



New Milford Public Schools
50 East Street
New Milford, CT 06776
860-355-8406
www.newmilfordps.org



New Milford High School
860-350-6647

Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal
Mrs. Liz Curtis, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Linda Scoralick, Asst. Principal
Mr. Eric Williams, Asst. Principal



Schaghticoke Middle School
860-354-2204

Dr. Christopher Longo, Principal
Mrs. Kerri Adakonis, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Delaney, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Asst. Principal



Sarah Noble Intermediate School
860-210-4020

Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Asst. Principal



Hill & Plain Elementary School
860-354-5430

Mrs. Paula Kelleher, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Asst. Principal



Northville Elementary School
860-355-3713

Mrs. Susan Murray, Principal
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Asst. Principal

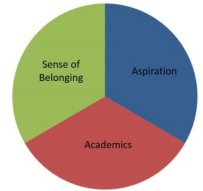
Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 8, Issue 8

February 2018

Building a Sense of Belonging

The month of February featured several events designed to help foster student belonging and community. They include the sharing of valentines and friendship in our youngest grades, the Start With Hello Week initiative in our intermediate and middle grades, and the THP Project Purple initiative at NMHS.



This is the second year for the celebration of Start with Hello Week at SNIS and SMS. Held this year from February 5 through 9, the initiative uses materials from the Sandy Hook Promise Prevention program to guide activities.

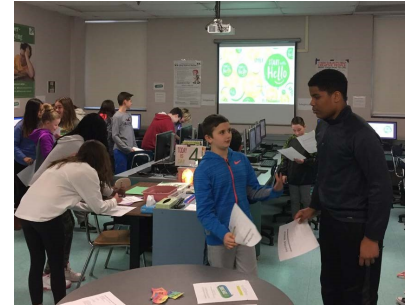
At SNIS, The PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Committee, which is comprised of administrators, teachers, a school counselor, social worker, and a parent, shared an instructional powerpoint presentation with staff to use in their classrooms. Grade 4 teacher Mrs. Stacey Haleks says, "The powerpoint reminds the students of simple steps we can all take to make sure that everyone around us feels included and like they belong. It takes three simple steps to do this. At the heart of it all: notice someone alone, make contact in some way, and help them as they need it."

On Tuesday, all the students wore name tags. The idea behind this was to greet each other in the hall using each other's names. The goal was to reach out and say hello to someone you have not spoken to yet. The weather got in the way of Wednesday's "Random Acts of Kindness day", but that did not stop the SNIS community. Mrs. O'Loughlin's class, pictured, were the lucky recipients of bookmarks specially delivered by some new friends (on Friday instead).



On Thursday, students and staff were encouraged to wear green in support of the program whose logo's main color is green. To foster new relationships, the students were invited to have open seating in the cafeteria on Friday. The goal was to help students make new connections with new friends. Mrs. Haleks also states, "I love this initiative! At the heart of it all, it is about inclusion and showing respect to everyone around you."

SMS followed a similar schedule with some different activities. Monday was "Go out of your way to say hello to someone you do not know day". Tuesday featured written poems, essays, and posters created by students that were shared and posted throughout the building. The snow hit SMS on Wednesday, so Thursday was jam packed with games of Human Bingo and Human Scavenger Hunts around SMS designed to build student connections and to encourage students to meet others they haven't met before. Thursday was Say Hello in other languages day, both in announcements and in the halls. Similar to SNIS, the week culminated on Friday with "No one eats alone day" where students were encouraged to sit with students they didn't already know and make new friends. The week was also promoted through Start with Hello wristbands and the creation of a Positivity Wall, where the entire school community could post during the week.



At the end of the week, SMS also released the second video in a five part series on the meaning of the school's motto: SURGE. This video focuses on the letter U for UNITE and asked students and staff "What does Unite mean to you?" [Check it out here.](#)



At NMHS, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club students teamed up in solidarity with the towns of New Milford and Sherman to celebrate THP Project Purple Week from February 11–17. According to the press release issued by the New Milford Substance Abuse Prevention Council "Project Purple is an initiative of The Herren Project (THP), a non-profit foundation established by former NBA basketball player Chris Herren, which assists individuals and families struggling with addiction. The THP Project Purple initiative was launched to break the stigma of addiction, bring awareness to the dangers of substance abuse and encourage positive decision making to navigate life's challenges. The THP Project Purple Initiative empowers our youth to stand up and make a difference. Going Purple gives students motivation and support as they embrace a message of education and awareness. Students learn that they do not need drugs and alcohol to meet life's challenges; that they are perfect the way they are." To raise awareness in the

community, the New Milford town green was decorated with purple ribbons, purple lights and a banner on the band stand.

SADD students coordinated events for the entire high school community to show support. Monday's kickoff event was "I Am" statements in the cafeteria where students (and staff) filled out purple hearts with a sentence that best describes who they are without drugs and alcohol. Tuesday students were encouraged to symbolically wave goodbye to drugs by wearing Greenwave apparel in solidarity. Wednesday was mismatched clothing day, a visual reminder to students not to get mixed up with drugs. Thursday was "too bright to ignite" day where students wore bright, colored clothing as a reminder that they don't need drugs to shine. To finish the week, students came decked out in purple on Friday.



The Housatonic Valley Coalition Against Substance Abuse Teen Advisory Board, which includes New Milford High School students, created a video showcasing some of their "I Am" statements. It can be viewed [here](#).

SMS Forms Principal's Student Advisory Council

The March 2017 issue of Spotlight reported on the creation of a Principal's Student Advisory Council at NMHS and the creation of smaller subgroups to work on special projects, mentoring and outreach. This year, the group sponsored an Antique Show/Sale in October with proceeds going towards defraying the cost of prom. New Milford High School's Key Club and the Council are working in collaboration with HPS' school social worker on a mentoring program. High school students are paired with elementary students and meet once a week throughout the year to read, play games, or just talk.

SMS Principal Dr. Chris Longo thought the idea of a principal's student advisory council was so good that he has instituted the club at his school. Open to students in all three grades, the SMS Principal's Student Advisory Council meets the first Wednesday of each month. Dr. Longo says, "The group has been discussing current initiatives at SMS and ways we can improve. We also discuss problems and brainstorm ways to problem solve. It's always interesting to hear the students' perspective and suggestions."

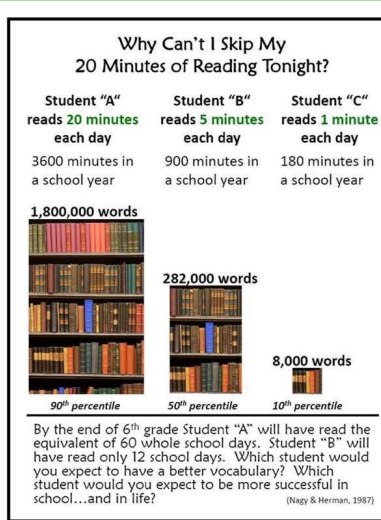
Some of the discussion items this year include getting the word out about clubs so that all students are aware of choices, publicizing the school's SURGE motto through



posters and announcements, and collaborating with the newly formed S.A.F.E. (Schaghticoke Allies for Equality) Club. The group is always looking at activism, with topics such as recycling and animal protection, and to community outreach through Veterans Day activities and community thank you cards.

“Sometimes discussion is more casual and can be about day to day happenings in the school.” says Dr. Longo. “We’ve had informal talks about bus respect and monitoring language in the school hallways and cafeteria, even just what to do or say to a fellow student who is upset for some reason. It has been a natural fit with some of our other initiatives like the *Say Something* and *Start with Hello* weeks. I’m looking forward to seeing how the group evolves.”

Promoting Literacy



“Why Can’t I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?” The illustration to the left clearly shows the importance of regular reading. NMPS promotes student literacy both through curriculum and special events designed to build enthusiasm for literacy.

SNIS is hosting its fifth year of Book Madness. Students and staff nominate their favorite books and a “tournament bracket” is built. Then the fun begins with students voting to narrow down choices until a champion is crowned. This year over 700 nominations were received. Books that were previously



crowned champion are *The Hunger Games* (2014), *Wonder* (2015), *The Day the Crayons Quit* (2016), and *The BFG* (2017). This year’s champion will be announced in April. You can follow the tournament on Twitter @SNISBookMadness.



At SMS, the Battle of the Books is a longstanding friendly reading challenge which generates a great deal of student interest. This month, the SMS PTO sponsored a kickoff Read-a-Thon to promote the springtime event. Students stayed after school for pizza, trivia, prizes and reading. As SMS Library Media Specialist Susan Baerny said, “A perfect afternoon promoting literacy!”

Follow the Drinking Gourd: A cross-curricular lesson at SNIS

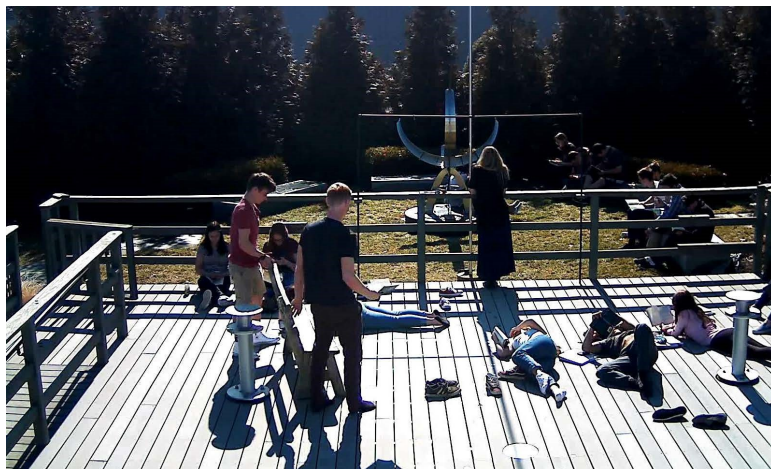
This February, SNIS Music teacher Gloria Capone took her 5th grade music classes on an “in school field trip” to the SNIS John J. McCarthy Planetarium in connection with a study of the “Songs of the Underground Railroad” and specifically the song “Follow the Drinking Gourd”. There they met with Science Enrichment teacher Susan Brofford to learn the science behind the story.



Students were asked to put themselves in the place of escaping slaves who were following the clues of this famous song. Mrs. Brofford showed the students what the sky would have looked like in their native Africa where stars were used for navigation. Then she brought them to America where they located the routes taken out of the south towards the Ohio River and freedom. Students learned how to use the guide stars of the “Drinking Gourd”, which we know as the Big Dipper, to locate the North Star. They also learned how to locate the star during different seasons, especially in spring, when it was safest to attempt escape.

Ms. Capone recorded true stories of slaves who had made the journey, and played them to the students as they looked at the sky in the total darkness of the planetarium. Mrs. Brofford’s knowledge enhanced their study and took it to a new level. Students will conclude their study by becoming “Freedom Seekers”, and writing a journal page of their trip on the Underground Railroad.

Ms. Capone says “Music is a complex and fascinating subject for young people, and enhances all the other disciplines. Making the connections between Music, Science, History and Literature gives students a multimodal experience to enrich their understanding. I don’t know how to teach music without crossing into other subject areas. I believe that this cross-curricular approach keeps music alive for all students, regardless of their talent.”



The Planetarium was not the only busy spot this month. NMHS Students took advantage of February’s brief “spring” by visiting the sun deck at the John J. McCarthy observatory for some outdoor reading.

BOE Sub-Committees: Doing the Business of the Board

Ensuring the smooth day-to-day operations of the New Milford Public Schools is the responsibility of Superintendent Joshua Smith, the district's administrative team, and staff. It is the New Milford Board of Education however that is charged with the overall care and management of our schools. These elected officials are given the authority and responsibility to govern the local public schools within the powers granted by the Constitution and the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, the regulations of the CT State Board of Education, and the pertinent provisions as determined by the Town of New Milford.

How do they go about doing this here in New Milford? First and foremost by employing a superintendent capable of ensuring that the district maintains a position as an outstanding school system and that school personnel carry out the policies of the Board with energy and dedication. Then the BOE and Superintendent work hand in hand to decide how best to accomplish these goals. This may take the form of workshops, regular meetings and special meetings as necessary. In order to further assist with this work, the Board has established certain committees to serve in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent and the Board, and to fulfill its responsibilities as required by law. It is in these standing committees that the business of the Board begins.



The New Milford Board of Education has four standing subcommittees, designated to address specific operations of the Board, which meet on a regular monthly basis. These meetings take place before the regularly scheduled monthly Board meeting so that any recommendations can be brought forward to the full Board for discussion and possible action. They also provide a place to begin discussion of often weighty topics and anticipate questions the full Board may have when topics are brought forward. The four sub-committees are Policy, Committee on Learning, Facilities and Operations.

The Policy Sub-Committee is responsible for formulating the broad policies which govern the workings of the New Milford Public Schools and for suggesting amendments/revisions to existing policies when appropriate. These are the policies that show up in school handbooks and in the Appendix A that students receive each year. They are organized into subsets in areas such as Community Relations, Students, Instruction, Personnel etc. All policies can be found on the [district website here](#).

The February Policy meeting provides a good example of the work this committee does. Members reviewed five policies that needed to be revised due to recent changes in CT law, including everything from employment reference checks to expulsion of students. They also scheduled discussion on a review of the 1000 series of policies which pertain to community relations.

The Committee on Learning subcommittee reviews curricula and instructional programs, including proposals for new courses and initiatives, and sends them on to the full Board for

discussion and approval. This sub-committee is usually the first to review annual district assessments as well. February's meeting focused on the review of curricula for Physical Education classes from Kindergarten through Grade 12.

The Facilities Sub-Committee works with the Superintendent and district staff in the overall planning for and supervision of the physical plant: the district's buildings and grounds. They provide for the planning and scheduling of long-range maintenance needs and repair projects. Topics here cover everything from updates on custodial and maintenance work and routine inspection results, to large scale repairs and replacement of items such as water heaters and fire alarm units, to long term capital projects such as roof repair. This committee also reviews building and field use.

The Operations Sub-Committee is charged with overseeing the real day-to-day nitty gritty. It is here that the first review is done regarding hiring, purchasing, and other contractual and budgetary matters. This committee also reviews donations, requests for clubs and activities, bid awards, grant approvals, and all the other items that can affect the budget's bottom dollar, before moving discussion on to the full Board meeting. February's meeting included donations from the New Milford PTO and Lowe's Toolbox for Education Program.

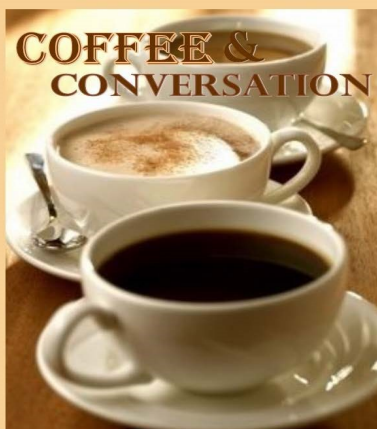
So, what does all this mean for our students? Ultimately, these sub-committees provide the Board of Education with the information they use to oversee our students' school experience. They recommend for approval the staff in our buildings, the programs they teach, and the budgeted materials they use. They plan for future needs to meet the

educational demands of the district. They also serve as a link between the schools and the general community.



The schedules for the public meeting of these committees are listed on the district website under their respective headings, along with agendas and minutes as they occur. Full Board meeting agendas, minutes and video recordings appear on the website as well. [Go to the district home page to follow the links.](#)

**This year's 3rd
Coffee & Conversation
with Superintendent
Joshua Smith
is March 13, 2018**



What's on your mind?

Please join us for casual conversation with
Superintendent of Schools Joshua Smith

**Tuesday, March 13, 2018
5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

**Lillis Administration Building, Rm 2
50 East Street
New Milford**

Can't join us but have a question or concern?
Call (860) 355-8406 or email:
suptoffice@newmilfordps.org

SNIS Students Participate in Winter Olympics



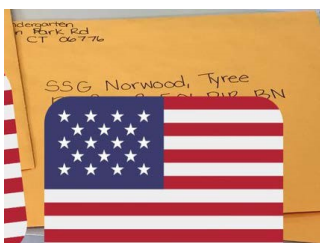
Students in Physical Education classes at SNIS are participating in their very own Winter Olympics mini-unit this month as part of the larger cooperative games unit. The students rotate through from station to station and participate in a torch relay, curling, bobsledding, biathlon, and hockey. At each station, students have the opportunity to work as a team as they complete the task for that station. SNIS PE teacher David Mumma says, "The games are modified from the originals, but the format allows the students to learn about and experience some alternative, non-traditional sports. So far our most popular event has been the roller racer hockey game, with bobsledding coming in a very close second."

HPS Kindergarteners Connect with Veterans

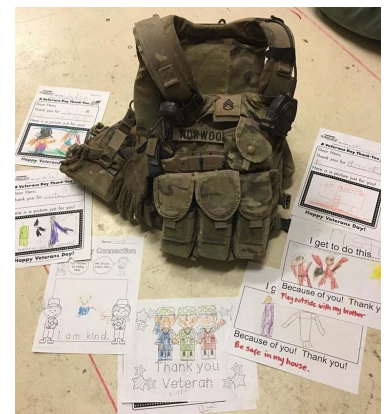


Last November in honor of Veterans Day, Ms. Carr's Kindergarten class at HPS sent letters to three soldiers stationed in Afghanistan. The soldiers are all personal friends of Ms. Carr's and she knew how much they would enjoy receiving the notes. The students drew pictures, and with the help of Ms. Carr, thanked the soldiers for their service. In response to the prompt *Because of you I get to do this...* students responded with statements such as "play outside with my brother" and "be safe in my home".

Tyree Norwood is one of the soldiers the students wrote to. He is a ranger in the 82nd Airborne Division. Ms. Carr says, "The children learned about his job and how he jumps out of airplanes. They thought it was very awesome! They thanked him for 'jumping out of planes to keep us safe' and for 'making the world a better place'. Tyree was thrilled to receive the package and hung up all the pictures."



This week, the class was excited to hear that the soldiers were back in the United States after a six month deployment. Tyree wrote to let them know he was back home safely and sent a picture of his vest.



"The kids asked if Tyree kept snacks in the pockets of his vest," says Ms. Carr. "The things they think about!"

New Milford High School's Internship Program Continues to Grow

The New Milford High School Internship Program works with participating area businesses to mentor interested students. Mrs. Kristie O'Neill, program coordinator and NMHS business teacher, states that "The program continues to expand in the number and scope of participating businesses welcoming our students."

The Internship Program was started over twenty five years ago by then NMHS art teacher, Ms. Paula Marian. In 2011 Mrs. Janice Perrone, a business teacher, took over responsibilities of the program, which was turned over to Mrs. O'Neill five years ago. Mrs. O'Neill gives an example of a recent success story from this past semester in the matching of a new local business, Makery Coworking on Bank Street in New Milford, with a student intern. Makery Coworking owner Tony Vengrove was interested in mentoring a student in Marketing and Photography and Mrs. O'Neill was able to successfully place student Liam Lacey (pictured at right). Upon completion of the internship both Mr. Vengrove and Liam could not say enough positive things about the experience. Mr. Vengrove says, "Participating with the NMHS Internship Program was a blessing. Liam Lacey is a wonderfully talented student with a broad set of marketable skills coupled with an ebullient personality. Liam took direction well and was able to add tremendous value to Makery Coworking. We are grateful for his help and look forward to his continued engagement and support of our business."



Through the program, student interns have worked in a wide variety of fields. Some examples of past and current internships include work at an art gallery, a web design firm, an accounting office, a veterinarian's office, a pediatrician's office, a museum, a nursing home, a radio station, an auto body repair shop, fire department and fitness club. The list of businesses who have participated in the NMHS Internship Program to date includes over sixty different businesses.

Mrs. O'Neill says, "Interning during the high school years can be a great way for students to get real-world experience before heading off to college. High school students are realizing that the experience they get through an internship can give them an advantage, not only for college, but for overall future success. Students are using internships for a variety of reasons: to help decide their future major, add diversity to their college transcripts, and to gain overall experience in various aspects of business."

Internships are mentored by professionals in various fields and occur after school and/or on the weekend. Students apply, submit recommendations, and are interviewed for these positions. Entrance is based on interest and a history of strong employability skills, like punctuality, good attendance, and problem solving/team work ability.

Internships start at the beginning of each semester and run the length of that semester. Student interns are required to work a minimum of 100 hours at a location of their choosing. Upon successful completion of the program, they receive a half school credit and a pass/fail grade through an independent study contract. Interns are required to show evidence of their accomplishments through a final project which is presented to their peers at an after school meeting. The final presentation and mentor evaluations determine if the student will pass or fail for the semester.



NMHS is always looking to expand the number and scope of businesses who participate in the program. If you own, manage, or work for a company that would be interested in mentoring a student, please contact Mrs. O'Neill at oneillkri@newmilfordps.org.

Looking Ahead at NMHS

Spring time is always busy for the NMHS Counseling department as the counselors work with students on planning for post-secondary college and career. Several upcoming events aid in the process:

Transition Workshop – March 8

This workshop, offered in the NMHS Lecture Hall on March 8, beginning at 6:00 p.m., is offered for parents and students who receive special education services, or have a 504 Accommodation Plan. A Transition Specialist in the AccessAbility Services office at WCSU, will present on the transition from high school to college and services available for students with disabilities at the college level followed by a Q&A. Topics to be covered at the workshop include: preparing for college; differences between accommodations in high school and college; classroom, housing and campus accommodations; support services offered at WCSU; procedures and policies for requesting accommodations and services; and tips for parents to assist students in making a smooth transition to college.

CT SAT School Day – March 21



All juniors will be taking the SAT on March 21, CT SAT School Day. The SAT is a three-hour examination measuring college and career readiness and is accepted at most four-year colleges and universities in the United States. The test is developed by the College Board and offered through the Connecticut State Department of Education for grade 11 students in public schools.

College Planning Night – March 27

NMHS Counselors host this annual informational evening for parents and students grades 9 through 12. College admission officers representing both state and private schools, along

with high school counselors, will provide an overview of the college admission process along with a Q&A session. Always informative!

Field trip to Naugatuck Valley Community College – March 28

The day will begin at the Danbury Campus where students will be greeted by the NVCC admission staff and receive an overview of the admission process. The day ends at the Waterbury Campus with a tour and presentation on majors, programs, etc. There is no cost for the field trip. Interested students can pick up a permission form in the Career Center anytime before March 21.



College and Post-Secondary Options Fair - April 25

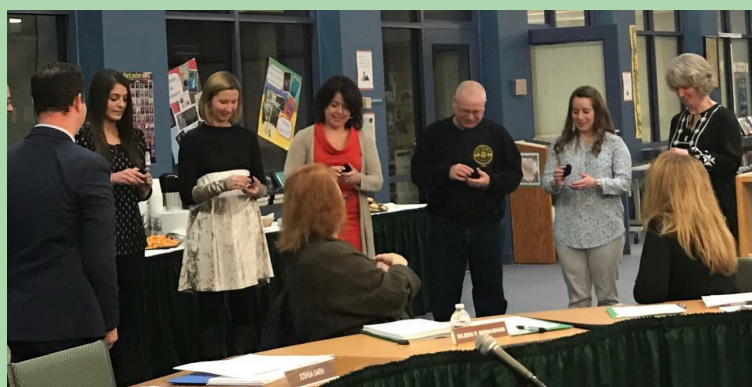


This event will take place from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in both the large and small arenas at the high school. Parents and students from all grades are invited to attend the annual fair. Representatives from colleges, vocational programs and the military will be available to discuss their programs and answer questions.



Congratulations to the New Milford Public School “Stars” for the month of February!

**Shannon Arcano
Victoria Giudice
Robyn Hicks
Roger Hill
Stephanie Sagaria
Lynn Sheeran**



Special congratulations to Robyn Hicks who will drive the Ingersoll Auto of Danbury NMPS courtesy car.

Don't forget to visit the district website to
[submit your staff nomination](#).



New Milford Public Schools

50 East Street
New Milford, CT 06776
860-355-8406

Mr. Joshua Smith
Superintendent

Ms. Alisha DiCorpo
Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Ellamae Baldelli
Human Resources Director

Mr. Kevin Munrett
Facilities Director

Mr. Anthony Giovannone
Fiscal Services & Operations
Director

Mrs. Laura Olson
Pupil Personnel &
Special Services Director

Ms. Roberta Pratt
Technology Director

Mrs. Sandra Sullivan
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Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach

Mr. Brian McCauley

Mr. J.T. Schemm

PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR...

Important Dates New Milford Public Schools 2018-2019 School Calendar*

*Full Calendar to Follow

8/29 First Day of School for Students

9/3 Schools Closed - Labor Day

9/10 Schools Closed - Rosh Hashanah

9/19 Schools Closed - Yom Kippur

10/5 Schools Closed - K-12 Prof Dev

10/8 Schools Closed - Columbus Day

11/6 Schools Closed - Election Day, K-12 Prof Dev

11/12 Schools Closed - Veterans Day observed

11/21, 11/22, 11/23 Schools Closed - Thanksgiving Recess

12/24-12/28 Schools Closed - Holiday Recess

12/31-1/1 Schools Closed - Holiday Recess

1/21 Schools Closed - Martin Luther King Day

2/18-2/19 Schools Closed - Winter Recess

4/15-4/19 Schools Closed - Spring Recess
(includes Good Friday)

5/27 Schools Closed - Memorial Day

6/13 Last Day of School - No Snow Days

(Dates in Bold Align with Draft Regional Calendar)

DRAFT as of 2/8/18

Full calendar to follow in the spring.

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.

February 2019