



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
Ms. 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

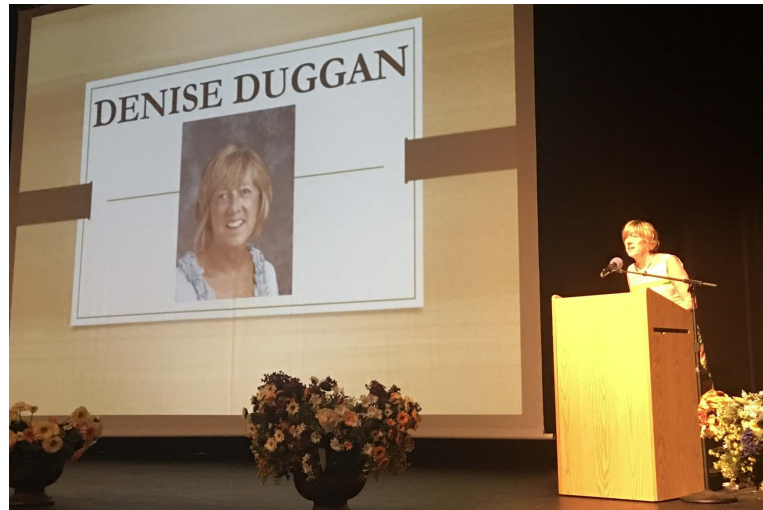
Mrs. Susan Murray, Principal
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Asst. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 8, Issue 3

September 2017

Meet New Milford's 2017-18 Teacher of the Year



Each year, parents, students and fellow staff members are invited to nominate a teacher for selection as New Milford's Teacher of the Year. The nominee must have taught in the district for five or more years and have demonstrated continued excellence of performance during his/her tenure. A Selection Committee then considers all the nominees based on the following guidelines:

- Demonstrated ability to inspire enthusiasm and motivation for learning in students.
- Demonstrated use of effective teaching techniques, flexibility of style, innovation, and creativity.
- Caring relationships with students.
- Demonstrated commitment to continuing professional growth and development.
- Respect and admiration of students, colleagues, parents, and administration.
- Personal philosophy and goals.
- Ability to articulate ideas clearly.

The Committee was pleased to select Mrs. Denise Duggan as this year's New Milford Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Duggan has been a teacher at New Milford High School since 1996. During that time, she has taught classes in Health Education, Medical Technology, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Sports Medicine and Physical Education. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Health Education and Master's Degrees in

Exercise Science, Human Performance and Educational Leadership. She has served on district and town-wide committees including the Wellness Committee, Professional Growth and Development Committee, and Curriculum Council. She is advisor to the student group HOSA (Health Occupations of America) and the National Honor Society; has been a class advisor, summer school and adult education administrator; and a mentor for colleagues and student teachers. Mrs. Duggan donates her time to the New Milford Cares Initiative, working to support youth in crisis.

Prior to beginning her teaching career, Mrs. Duggan worked as a registered nurse. “I witnessed health care first hand, and saw the need for educating people to become health consumers, and to teach them about wellness and prevention. After I became a teacher, I was given the opportunity to teach the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) class. This was so important to me because students would be able to experience the nursing profession in high school and decide if it was the career for them. I also became an EMT so I could create and teach the EMT class and encourage young men and women to join the health care field as a profession. I feel it is my job to make them ready to care for patients the way I would want someone to care for me or one of my loved ones.”

Students taking the CNA and EMT classes must complete required clinical hours, which happen after school and on weekends through community connections to the local ambulance company and health care facilities. Mrs. Duggan says this speaks volumes about the students’ commitment. Mrs. Duggan also teaches the CNA class to Adult Education students. “In many cases, this program changes lives and gives students health care and a much-needed paycheck to help them support their families. I had one student who worked at a local nursing home and later went on to college to get her nursing degree. I was at the local nursing home when she came in her cap and gown the day of her graduation to show residents she graduated. These are not just opportunities for employment, they become family to the residents. In a similar case, the members of the Ambulance crew also become like family and nurture and encourage one another through tough calls and very long days and nights.”

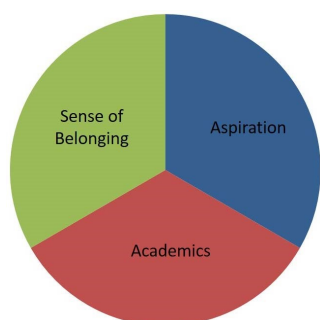
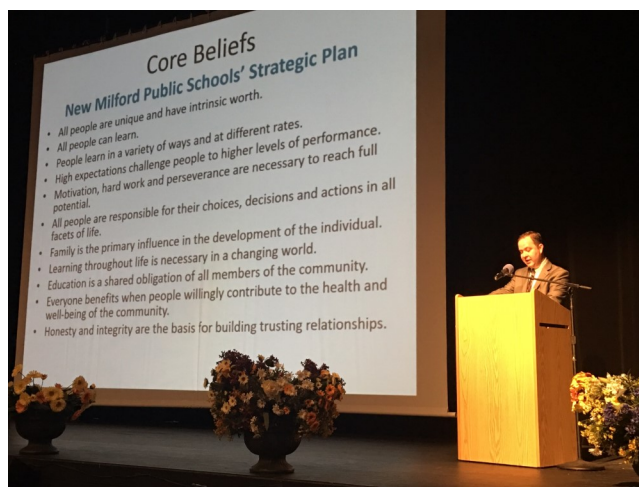
Mrs. Duggan speaks passionately about teaching Health in general. “Students are at a very tumultuous time in their lives and have some tough decisions to make. In Health we cover very important topics such as nutrition, mental health, sexuality, and substance use and abuse. In health care, there are jobs today that did not exist when I first entered the profession. In class, we give students an opportunity to problem solve and explore their education together as peers, with teachers as resources and mentors. We are no longer teaching specific skills and knowledge. My students need to think on their feet, especially in clinical where circumstances don’t always come right out of the textbook and they need to make decisions. They need to develop the skills they will use for future endeavors.”

Colleagues speak of Mrs. Duggan’s ability to lead by example, her passion for education and for her students, and the grace and poise she demonstrates at all times. Superintendent Joshua Smith says “Mrs. Duggan represents the best in all of us. Over the past twenty years, her work in our schools and community as a Health teacher has quite literally saved lives. Empathy, knowledge, and purpose are components of all that she does.”

Convocation: Viewing Students Through Different Lenses

On August 28, all district staff gathered in the New Milford High School theatre for the annual convocation, officially opening the new school year. Superintendent Joshua Smith took to the stage reminding those present that, “In a few short days our doors will open to thousands of students. You are the faces that will greet them each day, who they will talk about over dinner, and whose words and actions will impact them long after they leave our hallways.”

Mr. Smith shared the district’s Core Beliefs, which were developed through a broad community conversation several years ago during the process of Strategic Planning. These core beliefs were reviewed by the Board of Education this summer and affirmed as part of their summer workshop. They form the base for the district’s work which Superintendent Smith said is always focused on the student.



In reviewing how the district understands and responds to students, Mr. Smith said it is helpful to look through three lenses: academics, aspiration, and a student’s sense of belonging.

“We probably spend the most time looking through the lens of academics and while it is an extremely important one, we see all lenses as equally important. If students don’t feel connected to their learning or are not able to find a purpose in it, they will fall short of their academic potential.”

To guide this work, the administrative team has developed, and the Board of Education has approved, four Theories of Action listed below.

- ◆ IF we develop a commitment to student learning and achievement over a compliance to directives, THEN students will learn in a more flexible and adaptive environment.
- ◆ IF we develop a student centered culture of achievement, belonging, and trust THEN all students will be better prepared for lifelong success.
- ◆ IF we develop administrative instructional capacity and teacher leadership opportunities, THEN a culture of professional learners will foster more collaborative efforts to support student learning.
- ◆ IF we create learning experiences that support student aspirations for life beyond school THEN students will graduate with the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Mr. Smith asked the teachers and other staff members present to reflect on how the words and concepts in each of these statements apply to the school they work in or the role they play in our district. "School is about growing up. Students will spend about 16,380 waking hours within our walls. That is a long time to spend on something without thinking about what you are going to do with all of it. Our students are better students when they have a reason to come. When they do come, they should feel a sense of belonging in a safe place that is welcoming to all."

Theories of Action

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- IF we develop a student centered culture of achievement, belonging, and trust THEN all students will be better prepared for lifelong success.
- IF we develop administrative instructional capacity and teacher leadership opportunities, THEN a culture of professional learners will foster more collaborative efforts to support student learning.
- IF we create learning experiences that support student aspirations for life beyond school THEN students will graduate with the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the 21st century.

In closing, Mr. Smith talked about the importance of being able to answer the question why. "We should be able to say to parents, students, business owners and community members: this is what happens in our schools and why we do what we do. Like a river through a canyon, our work often takes time before we can see results, and the effect we have on our students may not be immediate, but together we will change the landscape."

Special thanks to Mr. David Syzdek and the NMHS Band for helping to warm up the crowd at convocation. The Band performed several brief numbers including a sneak peek of this year's show. Here they are caught in a warm up of their own before the crowd enters.





TO OUR NEW STAFF!

Mrs. Cara Abraham

Social Studies teacher, New Milford High School

Mrs. Abraham earned her BS and MS in History at WCSU. She has previously taught in Bethel and Brookfield public schools and was a long term substitute at New Milford High School last year.



Mrs. Rebecca Appleby

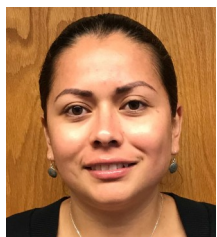
Paraeducator, Hill and Plain Elementary School

A New Milford High School graduate, Mrs. Appleby has worked in the Danbury and Brookfield schools and as a long term substitute at a private school in West Haven.

Mrs. Michele Biondi

Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Biondi has previous experience as an office manager and has been a volunteer for PTO and Girl Scouts.



Mrs. Maria Brito

Spanish teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Brito earned her AA in Liberal Arts and Sciences from Naugatuck Valley Community College and BS in Secondary Spanish Education from WCSU. She has worked previously as a Spanish teacher at New Fairfield Middle School and as a Spanish tutor at WCSU.

Ms. Amanda Cianciola

Grade 1 teacher, Northville Elementary School

Ms. Cianciola attended Quinnipiac University where she earned her BA in Psychology and MA in Elementary Education. She has taught in the Bridgeport and Cheshire public schools and tutored at a private school in New Haven.





Mr. Jonathan Cole, Jr.

Maintainer/Plumber, New Milford High School

Mr. Cole completed the Henry Abbott Tech Plumbing and Heating program in 2013 and has worked as a licensed plumber in Bethel for four years.

Mrs. Susan Comito

Spanish teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Comito holds a BS in Spanish from Charter Oak State College and MA in Spanish from CCSU. She has taught in the Litchfield, Southington, and Torrington public schools. She has also worked as an English teacher in Spain.



Ms. Priscilla Correa

Custodian, New Milford High School

Ms. Correa is joining the custodial staff full-time after working as a substitute custodian for the district.

Ms. Lisa Crowley

Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School

Ms. Crowley earned a BSED and MSED in Mathematics from CCSU. Most recently, Ms. Crowley taught Mathematics at Litchfield High School. Before Litchfield, Ms. Crowley spent nine years at New Milford High School.



Mrs. Sara D'Amico

Science teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. D'Amico holds a BA in Communications Sciences from UConn, a BA in Biology from WCSU, and an MA in Education from the University of Bridgeport. She previously taught eighth grade Science in Bethel.

Mr. Pierre de St. Croix

Technology Education teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mr. de St. Croix's educational background includes an AS in Math, Science and Engineering from College of the Sequoias, CA and a BA in Geology and MEd Secondary Geoscience Education from the University of CA, Davis. He has previously taught middle school science and math in California, Virginia, North Carolina and Connecticut.





Mr. Marc DiNicola

Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mr. DiNicola has worked previously as a paraeducator and as a substitute teacher in Region 15.

Ms. Ashley Dovale

Bilingual teacher, Sarah Noble Intermediate School

Ms. Dovale attended WCSU where she received a BS in Elementary Education with a concentration in Spanish and MS in Bilingual Education. She has worked as a grade 3 bilingual teacher in Waterbury public schools and as an ESL tutor in Danbury. She is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese.



Ms. Oligerta Gjoka

Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School

Ms. Gjoka earned her BS in Mathematics from the University of Natural Sciences in Albania and her MS in Mathematics and Education from the University of Bridgeport. She has previously worked as a private tutor in Greenwich and as a high school mathematics teacher in Bridgeport.

Mrs. Melissa Healy

Special Education teacher, Faith Academy

Mrs. Healy has her AA in Elementary Education from Broward Community College, BS in Behavioral Studies from the University of Hartford, and MS in Inclusion Education from the University of New England. She has previously worked as a special education teacher in several schools in CT.



Mr. Dennis Johnson

Technology Education teacher, New Milford High School

Mr. Johnson attended CCSU where he received a BS and MA in Technology Education. He has worked as an industrial arts/technology education teacher for over twenty years in CT schools in West Hartford, New Britain, Willimantic, Pawcatuck, Hartford and East Granby.

Ms. Amelia Lakoff-Paquette

Music teacher, Northville Elementary School

Ms. Lakoff-Paquette earned her BFA in General Music from Concordia University. She has previously taught in New York. Prior to teaching music, Ms. Lakoff-Paquette worked in New York City as a professional opera singer.





Mr. Michael Lau

Mathematics teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mr. Lau received his BS in Mathematics and MA in Curriculum and Instruction from UConn. He has worked as a long term substitute in Fairfield and Ridgefield schools.

Mrs. Holly Mackey

EXCEL Special Education teacher, Northville Elementary School

Mrs. Mackey earned her BS in Early Childhood Education at the University of Hartford and MS in Reading at WCSU. She has previously taught preschool, kindergarten and grade 3 for Ridgefield public schools.



Ms. Tara McCabe

Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School

Ms. McCabe has been a substitute paraeducator for the New Milford Public Schools for several years.

Mr. Peter Miserendino

Physics teacher, New Milford High School

Mr. Miserendino received his BS in Physics from the City University of New York/Lehman College and his MA in Education from Sacred Heart University. He has interned and been a substitute teacher in New Milford Public Schools and is a volunteer at the John J. McCarthy Observatory.



Mrs. Nina Money

German teacher, New Milford High School

Mrs. Money has a BA in History from Durham University in Durham, England with additional credits in French from the University of Louisiana. She received her German/French teaching certification through the Alternate Route to Certification program. Mrs. Money attended high school in Germany and taught foreign language to adults in Paris before coming to the United States. She is fluent in German and French and has worked as a substitute teacher in Kent.

Mrs. Jennifer Muliolis

Paraeducator, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Mrs. Muliolis has past experience in the fields of child care and mental health care.





Mrs. Jillian Murphy

Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Murphy has previous experience working as a paraeducator at the Sherman School and as a substitute paraeducator for New Milford Public Schools.

Mrs. Lisa Prontelli

Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Prontelli has been a reading and special education tutor for New Milford Public Schools and previously worked in New York as an academic interventionist.



Mrs. Laura Ramdin

English teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Ramdin earned her BA in English from the University of Georgia and her MS in Secondary English Education from Queens College. She holds an Advanced Certification in Gifted Education from Hunter College. Mrs. Ramdin has previously taught middle school grades in New York.

Mrs. Megan Rochford

Special Education teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Rochford received her BA in Psychology from College of Mount Saint Vincent and holds an MS in Special Education with a concentration in Autism from C.W. Post Long Island University. She has previously worked in schools in New York and Connecticut.



Ms. Lindsay Rodriguez

Grade 1 teacher, Northville Elementary School

Ms. Rodriguez attended Sacred Heart University where she earned her BS in Psychology and MA in Elementary Education. She has previously taught elementary school in Massachusetts.

Mr. Daniel Savo

Social Studies teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mr. Savo holds a BA in History and MEd in Education and Curriculum from UConn. He has worked as a substitute teacher in Danbury, Monroe, and most recently as a long term substitute in New Milford.





Ms. Shayna Sexton

Kindergarten teacher, Northville Elementary School

A New Milford High School graduate, Ms. Sexton is a recent graduate of UConn where she earned a BS in Elementary Education and MA in Curriculum and Instruction. She student taught in East Hartford before working as a Literacy Interventionist in Willington public schools.

Ms. Kathryn Shaw

Kindergarten teacher, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Ms. Shaw has a BS in Health Education from WCSU and MS in Elementary Education from the University of Bridgeport. She has worked as an intern and long term substitute for kindergarten in Region 10 and Region 15.



Mrs. Tammy Siegle

Library Clerk, Sarah Noble Intermediate School

Mrs. Siegle has been a volunteer and substitute for the New Milford Public Schools for several years.

Ms. Christine Sinisi

Special Education teacher, New Milford High School

Ms. Sinisi has a BS in Education/Spanish from Georgian Court University and MS in Special Education from the University of St. Joseph. She has worked previously in West Hartford and Region 15.



Ms. Jennifer Smith

Administrative Secretary, Fiscal Services

Ms. Smith has previous experience in support administration for financial services, in customer service, and as a receptionist.

Mrs. Cynthia Steele-Pucci

Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, District-wide

Mrs. Steele-Pucci has an AS in Liberal Arts from Roger Williams University, BA in Psychology from UConn, MS in Counseling from the University of Bridgeport, and BCBA Certification from Manhattanville College. She has been a licensed professional counselor in private practice for 15 years.





Ms. Jessica Varley

Paraeducator, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Ms. Varley has previous experience in private child care and daycare.

Mrs. Rene Venezia

Special Education teacher, Sarah Noble Intermediate School

A New Milford High School graduate, Mrs. Venezia earned her BS in Elementary Education at the University of Rhode Island and MA in Moderate Special Needs from Boston College. She has previously worked at schools in Massachusetts and for the New Milford Public Schools as a paraeducator and teacher.



Mrs. Jennifer Vincent

Special Education teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Vincent attended Assumption College where she earned a BA in Social and Rehab Services and the University of St. Joseph where she earned her MA in Special Education with a cross endorsement in Elementary Education. She has previously taught in Oxford, Wilton, and Milford schools.

Ms. Noelle Visconti

Kindergarten teacher, Northville Elementary School

Ms. Visconti received her BS in Elementary Education and MA in Curriculum and Instruction from UConn. She previously co-taught kindergarten at a charter school in New Haven.



“You’re off to great places,
today is your day,
your mountain is waiting,
so get on your way.”

~ Dr. Seuss

Celebrating NMPS Staff



Throughout the 2017-18 school year, we will be publicly recognizing NMPS staff members for the good work they do to positively impact our students and/or the community of New Milford and we would like you to help! Parents, students and fellow staff members are invited to [complete a short online form](#) to nominate a NMPS staff member: whether it be a teacher, guidance counselor, nurse, paraeducator, school psychologist, secretary, social worker, administrator,

cafeteria worker, custodian, coach or other support person of your choice. You are welcome to make a nomination at any time and for as many deserving staff members as you wish.

From all the forms submitted, six honorees will be selected each month, one from each school and one non-school specific honoree. All honorees will be invited to attend the Board of Education monthly meeting for public congratulations where they will receive a star lapel pin as a small symbol in recognition of their “star” qualities. In addition, thanks to our continuing partnership with Ingersoll Automotive of Danbury, one lucky honoree each month will be gifted at random with a courtesy car to drive for the month!

To kick-off this year’s program, we are celebrating a single, most deserving honoree, Teacher of the Year Denise Duggan. Congratulations to Denise who will be driving back and forth to school this month in a brand new car.

We will be sure to keep you updated on the winners in future issues of *Spotlight on New Milford Schools* as we celebrate the stars among us. You can also see a listing of last year’s winners on the [Staff Recognition page](#) of the district website.





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
Food Services Director

Board of Education
Mr. David A. Lawson
Chairperson

Mr. Bill Dahl
Vice Chairperson

Mrs. Tammy McInerney
Secretary

Mr. Robert Coppola
Assistant Secretary

Mrs. Angela C. Chastain

Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach

Mr. Dave Littlefield

Mr. Brian McCauley

Mr. J.T. Schemm

National Courtesy Month

September has been designated as National Courtesy Month to remind us that good manners and watching out for others goes a long way toward making the world a more cooperative and happy place. We provide several suggestions below on how to celebrate, courtesy of Reader's Digest. You can see more [online](#).

Let something little go.

Someone cut you off in traffic? Step on your foot in line? Take the last dinner roll? Steal your pen? Instead of letting your anger fester, make a conscious effort to forgive them and let it go.

Hold the door open for the person behind you.

Have you ever had a door shut in your face? Exactly. Even if you're running late, take a moment to make the next person's day just a little smoother.

Let someone cut ahead of you in line.

We've all been the person standing at the end of the long grocery line holding just a gallon of milk. It's so frustrating! But more often, we've all been the one with the full cart in front of them. So let that person and their milk go in front of you. It'll take you two extra minutes but will likely make their day.

Listen, without interrupting.

Go a whole conversation without talking about yourself. Ask the other person questions about themselves and then genuinely listen to their responses. You'll be amazed at how good it is for both of you.

Call your mom.

When was the last time you called your mom? Most moms love nothing more than hearing from their children so take a few minutes and give her a ring (and then call your dad!).

Visit a senior.

Got an elderly neighbor or relative nearby? Chances are they'd love a visit or a call and you can check in and make sure they're okay. Especially keep these folks in mind after a big event like a storm or an accident nearby.

Say please and thank you. To everyone.

It's amazing how often we forget this little politeness and it seems like the ones we most often drop our manners with are our friends and family. So the next time someone does something for you, even something little, remember to say thank you.

September is

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.