify non-fiction texts to expand classroom libraries.
11. Administration observes instruction to ensure differentiation.

## **Professional development includes:**

1. Differentiation
2. Reading Instruction (Readers Workshop)
3. Nonfiction Reading Instruction in the Content Areas (through Reading, Social Studies, Math and Science PLC teams)
4. Special Education teachers will remain abreast of *Language!* program resources and continuing education.
5. Writing (including Word Study)
6. Grade Level Reading PLCs (every fifth and sixth grade teacher) meet approximately once per month after school.
7. Teachers of small intervention reading classes meet twice per month.
8. Literacy specialist, literacy teacher and assistant principal serve on District Literacy Committee.
9. RIS Literacy Task Force meets monthly.

Grade 5: Reading - Standard Progress Monitor Passages



BOARD OF EDUCATION  
2012 SCHEDULE OF  
MEETINGS

Meetings will be held in the Municipal Board Room, 3 Primrose Street at 7:30 p.m. with the exception of the January 17 meeting which will be held in the Newtown High School Lecture Hall and the March 6 and September 4 meetings which will be held in the Reed Intermediate School Library.

January 10  
January 17 (budget presentation) – *NHS Lecture Hall*  
January 19 (budget)  
January 24 (budget)  
January 26 (budget discussion and public hearing)  
January 31 (budget adoption)  
February 7  
February 22 (Wednesday)  
March 6 – *Reed Intermediate School*  
March 20  
April 3  
April 10  
May 1  
May 15  
June 5  
June 19  
July 10  
August 14  
September 4 – *Reed Intermediate School*  
September 18  
October 2  
October 16  
November 8 (Thursday)  
November 20  
December 4  
December 18

Approved December 20, 2011