

## **AGENDA-Wednesday, February 28, 2024**

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

BOARD OF EDUCATION

6:00 p.m.

Newbury Library Media Center

### **Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education Mission Statement:**

We believe the public education is an essential component of a free and democratic society. In a partnership of family, school, community, and local and state government, our mission is to enable all students to meet high standards, make productive choices in their personal lives, contribute to a diverse global society and act as responsible citizens.

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#### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

#### **2.0 PUBLIC PORTION**

#### **3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 3.1 February 14, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting
- 3.2 February 14, 2024 Special Board of Education Meeting
- 3.3 February 21, 2024 Special Board of Education Meeting

#### **4.0 PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL 2024-2025**

#### **5.0 OLD BUSINESS**

- 5.1 Updates
- 5.2 BOE Goals

#### **6.0 NEW BUSINESS**

- 6.1 Updates

#### **7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

- 7.1 Jessica Angell – Letter of Resignation

#### **8.0 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **9.0 ADJOURNMENT**

Enclosures: Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes 2.14.2024  
Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes 2.14.2024  
Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes 2.21.2024  
Letter of Resignation: Jessica Angell

Next Meeting: March 6, 2024, Budget Workshop @ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center  
March 13, 2024, Regular BOE Meeting @ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center  
March 16, 2024, Budget Workshop @ 8:00 a.m. – New Hartford Town Hall  
March 20, 2024, First Informal Town Budget Presentation: Colebrook Town Hall 7:00 p.m.  
Regular BOE Meeting to follow.  
March 27, 2024, Second Informal Town Budget Presentation: Norfolk, Botelle School-Cafeteria 6:30 p.m.

We welcome the public to share their comments via [publicinput@nwr7.org](mailto:publicinput@nwr7.org). Your emails will be considered during the Public Comment session of the meeting. Thank you for your participation.

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**Library Media Center**

**Wednesday, February 14, 2024**

**5:00 PM**

**DRAFT**

A special meeting of the Board of Education that was called for the purpose of conducting a teacher termination hearing convened at 5:00 PM.

**MOTION** by Rob Jerram, seconded by Terri Kenneson, to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of conducting a hearing of the termination of a tenured certified employee in accordance with (1) Connecticut General Statutes §10-151(d) and (2) in light of the need to receive evidence which may directly involve personally identifiable information of students within the school district and implicate the personal privacy of these students. The following persons are to be invited into Executive Session to assist in either giving testimony or evidence, or representation of the various parties to the proceedings: Steven LePage, Superintendent of Schools; Fran Amara, Middle School Principal; Gary Franklin, High School Principal; Attorney Mark Sommaruga, Board attorney and procedural advisor; Aigné Goldsby, employee's Attorney, and Mrs. Changying Jones, employee.

AYE: Molly Sexton Read, Rob Jerram, Theresa Kenneson, Lisa Fragale, and Mimi Duran. NAY: None. **MOTION PASSED (5-0)**

The Board entered into Executive Session at 5:02 PM during which the teacher termination hearing took place.

The Board exited Executive Session at 6:06 PM.

Attorney Mark Sommaruga communicated that, under the law, the Board of Education has 15 days from the close of the hearing to deliberate and make a decision and issue a written decision.

**MOTION** by Theresa Kenneson, seconded by Mimi Duran, to adjourn the meeting:

AYE: Molly Sexton Read, Rob Jerram, Theresa Kenneson, Lisa Fragale, and Mimi Duran. NAY: None. **MOTION PASSED (5-0)**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:06 PM.**



**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
February 14, 2024 – 6 p.m.  
Newbury Library Media Center

**DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, High School Principal Mr. Gary Franklin, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, Student Representatives: Owen Langer.  
**ABSENT:** Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Kim Crone (N), and Student Representative Ms. Fiona Leon.

Ms. Sexton Read requested to add 2 items to the agenda:

1. Board of Education members will be meeting in Executive Session to deliberate about the teacher termination hearing.

**MOTION BY** Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **APPROVE** the BOE to meet in Executive Session in deliberation of the teacher termination hearing, as presented: **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Bell. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Reexamine the timeline of the Superintendent's review in advance of the budget presentation.

**MOTION BY** Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **ADD** the discussion of the timeline of the Superintendent's review to this February 14, 2024 agenda, as presented: **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read called the Regular Board of Education meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

**PUBLIC PORTION:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION BY** Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE** January 10, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting, as amended: **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION BY** Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** January 31, 2024, Special Board of Education Meeting, as presented: **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Bell. **MOTION PASSED.**

**REPORTS**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT OWEN LANGER**

Mr. Langer communicated that Maddie Topa became the leading NWR7 basketball scorer over all girls and boys with 1467 points. Ms. Topa broke the record at NWR7, which has been standing for over 28 years. Ms. Topa is only a high school junior! In school events, course selection began for freshmen, sophomores and juniors. Some new courses are the History of Rock and Roll course and the UConn EMT training course. The Model UN has a chance to participate in several conferences in participation with Lewis Mills High School and Clark University. Mr. Langer read Ms. Leon's report, due to Ms. Leon having a conflict at this meeting. Ms. Leon communicated that the swim team had a Swim-a-Thon fundraiser. The swim team swam as many laps as they could in one hour and ended up raising over \$10,000.00. This money is being donated to a past member of the team and a friend of the coach who is battling cancer. On Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, it was the Winter Student Council's semi-formal as well as the co-op ice hockey game in honor of Marcus Rogers. Theatre is currently rehearsing for the Mary Poppins the Musical. The choir had 5 students make All-State.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FRAN AMARA**

Mr. Amara and Mr. Franklin welcomed Robin Waring, Library Media Specialist, to complete her presentation to the Board of Education.

**HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GARY FRANKLIN**

Mr. Franklin and Mr. Amara welcomed Robin Waring, Library Media Specialist, to complete her presentation to the Board of Education.

Ms. Waring's Library Media Presentation is attached for a complete view of the happenings and vision of the Library Media Center. Ms. Waring began by presenting a background of herself. She then proceeded on explaining the importance of libraries. This entailed a

progression into 6 aspects of Library Media and how these 6 items are evolving the NWR7 Library Media Center. These six facets are (1) Reading Promotion, (2) Course Collaboration, (3) Research, (4) Professional Learning, (5) Building Community, and (6) Physical Space. Brief discussion followed.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**State Budget Updates:** Superintendent LePage discussed briefly about the Governor's proposed midterm adjustment to the biennium approved state budget. Superintendent LePage explained that he will be testifying at the Legislative Office Building tomorrow, February 15, 2024. Superintendent LePage will be joined with Mr. O'Brien, the Department Chair and Teacher of the NWR7 Agricultural Education team. Mr. O'Brien will also be taking several student officers to the Legislative Office Building. All will attend the Education Committee press conference at 1:15 p.m., and Superintendent LePage will testify before the Legislative Appropriations Committee later in the day. Superintendent LePage registered and prepared his statement in coordination with the School Finance Project legal team. Superintendent LePage stressed that he hopes his testimony adequately conveys NWR7's concerns and needs, and urges the legislature to enact and continue implementing HB 5003. HB5003 implemented a number of positive changes to education funding, and the Governor's proposed adjustments undo many of the intentions for funding in this bill.

**Educator Diversity Plan:** Superintendent LePage conveyed that the Educator Diversity Plan Requirements being developed per legislative requirements, must be approved and submitted by March 15, 2024. Superintendent LePage will share the plan when completed and present it at the March Board of Education meeting for approval.

**Reduction of Food Waste in the NWR7:** Superintendent LePage communicated that he had a meeting with Kristin LaMesa-Hamzy, the Cafeteria Manager, Mr. Andrew O'Brien and Barbara Domack from Ag Ed to discuss options in reducing the food waste in the cafeteria. The meeting discussed possible ways of composting, animal feed, donation to shelters, etc. Superintendent LePage will keep the BOE posted on the progress. Brief discussion followed.

## **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

**2024-2025 Budget:** The budget presentation will be presented by Superintendent LePage on February 28, 2024. Mr. Gaskins explained it has been a challenging budget process due to the unanticipated special education outplacements, the medical renewal which is much higher this year, and most of all, the State Legislature's influxes of budgets, and underfunding of budgets are making this process difficult.

**Gym Floor Update:** The gym floor in the auxiliary gym needs some attention. NWR7 had repairs completed on this floor by going with the most "cost-effective" process to repair the flooring issues, within the insurance company's advice. The repairs basically did not fix the entire issue, so Mr. Gaskins is in the process of setting up a meeting with the contractor, the insurance company, Mr. Keith Boyle and Superintendent LePage. Brief discussion followed.

**Transportation Contracts:** 2025 is the last year of the transportation contracts. Mr. Gaskins expressed through communication with other school districts, that the increases for negotiations and bidding for the transportation contracts are much higher than anticipated. Some factors for this increase are personnel and driver pressure, labor costs, and fuel.

**Security Grants:** Mr. Gaskins is working on the security grants mentioned previously at BOE meetings. Mr. Gaskins explained how there were three security grants in the past, and NWR7 was only awarded one grant. He expressed that they are reviewing all grants again, trying to improve on what was submitted in the past. The applications for these grants will be submitted when the window opens for submission.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Updates: None  
BOE Goals: No Updates

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Timeline of Review of the Superintendent:** Transparency of the Superintendent's review and salary line item was adopted by the BOE approximately 4-5 years ago to complete each January, so the transparency of the Superintendent's salary is current in the budget process. The BOE, this year, will complete the review later in the year, because Superintendent LePage is a new Superintendent to NWR7. For this 2023-2024, the Superintendent's review will be thoroughly discussed by the BOE in late April 2024. Brief discussion followed.

**MOTION to move into EXECUTIVE SESSION** to discuss the teacher termination hearing. Ms. Bell exited the meeting at 7:12 p.m. Superintendent LePage and Mr. Gaskins exited the meeting at 7:12 p.m.



**MOTION BY Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to MOVE the BOE into EXECUTIVE SESSION in deliberation of the teacher termination hearing, as presented: AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.**

The Board entered into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 7:13 p.m.

The Board exited **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 7:30 p.m.

**MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to ADJOURN from EXECUTIVE SESSION without taking action, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS**

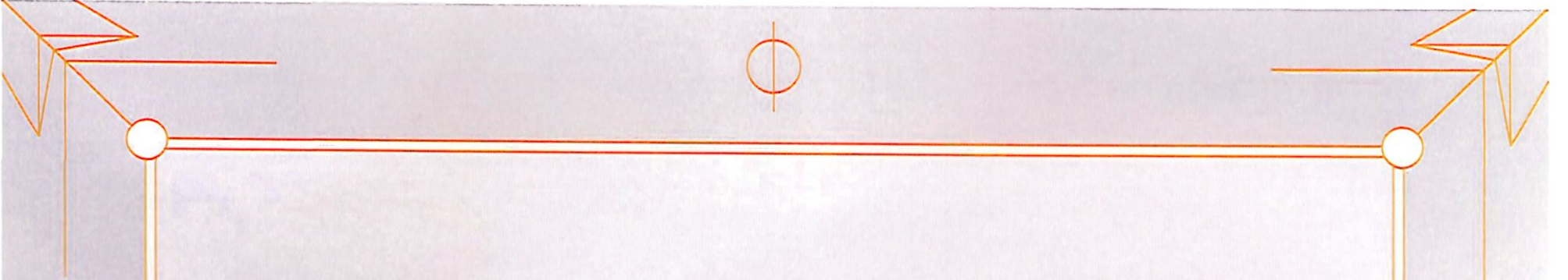
None

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to ADJOURN at 7:30 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran, and Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. MOTION PASSED.**

The next regularly scheduled BOE Meeting will be Wednesday, February 28, 2024, which entails the 2024-2025 Budget Presentation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Barrett  
Board Clerk



# Northwestern LMC


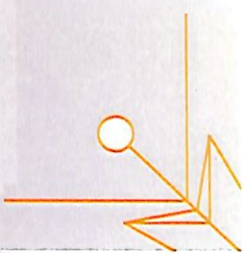
*Building a student-centered collaborative  
hub for the NWR7 Community*

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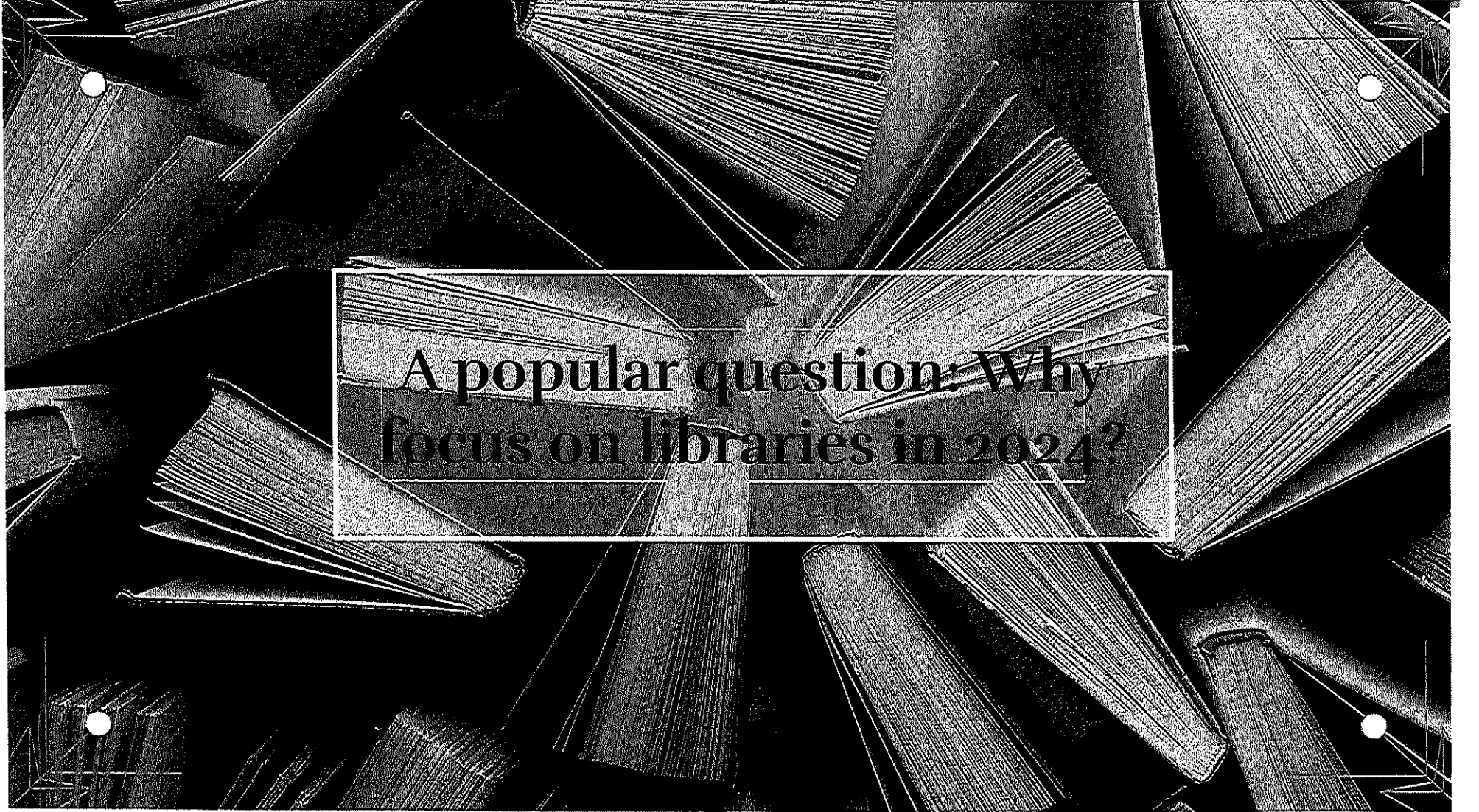
## A little about myself:

- ★ Veteran Teacher: 20 years of classroom experience
  - ★ Department Chair: 12 years of educational leadership experience
  - ★ History Education, Administration, and Library Media Specialist Certification
  - ★ The skills and dispositions to take the Northwestern LMC to the next level
  - ★ **Vested Interest: A local community member & parent**
- 
- 



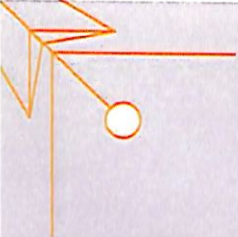
A little about myself:



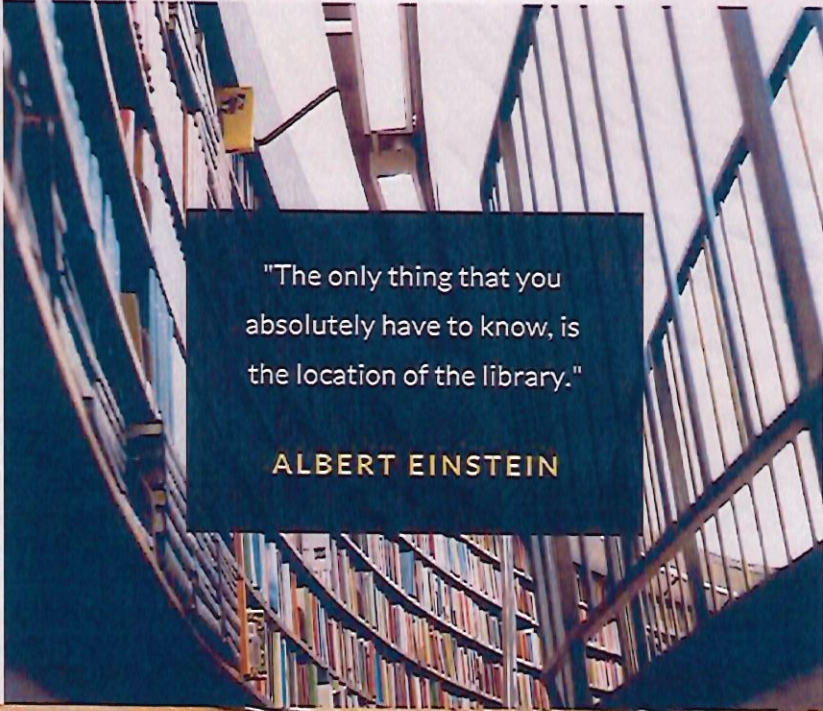


A popular question: Why  
focus on libraries in 2024?





# The Importance of Libraries

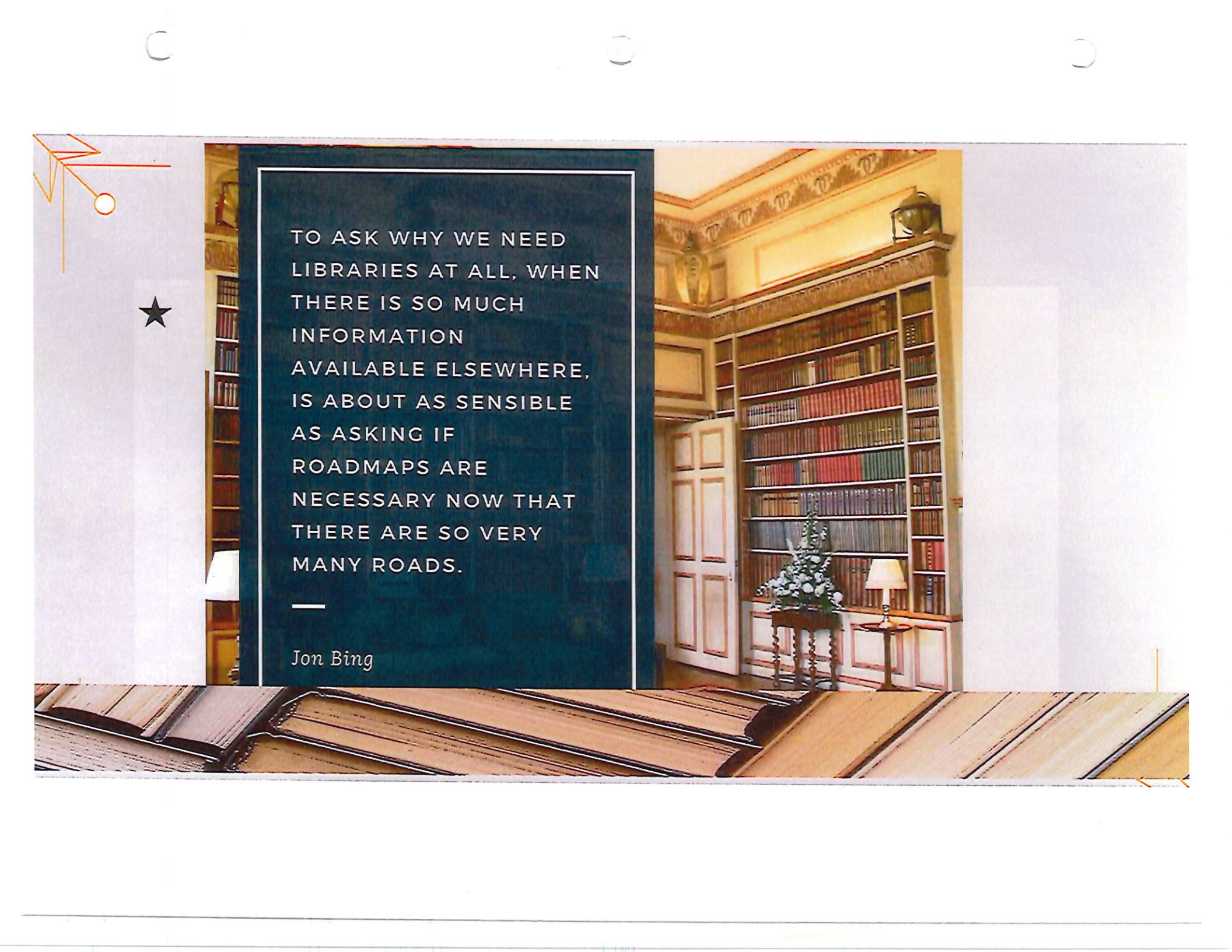


"The only thing that you  
absolutely have to know, is  
the location of the library."

**ALBERT EINSTEIN**



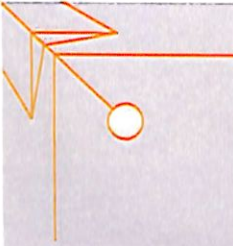






TO ASK WHY WE NEED  
LIBRARIES AT ALL, WHEN  
THERE IS SO MUCH  
INFORMATION  
AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE,  
IS ABOUT AS SENSIBLE  
AS ASKING IF  
ROADMAPS ARE  
NECESSARY NOW THAT  
THERE ARE SO VERY  
MANY ROADS.

—  
Jon Bing

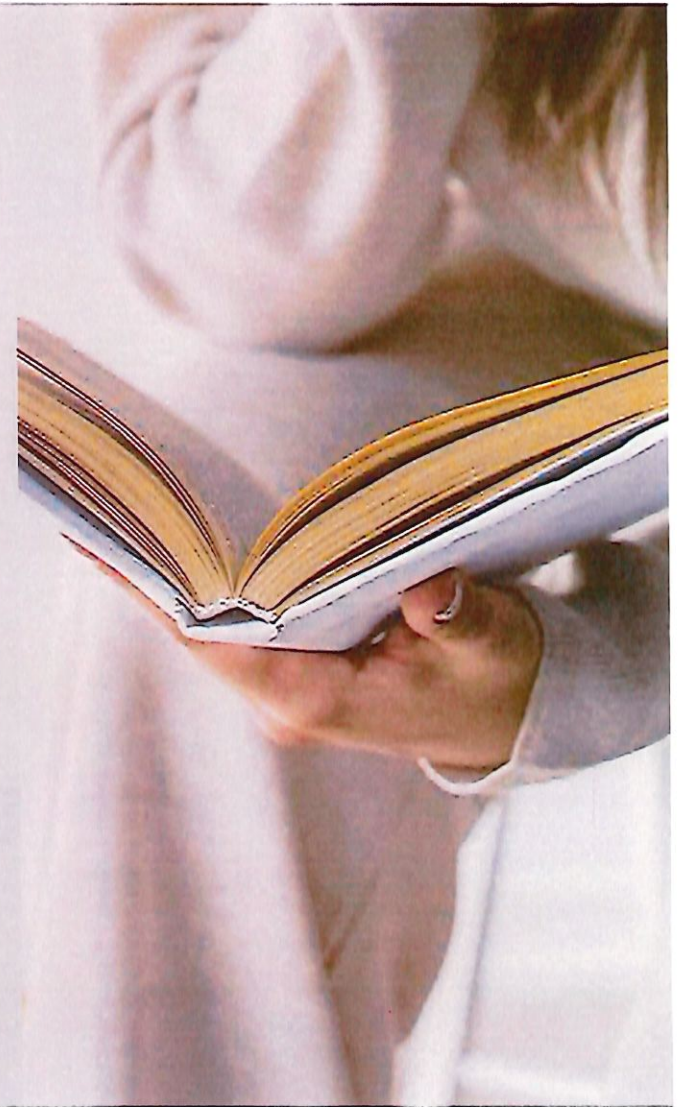




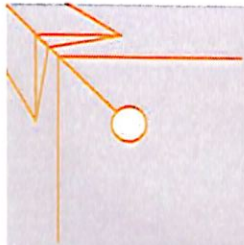
Young People ARE  
Reading!



83%

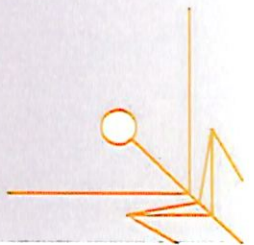





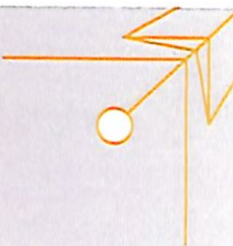


## A Strong LMC = Increase in Student Learning

“Across the United States, research has shown that students in schools with good school libraries learn more, get better grades, and score higher on standardized test scores than their peers in schools without libraries. From Alaska to North Carolina, more than 60 studies have shown clear evidence of this connection between student achievement and the presence of school libraries with qualified school library media specialists” (NCLIS, US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science)







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Reading  
Promotion

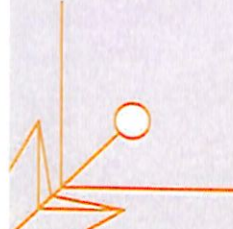
02

Course  
Collaboration

03

Research

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Professional  
Learning

05

Building  
Community

06

Physical  
Space



**01**

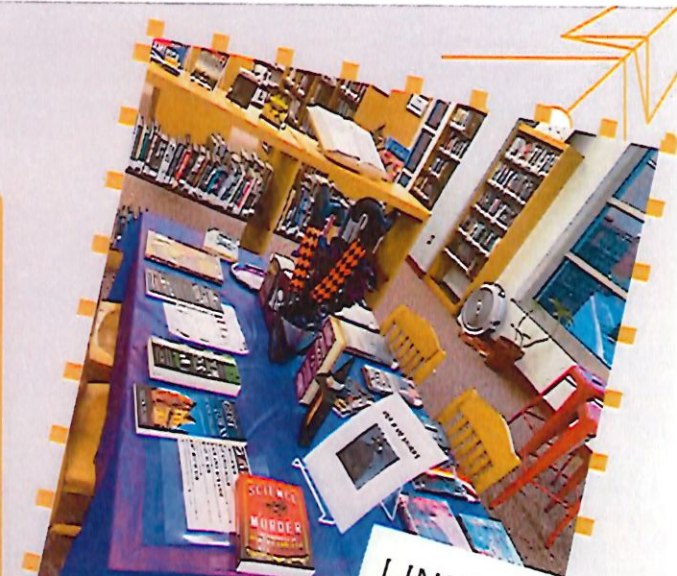
# Reading Promotion



# Book Tastings!



Seasonal, For Fun,  
Tastings!



LINKS  
(Learning  
Independence  
New  
Knowledge &  
Skills)  
Students=  
Party  
Planners!





# Book Tastings!



Course Specific  
Book Tastings-  
Genre Exploration,  
Specific Topics etc.





# Interactive Displays/Genre Displays





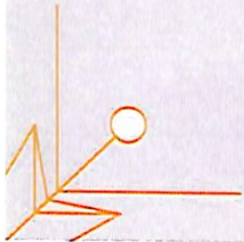


# Summer Reading



- ★ *New for Summer 2024-* A Full Summer Reading Website, Reading Incentives, Course Recommended Reading, and promotion of the Governor's Challenge Lists
- ★ Speaking with all incoming 7th Graders to ensure they're knowledgeable about NWR7 Summer Reading.
- ★ Partnering with local libraries to provide resources and information to our students during the summer months

**Our Goal-** Prevent the Summer Slide, Partner with Parents/Families to provide summer reading suggestions, & encourage course specific interests and helpful pre-reading.







## Careful Curation

- ★ Hundreds of new titles on the shelves
- ★ **Student Requests- Quickly purchased and in hands in a matter of days**
- ★ **Teacher Requests- Quickly purchased and in hands in a matter of days**
- ★ 7-12 titles are based on School Library Journal Reviews, Kirkus Reviews, Booklist, and Common Sense Media.

**Our Goal-** A representative collection that is truly in tune with our school community's needs and wants







## eBooks/Audio Books

- ★ Enhancing Sora for students and staff
- ★ Purchasing popular titles or course specific titles in multiple reading formats
- ★ Finding audio services, accessible textbooks, companion texts to support classroom learning.



**Our Goal-** A representative collection that is truly in tune with our school community's needs and wants

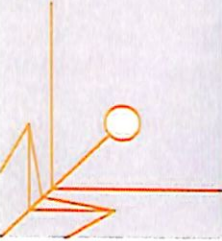






## Why Genrefication?

- ★ Finding books is easier, for everyone. ...
- ★ Genrefication increases browsing satisfaction. ...
- ★ Genrefication is helpful for Reluctant Readers, ESL Learners, and Neurodiverse learners...
- ★ Genrefication increases circulation.



**Our Goal-** Full Genrefication (organize by topic) of our fiction section to enhance the patron experience and allow students to take stronger ownership of their interests





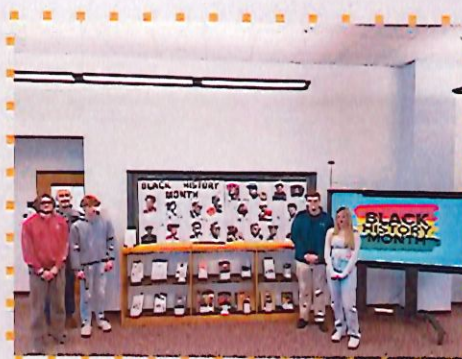
**02**

## **Course Collaboration**



# ⊕ Multidisciplinary Learning Experiences

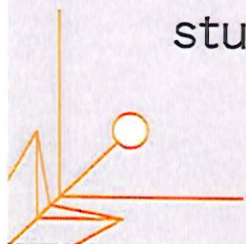
- ★ **African American/Black & Puerto Rican/Latin American Studies Course-** Work with the LMS to research project specific topics like our Black History Month Display.



- ★ **Art Department-** Installation of art projects for the enjoyment of patrons as well as displays for our art students.



**Our Goal-** Each month select a course to run an exhibit in the LMC incorporating research skills, presentation skills, and curation of relevant sources.







# Multidisciplinary Learning Experiences

- ★ **Film Studio**- Brand new video recording studio for documentaries, student projects, etc.

**Our Goal-** Fully operational newsroom, AV Studio open to students and classes

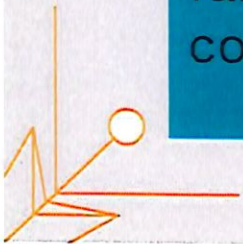





# Multidisciplinary Learning Experiences

- ★ **Ancestry.Com:** Foreign Language Classes and ELA Classes are using ancestry to explore identity and heritage.

**Our Goal-** Develop a Genealogy Club dedicated to oral history projects, family trees, and community history.



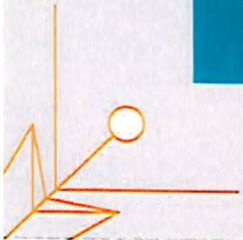




# Multidisciplinary Learning Experiences

- ★ **Mobile Library-** bringing a curated selection of books to classrooms to support student learning. I bring the check out equipment, books, and summaries, to ensure students end up with the most relevant book for them.

**Our Goal-** If they won't come our way, we will bring books to classrooms for our educators and students. This enhances our partnership with the classroom teacher.



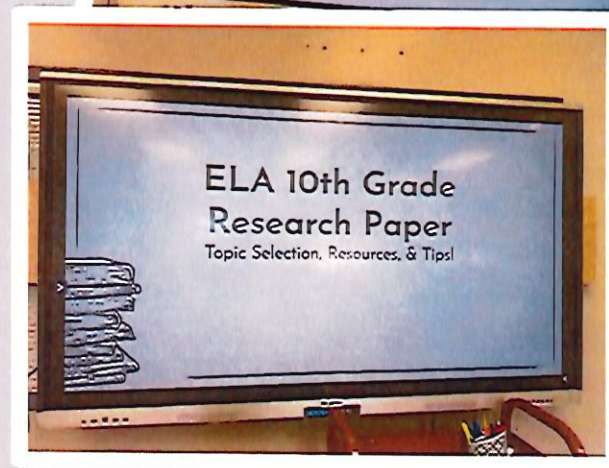
# Research

03



# Teach Research Classes: Ag Ed, ELA, Social Studies, & MORE!

- ★ Tailor **presentations for all departments** in topic selection, database searching, outlining, Noodletools, and citations
- ★ Create presentations with **accessibility** for all students as a top priority
- ★ Work with students in the LMC on **research skills, finding sources, and citing them**
- ★ Ensure the **research tutorials** are provided to each student

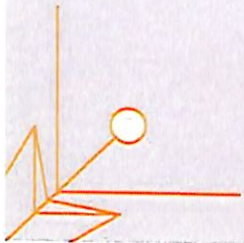






# Teach Research Classes: Ag Ed, ELA, Social Studies

- ★ **Beyond the Databases-** Although we pay for reliable resources, we do teach students to determine the credibility of internet sources. Providing students with outside resources, lateral reading lessons & more!

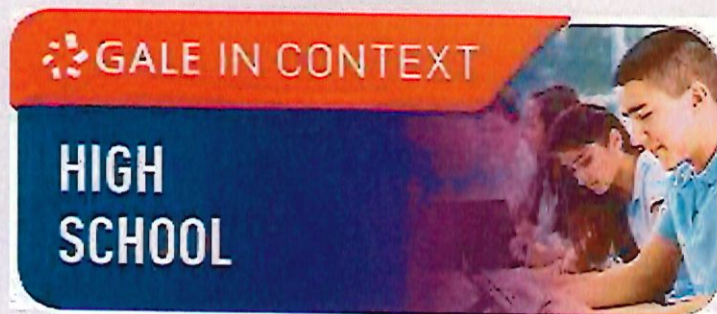






# Maintaining Reliable Databases

- ★ We provide students with an awesome selection of databases and resources managed and accessed through the LMC & our brand new website



**Our goal=** teacher professional training to encourage **all disciplines** to use the reliability of database research for students!



# Professional Learning

04



# Colleague Support & Professional Learning

- ★ Ancestry.com **Training Seminars**-  
Taught by Ben Crusson of Beardsley  
Library to train staff and students alike
- ★ A **useable and accessible website** for all  
students/staff
- ★ Purchasing resources **immediately** for  
students and staff
- ★ **Grading** works cited pages for  
projects/papers



**Our Goal-** AI Training/Staff website, training sessions for databases & research tools, educator tools/support.



# Building Community

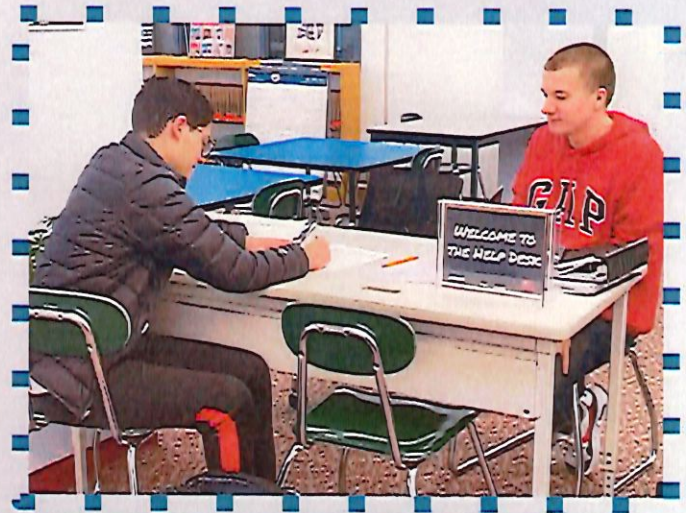
05





## A Community Hub

- ★ Capstone Partnership
- ★ NHS Help Desk
- ★ Highlander Transition Academy Partnership (Vocational Training)
- ★ LINKS Program Partnerships
- ★ Student Volunteers



**Our Goal-** Author talks, public speaking presentations, art displays, interactive activities, etc.

# Physical Space

06



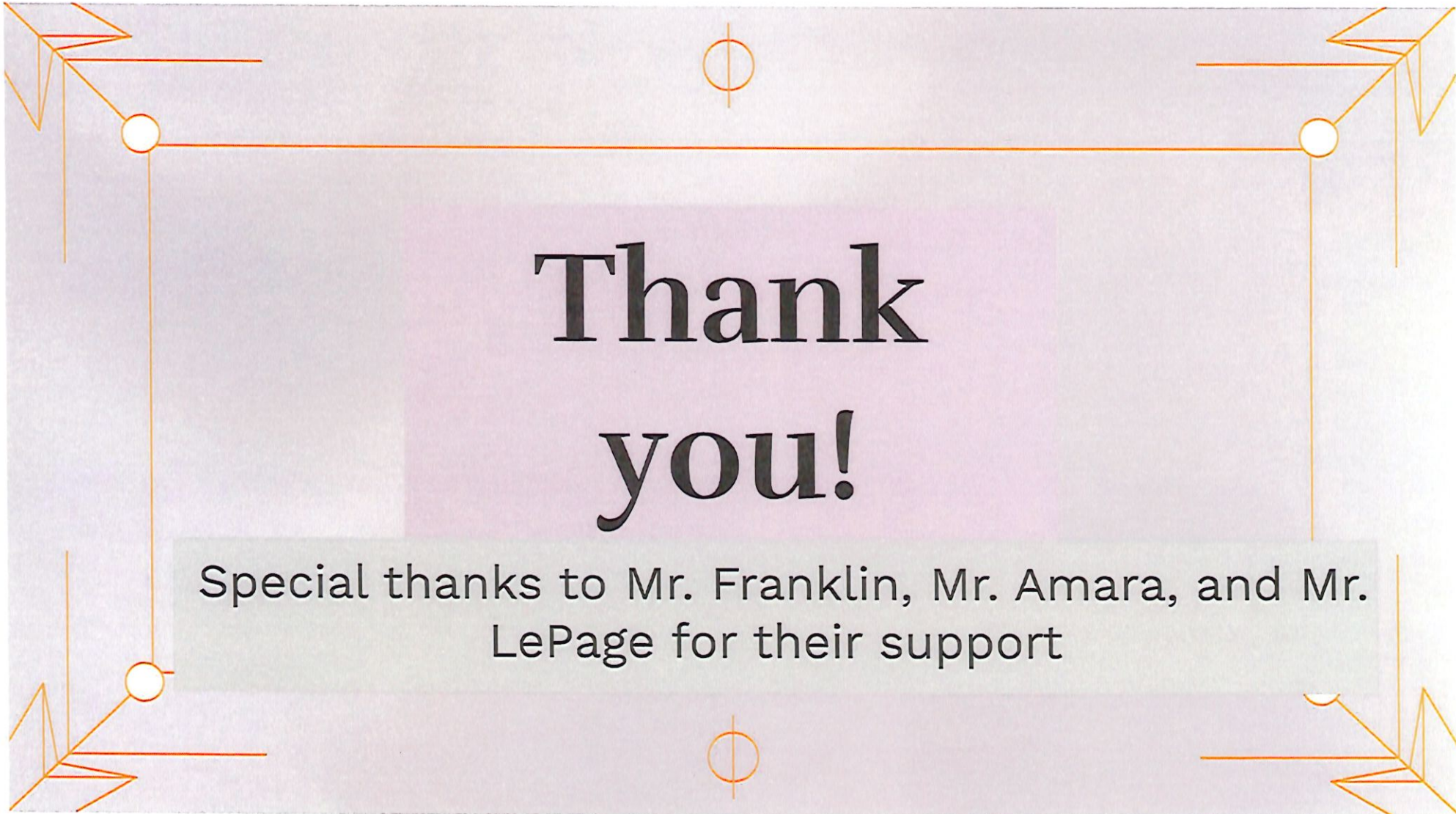
## An inviting space for all...



★ Donations & grant funding have drastically enhanced the physical space!

**Our Goal-** Continue working on the space, incorporating comfortable and effective collaborative seatings as well as updated chairs.





# Thank you!

Special thanks to Mr. Franklin, Mr. Amara, and Mr.  
LePage for their support



**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Library Media Center**  
**Wednesday, February 21, 2024**  
**5:30 PM**  
**DRAFT**

A special meeting of the Board of Education that was called for the purpose of conducting a teacher termination hearing convened at 5:30 PM. NWR7 Board Members present: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), and Ms. Mary Duran (B).

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** the School Administration had met its burden for establishing cause for termination for the elimination of position, in light of Connecticut General Statutes §10-151(d)(5), as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** the Board of Education to terminate the contract of employment of Mrs. Changying Jones as a tenured teacher due to elimination of position under Connecticut General Statutes §10-151(d)(5), effective at the end of the 2023-2024 school year, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** Attorney Mark Sommaruga to draft, sign, and issue the Board of Education's written decision (with findings and conclusions) on behalf of the Board, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

**AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

February 22, 2024

Dear Northwestern Board of Education,

I am writing to formally provide my 30 days notice of resignation, and to thank you for my amazing experience teaching and leading at Northwestern. I have accepted a position to begin a new contract with another district on March 25, 2024.

Though I am excited for my new opportunity, I am beyond grateful for the relationships and experiences developed with my Northwestern family. I leave a piece of my heart forever with the Highlanders, for it is here that I grew into my professional learning, roles, and responsibilities.

Because of the love, support, kindness, and nurturing I have received here, I am prepared to bring the knowledge and skills I have developed to another district, and spread the spirit of the Highlander. Thank you for all of your support, for trusting me as a role model and educator, and for providing me with the strength I need to begin my first step on this new journey.

With sincere gratitude,



Jessica Angell