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 860-350-6647

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 Mr. Marc Balanda, Ass't. Principal
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Schaghticoke Middle School
 860-354-2204

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 Mrs. Emily Gervasio, Ass't. Principal
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Sarah Noble Intermediate School
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Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal
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Hill & Plain Elementary School
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John Pettibone Elementary School
 860-354-3218

Mrs. Paula Kelleher, Principal
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 860-355-3713

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Spotlight on New Milford Schools

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Spotlight on Parent Math Workshops

In September of this year, the Board of Education approved the implementation of a new math curriculum for all grades kindergarten through grade five. The curriculum had been approved for grade two the previous school year and was expanded to the additional grades this year. The program, called *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space*, has been well received by teachers and students but represents a big change from how some parents are used to seeing math taught. To help parents see first hand how their students are learning, Math coaches Mrs. Corby Kennison and Mrs. Stephanie Zappone organized a series of parent math workshops in January.



Mrs. Kennison coordinated the workshops for grades kindergarten through three which took the form of evening "Family Math Nights" held at each of the elementary schools. Mrs. Kennison says, "We did get all three Family Math Nights in - without having to use any of the snow dates! Families braved the cold to come and

play math games during the evening from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at school-based events. Several teachers and the building level administrators at each school also lent their support."

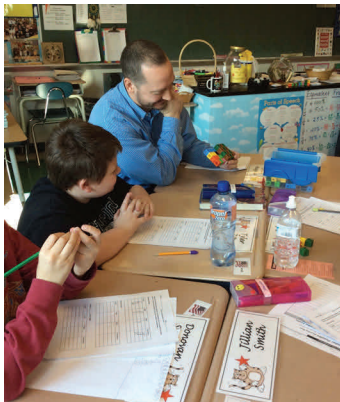
Six to eight games from *Investigations* for each grade level were available for participating families to explore. Since many of the games and activities were appropriate for a range of ages, families were able to play and discuss a variety of games. Families worked with activities in number, geometry, measurement and data. [Click here](#) to see a sample handout that families used to navigate the games. The goals were posted at the sign-in table. Children also worked with their families to guess the number of pretzels in a large container. The student who was closest to the actual amount won a full container of pretzels to share with the class during snack time.

While the directions for each game were available, children already knew how to play and taught their parents. One favorite was "Beat the Calculator" in which players use mental math strategies to try to find the total of a string of numbers before the player with the calculator could determine the total. Children of all ages (even pre-school!) used pattern blocks to cover shapes in more than one way. Children challenged their parents to see who could jump the farthest and measured the results. There were a variety of card games to reinforce number concepts. Kindergarten children also sorted buttons and attribute blocks in different ways.



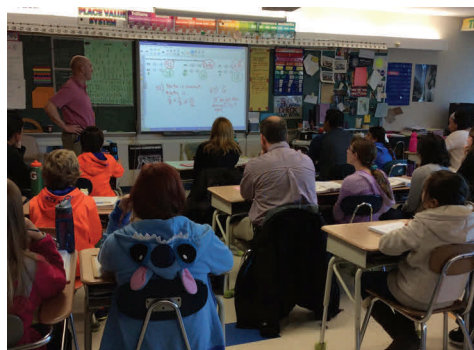
In addition to the games and activities, families also experienced a component of the *Investigations* program, Classroom Routines. These are ten-minute daily activities to support and reinforce major concepts and skills of the grade level. For Family Math Night, participants with children in grades two and three shared a variety of equations for the Number of the Day, and kindergarten and first grade students worked with numbers on the calendar, hundred chart, or with quick images of ten-frames.

Mrs. Kennison says, "The response was phenomenal and overwhelmingly positive. In the three Family Math Nights, a total of 341 people in 133 families came out to enjoy and experience math together!"



SNIS parents and students also got to experience the Math program first hand in workshops held during the day. Principal Anne Bilko says, "Over 180 parents from grades four through six took part in Sarah Noble Intermediate School's Parent Math Workshops during the month of January. Fourth and fifth grade each had two sessions in which parents were given a presentation by Math coach Stephanie Zappone who coordinated the program. Then parents experienced a Math Workshop lesson with their children in their classrooms."

During Mrs. Zappone's presentation, parents viewed a quick overview of the program *Investigations* and learned what they would be seeing about the new math program during their visit. They also were provided with information about student online access to program materials and the district math websites created last year for each grade level K-6. Afterwards, parents moved to general classrooms for their math experience. The classroom experience started out with a Ten-Minute Math activity (a daily ten minute fluency activity that is taught outside of the math period), then moved into the Math Workshop which consisted of three typical games/activities in which both students and parents happily participated.



Since sixth grade is reflective of a typical middle school schedule in which students change classes each period, parent visits for workshops were slightly different than in the other grades. Parents arrived and received a handout and a quick overview, then were escorted to their child's math classroom. This occurred for each of the math classes, throughout the day, during both sessions. Parents of sixth graders participated alongside their child in a lesson about multiplying fractions and were exposed to the various strategies students have learned.

Mrs. Zappone says "Parent response was very positive during all six sessions of Sarah Noble's Parent Math Workshops. It was great to see how excited the students were to have their parents in class with them! SNIS teachers are very grateful to all the parents who were able to take time out of their busy schedules to attend the workshops."

To learn more about the new program *Investigations* and see activities and online games by topic that support student learning, [visit the district website](#).

It's Official! PLTW Receives National Certification

The January issue of *Spotlight* reported that New Milford High School's Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Program was in the process of being recommended for national certification. **We are happy to report that certification has been officially granted!** Full certification means that students in all PLTW courses will have the potential of earning college credit from more than 60 colleges and universities across the nation including University of New Haven, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Rochester Institute of Technology, to name a few. Many universities also award PLTW students financial scholarships upon entering their engineering programs.

"New Milford High School should be congratulated for demonstrating its commitment to PLTW's quality standards," said PLTW President and CEO Vince Bertram. "The real winners here, however, are the school's students. Students benefit from PLTW's innovative, project-based curriculum that encourages creativity, problem solving and critical thinking. We look forward to many more years of working together to prepare New Milford High School students for the global economy."

PLTW teacher Mrs. Erin Lucia adds, "The beauty of PLTW courses is that our students get to experience how a concept they learned in science applies to real-world projects, including robotics. Rather than sit passively and listen to a lecture, our students are building, developing and creating. It's the kind of hands-on experience that will engage more students in science, technology, engineering and math—fields that they might otherwise never have considered."

BOE Pleased to Recognize Students and Staff

The New Milford Board of Education holds regular meetings each month throughout the school year and special meetings as necessary to conduct the business of the New Milford Public Schools. One of the most enjoyable moments of these evenings happens at the beginning of the meeting when the Board pauses to recognize deserving students and staff. Recognition varies from month to month and is given for many reasons ranging from academic excellence to athletic accomplishments to special contests. This month's meeting was a good example as both students and staff were recognized.



Morganne C., a student at SMS, was recognized for winning the VFW Patriot's Pen Essay Contest; Ryan C., a student at SNIS, was recognized as the winner of the local Fire Prevention Poster Contest; eight teachers from four different schools were recognized as awardees of CT Core Standards (CCS) Professional Learning Mini-Grants; and one staff member was recognized on her retirement after more than 20 years in the district. Following the formal recognition, the Board always takes a small recess to allow the awardees to take photos with family and friends to mark the occasion.

The [Annual Report](#) of the Board of Education lists past recognitions and can be found on the district website. Also in the report is a summary by month of business conducted.



Online Registration a Success for New Milford Adult Education

New Milford Adult Education has successfully launched its new online registration site at newmilford.coursestorm.com. Since the site went active on January 5, the new method of registration has been well received. Registration numbers are high. The site is convenient, and user-friendly. From the first day the site went public, it was described by users as straightforward and easy. Those who register for classes receive an email confirmation almost immediately. Communication with class participants is streamlined with emails generated using class rosters from the site.

Exciting and informative classes are added to the Adult Education offerings every semester. New classes added for the winter/spring 2015 semester include Line Dancing, Succulent Terrarium Workshop, 3-2-1 Interval Training, Attracting Pollinators to the Garden, Off-Loom Bead Weaving, Waking up the Vegetable Garden, and Upcycled Art. Residents from surrounding towns are welcome to take enrichment classes at no extra charge.

Enrichment classes run through the end of May and registrations are accepted right up until each class fills or it begins. Some fitness instructors have even agreed to accept registrations after the class start date.

High School Diploma, GED® Test Preparation, and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are free and require in-person registration.

SMS Eighth Graders Prepare for Life as Freshmen

This school year is just past the halfway mark but it is not too early for current eighth grade students to start thinking about their lives next year as freshmen at New Milford High School. Two annual events are designed to help that process.



On Friday, January 16th the Guidance departments at SMS and NMHS hosted a Course Selection information session for all current SMS eighth grade students. NMHS counselors presented the students with valuable information concerning the high school expectations, credits and activities. Students were given a copy of the Program of Studies and were shown how to use the guide to pick their electives. SMS school counselors met with students the following week to reinforce credit expectations and review how to complete the Course Selection Sheet.

New Milford High School continued the process by hosting Incoming Freshman Night which took place at the high school in the evening of Thursday, January 22nd. This event is designed for current eighth grade students and their parents to provide additional valuable information in preparation for next school year. The evening began in the theatre with a presentation by New Milford High School Principal Greg Shugrue who introduced the NMHS administrative team, including department chairs, as well as leaders of athletics and band. He then reviewed the Mission Statement of the New Milford Public Schools and New Milford High School's core values and beliefs.

Parents and students heard information on graduation requirements along with how classes are structured at NMHS, specifically in all core areas and electives. Then, students and parents were provided information regarding the NMHS Guidance Department and course selection, along with a look into the high school's schedule. The presentation concluded with a review of the various forms of communication that NMHS offers: the school website, email, Principal's Corner newsletter, School Messenger, Twitter, and Remind 101. To see slides of the presentation [click here](#).

From the theatre, the evening's events proceeded to the cafeteria, where academic departments, clubs, band, activities, and athletics were represented at individual tables. Prospective students and their parents had an opportunity to talk informally with any of these school groups. Mr. Shugrue is pleased to report that this year's event may have been NMHS's biggest turnout ever!



SMS Reminds Students to Pay It Forward

Character education is an important component of the school day at all the New Milford Public Schools including Schaghticoke Middle School. SMS emphasizes the importance of good character through special days such as their Unity Day and Anti-Bullying Day and through special initiatives throughout the year.



One recent example is the “Pay It Forward” snowflakes display in the school’s library media center and on hallway bulletin boards. SMS teacher Ms. Lisa Mosey spearheaded this idea for the school’s December Unity Day. Ms. Mosey says, “What we did was show students a short clip from the movie *Pay It Forward* where a boy is given a project by his Social Studies teacher in which he is challenged to make a difference in the world. The boy proceeds to choose three people who need help in certain ways and the only thing he asks of them is to do the same for three other people by paying it forward. We had the students talk about ways to do just that.”



In the spirit of the wintry weather we’ve been seeing lately, students used a snowflake theme to display their ideas. The snowflake is a particularly good choice since as there are an infinite number of snowflake shapes, so too are there an infinite number of ways to “pay it forward”. Pictured above are just a few of the many ideas students had of ways to make a difference.



REMINDER:
The next
**Sit Down with
the Superintendent**



will be held on March 18th from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.
at the Lillis Administration Building,
50 East Street

Transition Update

TRANSITION
YEAR

Project managers Arum and Associates held focus group meetings during the month of January. They met with interested parents at each of the affected schools during the January 6th -14th timeframe and held a community meeting on January 15th. Focus groups were also held with staff at each of the K-8 schools. Participants had an opportunity to share thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and concerns about transition topics. All comments from these sixteen focus group meetings have been added to the district website's [Transition Year](#) page under the heading "Click here for Focus Group Comments". The comments are sorted by school and meeting. Additionally, the project managers, in conjunction with central office administrators, have drafted a Question and Answer document based on topics discussed in the groups. This document can be found on the Transition Year page under the heading "Click here for Parent Focus Group Meeting Q and A's". Please check the website frequently for any additional updates.

As an offshoot to the focus group meetings, a parent advisory committee has been formed. The committee had its first meeting on Wednesday, February 18th at SNIS. The first task of the committee will be to explore ideas and suggestions for making planned April parent/student evening meetings in each of the receiving schools as effective as possible. The group will also explore strategies for enhancing communication between parents and the schools.

Third grade and sixth grade instructional transition teams had their first meetings. Participants discussed team objectives which will include looking at ways to make the transition process as smooth as possible for students and parents and brainstorming about instructional opportunities. Project managers will be meeting with library media specialists over the next week or so to discuss the progress of plans to move collection materials to the appropriate schools.

NMHS presents *The Secret Garden*



Tickets are on sale now for this year's All School Musical production of *The Secret Garden*. Evening performances will be presented on March 20, 21, 27, and 28 at 7 p.m. in the NMHS theatre. Matinees will be offered on March 22 at 3 p.m. and on March 28 at 2 p.m. All seating at \$10 per person is reserved. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the high school box office

Mondays through Fridays from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Mondays through Thursdays from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tickets are also available by calling the high school box office at 860-350-6647 ext. 1552.

Senior citizen passes are available that provide FREE admission to the musical and other school events. Please call the Central Office at 860-355-8406 for more information.





New Milford Public Schools

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860-355-8406

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Assistant Superintendent

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Human Resources Director

Mr. John Calhoun
Facilities Manager

Mr. Jay Hubelbank
Fiscal Services & Operations Director

Mrs. Laura Olson
Pupil Personnel & Special Services Director

Ms. Roberta Pratt
Technology Director

Mrs. Sandra Sullivan
Food Services Director

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Library Lovers Month!

A month long celebration of school, public, and private libraries of all types

A library is much more than a place to borrow books or to study. Libraries offer educational, civic, and entertaining programs and continue to play an important role within local communities. The Institute of Museum and Library Services in its most recent survey found that in 2012, Americans made 1.5 billion trips to public libraries in the United States – the equivalent of more than 4.1 million visits each day! Libraries are offering more public programs, including programs for children, and are seeing greater attendance than in previous years. Public libraries are also adding more to their digital holdings, including e-books and downloadable audio and video. In addition, libraries continue to provide public access computers and internet access.

When was the last time you spent time in the sanctuary of the library, away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life? If it's been a while, there's no better time to stop in than during Library Lovers' Month. Browse the shelves, check out a book or two, attend an event or simply sit down and catch your breath.



MY LIBRARY
by Varda One

**It's only a room with shelves and books,
but it's far more magical than it looks
It's a jet on which I soar
to lands that exist no more.
Or a key with which I find
answers to questions crowding my mind.
Building my habit of learning and growing,
asking and researching till I reach knowing.
Here, I've been a mermaid and an elf
I've even learned to be more myself.
I think that I shall never see
a place that's been more useful to me.
With encouraging kind friends with wit
Who tell me to dream big and never quit.
It's only a room with shelves and books,
but it's far more magical than it looks.**



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February

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family and community, is to prepare each and every student to compete and excel in an ever-changing world, embrace challenges with vigor, respect and appreciate the worth of every human being, and contribute to society by providing effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, offering a wide range of valuable experiences, and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.