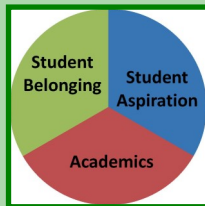




New Milford Public Schools
50 East Street
New Milford, CT 06776
860-355-8406
www.newmilfordps.org



New Milford High School
860-350-6647
Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal
Mrs. Liz Curtis, Asst. Principal
Ms. Linda Scoralick, Asst. Principal



Shaghticoke Middle School
860-354-2204
Dr. Christopher Longo, Principal
Mr. Kevin Best, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Sasha Salem, Asst. Principal



Sarah Noble Intermediate School
860-210-4020
Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Asst. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Asst. Principal



Hill & Plain Elementary School
860-354-5430
Mr. Eric Williams, Principal
Mrs. Kerri Adakonis, Asst. Principal



Northville Elementary School
860-355-3713
Mrs. Gwen Gallagher, Principal
Mr. Kevin Best, Asst. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 11, Issue 8

February 2021

Reopening NMPS for In Person Learning

On February 11th, Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo emailed families regarding the district's plan to bring students back to school for in-person learning in grades PK-5 during the month of March. The transition will take place with PK-2 students returning first on March 1st, and then two weeks later, grades 3-5 on March 15th. The Friday before each school is to reopen, both cohorts will be remote. For HPS and NES that is February 26th and for SNIS, March 12th. This will allow teachers and administrators to use the time to collaboratively plan for a safe return for all students and staff. It's important to note that all reopen dates are subject to change, based upon COVID related factors. Students who wish to continue accessing their education remotely will also be able to do so.

For planning purposes, families were surveyed mid-month as to whether or not their children would be returning to school in-person. Over 85% or more of families PK-5 reported their intention to return. On February 25th, HPS and NES principals, along with district administrators, held virtual meetings with families prior to students in-person return to provide a virtual tour of each building, describe the school day, and answer questions. A similar evening will be held for SNIS families on March 10th.



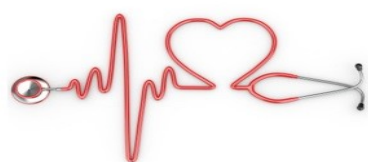
For families choosing to have students participate in-person, the schedule will change to reflect in-person learning, Monday through Friday, with an accelerated early dismissal schedule followed on Wednesday, complete with grab and go lunch. Administrators are working to define the Wednesday half day schedules, which will include time for planning, as well as afford our Facilities staff the opportunity to provide deep cleaning.

District administrators have been working diligently to safely plan for the reopening in the PK-5 schools. Desk shields for all teachers and students were ordered and are being installed. The Facilities department worked with building administration on cafeteria set up

and partitions, as well as classroom configuration. Air purifiers were ordered for cafeteria use. Social distancing throughout the schools will be approximately 3-6 feet, and during recess students will be required to wear their masks. This week, Ms. DiCorpo visited the schools with Ms. Lisa Morrissey, New Milford's new Health Director, in order to review plans and set up and to make any adjustments needed.

In addition to the PK-5 schools reopening, changes will be made to the middle school and high school schedules to include a half day of in-person learning for students on Wednesdays with Cohort A and B rotating in. Cohort A will begin this rotation on March 17, 2021.

Superintendent DiCorpo says, "I am grateful to the administration, teachers, staff, our local Health Department and our Medical Advisor for working together to bring students back to school. We are looking forward to welcoming students back and to supporting them with this transition."



Notes from the School Nurses

Reminders from the Nurse's Office

Our best protection from getting sick and spreading the COVID-19 virus continues to be masking, social distancing, and frequent handwashing. Thank you for your help in reinforcing healthy behaviors in our students.

Please continue to:

- ◆ Screen your children daily for illness prior to sending them to school.
- ◆ Keep them home if they are not feeling well.

Reach out to your child's school nurse if your child is:

- ◆ Sick
- ◆ Being COVID-19 tested
 - It is important that the school is aware of any positive student cases, even if your child is fully remote. The positive cases in the district are reported to the State daily and used in contact tracing as needed.
- ◆ A close contact of a person who has COVID-19
- ◆ Planning to travel
 - Please notify your school nurse and know that your child will need to provide a negative COVID-19 test result or quarantine for 10 days following your return to Connecticut. NMPS is following the state of Connecticut's travel advisory.

*If you have any questions or concerns,
please reach out to your child's school nurse anytime!*

Alisha DiCorpo Named Superintendent for NMPS



At a Special Meeting on February 10th, the New Milford Board of Education named Interim Superintendent of Schools Ms. Alisha DiCorpo as Superintendent for New Milford Public Schools. Ms. DiCorpo is a seasoned educator with more than 20 years' experience.

Ms. DiCorpo has served as Interim Superintendent of New Milford Public Schools since October 29, 2020 and Assistant Superintendent since June 2016. She came to New Milford from the Thomaston Public Schools. She worked from 2010-2016 in a variety of roles including Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, as well as Principal and Assistant Principal. Prior to working in Thomaston, Ms. DiCorpo was the District Professional Development Coordinator for Watertown Public Schools. She has also spent time as a fourth and fifth grade teacher.

Since serving as Interim Superintendent of Schools, Ms. DiCorpo has led the district in:

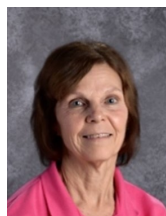
- budget preparation and development in collaboration with district and school administrators, the Board of Education, and the town;
- efforts to reopen K-5 schools to in-person learning scheduled for next month;
- the ongoing monitoring of COVID cases for students and employees, contact tracing efforts, and communicating with health officials and medical advisors; and
- improved communication with the New Milford community.

As Interim Superintendent, her many responsibilities included curriculum development, vetting, training and implementation. In 2020, she led extensive efforts in "reinventing school" after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of school buildings in March and pushed all learning remotely. She led the work for the district in developing a reentry plan to reopen schools in the hybrid model and collaboratively developed a distance learning plan and system of support for students, teachers, and families.

Members of the Board reviewed their desired characteristics in a superintendent looking for a strong leader able to be collaborative, creative, and, most importantly, committed to New Milford's students and the community. The Board began its search for a permanent superintendent at the end of November. HYA Associates, the Board's search firm, presented a list of qualified candidates to the Board which then worked diligently to examine each candidate with extensive interviews over the past two months. The finalists were vetted, and the Board supported Ms. DiCorpo as its top choice.

The Board believes Ms. DiCorpo has devoted a significant amount of dedication and energy working for the New Milford school district. Her enthusiasm and passion to New Milford's students and schools is outstanding. Board of Education Chairperson Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach says, "The Board is excited to move the district forward with creativity, continuity, and transparency. We recognize our charge in selecting a strong leader and we are committed to the success of the district under Ms. DiCorpo's leadership."

Congratulations to the New Milford Public Schools "Stars" for the month of February 2021!



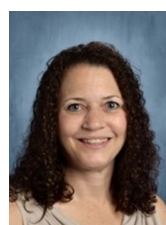
Carol Couch, SNIS Food Services

"Carol works very hard to help coordinate the thousands of meals handed out at the curbside meal distribution every Wednesday to the community."



Stacey Haleks, SNIS Grade 4 Teacher

"Stacey goes above and beyond for the students in her class. I can hear her enthusiasm on the online classes which I can only imagine is not always easy for her to keep up with the kids in class and online. My daughter loves being in her class and I know why."



Donna Molinaro, HPS Grade 2 Teacher

"Mrs. Molinaro has high expectations for all her students. She pushes them to meet their potential. She has a clear understanding of each child sitting in front of her. I feel so lucky my son is in her class."



Daisy Norlander, NMHS Secretary

"One of Daisy's many responsibilities is to ensure all classes are covered with a substitute when teachers are absent. Daisy rises to the challenge and somehow gets all the classes covered as she juggles substitutes, schedules and teachers willing to give up their planning time. She is like an air traffic controller on a busy day at JFK!"



Adam Radday, SMS Grade 6 Math Teacher

"It's a pleasure to work with Adam. Year after year he sets high expectations for his students and year after year they reach those expectations."



Candice Schiesel, NMHS Social Studies Teacher

"Mrs. Schiesel is incredibly devoted to her students and tries so hard to help us succeed. From communicating with the IT guy to let us change embarrassing profile pictures to making sure we understand every part of a lesson and lecture, she shows tremendous teaching skill and makes sure we learn all the content truly rather than just ensuring we get a good grade on tests."



Stephanie Wilson, HPS Student Care Worker

"Ms. Wilson truly gives her best to everything she does. She shows a level of care and understanding that is so reassuring and helpful to my son, and for me as a parent. She genuinely loves the students she works with, and believes in them. She is exceptional, and very deserving of recognition. We are grateful for her!"

[Complete a short online form](#) to nominate a New Milford Public Schools staff member for future recognition.

Never Tried a School Meal?

Now is the perfect time to try! Nutritious, delicious meals are available at no cost. There is no need to pre-sign up for meals in school.
Curbside meals DO require pre-sign up.

Meals at no cost to families

Eating healthy and nutritious

Available to all children 18 & under

Local farms & businesses

Support your school district

learn more here

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

FIVE REASONS WHY
School meals
IT'S TIME TO TRY

For more information and to sign up for **FREE** curbside meals
please follow this link:

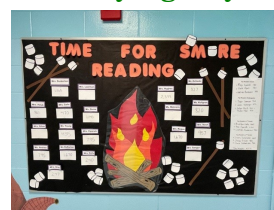
<https://www.newmilfordps.org/curbsidemeals>

News from Our Schools

Hill and Plain Elementary School



HPS has been focusing on Choosing Love this month. We have talked about ways to show forgiveness, compassion, courage and gratitude. In guidance classes students have been identifying ways to Choose Love and their ideas have been posted on our main hallway bulletin board. HPS would like to thank our PTO for running our annual Read-A-Thon this month. It was a great success due to our students who participated and because of our PTO parents who organized the event.



Northville Elementary School

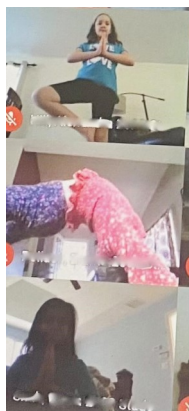
January was the month for students to focus on being independent learners. They were learning how to turn in assignments in their Google Classroom and take pictures of their work. Northville is proud of their hard work! For February our focus is kindness. Ask your child how they were kind today?

During the month of January our students participated in an assessment called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). This is a snapshot of your child's instructional levels in reading and mathematics. We use this tool along with daily student progress monitoring to determine what supports your child needs.

Kindergarten registration is ongoing. Please read the [New Milford Spectrum](#) article for more details.

We are excited to be working on our plans for students to be full in Monday - Friday with Wednesday being a shortened day. Thank you to all our families who completed the district survey that helped us with this planning.

Sarah Noble Intermediate School



SNIS Yoga Club is back! Virtual Yoga Club started in February at SNIS. Over 50 students have joined Mrs. Bonnell to stretch, breathe and have fun through various yoga poses. Yoga Club began in 2017 at SNIS; however, this is the first time it has gone virtual. One positive attribute of the virtual club is the ability to have unlimited students participate.

The virtual platform did not stop the multitude of yogis from showing up "on the mat." After the first session, yogis expressed their gratitude and "love" for Yoga Club. In addition to a weekly Yoga Google Meet, Mrs. Bonnell created a Yoga Club Google Classroom as a free space to check in with one another and find yoga practice tips.

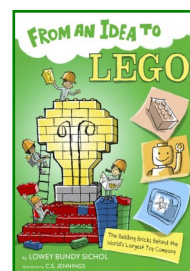
Schaghticoke Middle School

February brought a lot of snow! In anticipation of this, our PE staff pulled out the snow tubes and students participated in a collective sledding event right in our backyard "Mt. Schaghticoke". PE staff shared facts that show this type of exercise is wonderfully good for you. Students enjoyed seeing their teachers and other staff in a setting they never could have imagined, as kids again, sledding down a hill.



February also features Black History Month. So many classrooms embraced the opportunity to learn more about this integral part of American and world history. In an effort to not repeat the historical figures students have learned about since they were younger, many modern history-makers were featured in our morning announcements, such as John Lewis, Alvin Ailey, Amanda Gorman, and our Vice President Kamala Harris.

On February 24th, the SMS PTO sponsored a virtual visit for all students with STEM author Lowey Bundy Sichol. Ms. Sichol's nonfiction series of books, *From an Idea to...*, are the world's first business and entrepreneurship biographies for kids. Lowey is also the founder and host of Idea Tank for Kids, the nation's biggest entrepreneurship competition for kids ages 8-13.



Our School Counseling Department launched our Kindness Matters campaign with weekly activities and suggestions on how to make students' personal well-being better by extending kindness out into the world. Both hybrid and remote students engaged in these activities. The smallest act of kindness given can be the biggest act of kindness received on any given day. Activities ran through the SMS advisory period and are linked to the SMS school counseling Google Classroom page. Students participated in "The Great Kindness Challenge" for two weeks, completing a scavenger checklist of creative small acts of kindness.



SMS welcomed Dee and Roscoe into our Schaghticoke life! Who are Dee and Roscoe? Roscoe is a therapy dog and Dee is her handler. They have visited other area middle schools and started at SMS this month. In their first official visit, Roscoe welcomed 52 students and staff into the MPR to visit and understand the benefits of a therapy dog. We as a school community could not be more excited to be implementing this innovative program into our school life.

New Milford High School

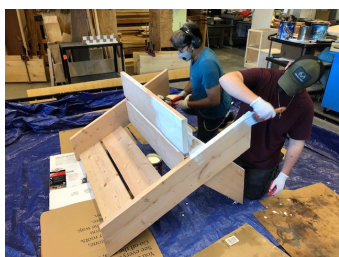
Congratulations Fall All-State Student Athletes! The All-State selections are made by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association and are based on the athlete's consistent outstanding athletic performance. We are pleased to announce that the following students were named Fall All-State Student Athletes in their respective sports:

Congratulations!

Julia Cascone - Girls Soccer
 Caleb Cerra - Boys Cross Country
 Claire Daniels - Girls Cross Country
 McKenzie Dayton - Field Hockey
 Connor Delpha - Boys Cross Country
 Heather Dempsey - Field Hockey
 Robert Harkin - Boys Cross Country
 Sydney Kelleher - Girls Cross Country
 Alec Llerena - Boys Soccer
 Amanda Neeb - Girls Swimming and Diving
 Andrew Taborsak - Boys Cross Country
 Shae Zeitler - Girls Cross Country

NMHS Winter Sports In Season Now. On February 8th, winter student-athletes began their competitive season. A total of five sports are in action including Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Gymnastics, Ice Hockey, and Swimming and Diving. The sports of Cheerleading, Dance, Boys and Girls Indoor Track, and Wrestling are allowed to condition and practice to a certain extent, but will not be competing this winter due to the State DPH recommendations. The entire Winter Sports Plan released by CIAC can be accessed using this link: [CIAC Winter Sports Plan](#). Most of the Winter Sports schedules have been uploaded onto CIAC and can be accessed at: [CIAC Winter Sport Schedules](#).

With spectators severely limited, the SWC will be livestreaming as many winter events as possible, mostly on the NFHS Network. The livestream requires a monthly fee. Families can subscribe to the NFHS Network using this link: [NFHS Network Registration](#). The other option, if you do not want to pay the monthly subscription to watch games live, is to create an account and watch archived New Milford High School games. Games will be archived three days after each event to be viewed at any time.



LLC Courtyard Project Underway. Library Media Specialist Lori Cerra teamed up with Woodshop teacher James Wilson last year to start the planning for a “courtyard project.” Last year’s mindfulness initiative was the motivation behind creating an outdoor space for students to read, write or reflect. After the idea was proposed, students from the advanced woodshop class, Projects Unlimited, started

planning and presented different building options along with the projected cost. Mrs. Cerra then reached out to the PTO and was awarded a grant to purchase wood and supplies for the project. COVID delayed the project, but the delay allowed some new Project Unlimited students to get involved. This month, some of the benches were finished and have been delivered. Now students just need to wait for spring weather!



NMHS All-School Musical Goes Virtual

Written by Alessandro Amenta, All-School Musical Director



It's almost been a year since the New Milford High School Theatre went dark. March 10, 2020 was the last rehearsal before our production of *The Addams Family* had to be postponed due to COVID-19; we were a little over a week away from our scheduled performances. Before the curtain could even rise, we had to strike our sets and say goodbye to our seniors in quarantine. Theatre programs everywhere have been severely impacted by COVID-19, and it has forced the theatre community to adapt to survive. Our show will go on this year: online.

Students and staff are currently hard at work rehearsing for *The Addams Family* (Take Two). Most of the cast and crew from last year are back to finish what they started, and we are delighted to have new members join the All-School Musical family and help make this show the best it can be. Sadly, we were unable to find a way to incorporate the pit orchestra this year due to all the restrictions stemming from COVID-19. I am deeply saddened that our student musicians are unable to join us, and do hope to have live music again next year.



We started the season in November, after receiving approval to run, with a virtual informational meeting detailing how we would safely put on a show during a pandemic. First, we made sure to utilize technology as much as possible. Students interested in auditioning for the cast were given instructions on how to record their acting, singing, and dancing auditions and submit them with their digital Audition Form. Students interested in the stage crew were asked to apply for a position by submitting a form online as well. Once the cast and crew were decided in December, students were added to our Google Classroom to keep track of rehearsal dates and other information as we geared up to start rehearsals in January.

For the first couple of weeks in January, rehearsals were strictly virtual. Students were able to participate in acting, singing, and dancing rehearsals, all from home. Rehearsing music on Google Meet is not easy, but our wonderful Music Director Ms. Rosen did a fantastic job breaking down the musical numbers for our students so that they would have the necessary knowledge and tools to practice at home. Ms. Pytel, our amazing Choreographer, was able to adapt flawlessly by teaching the dance numbers online and having students follow along at home, like a Broadway-themed home workout tape! I am so proud of our team for making virtual rehearsals work so well, and the best part is, now whenever there is a snow day, we can still have rehearsal online and get work done.



Mid-January, we were given approval to rehearse in-person following the guidelines. For music rehearsals, Ms. Rosen has had the very difficult task of teaching complicated music in an entirely new way: with students masked up and spaced out in the theatre, only able to sing in the space for thirty minutes at a time to allow for the air to circulate. I cannot stress

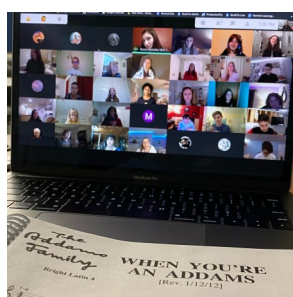
enough how amazing Ms. Rosen has been getting our cast to sound so good, despite all the odds. When it comes to dancing, Ms. Pytel has been doing an incredible job modifying her work with social distancing and safety in mind. The dance numbers are starting to look really great, even better than last year!

Meanwhile, on Saturdays our stage crew is hard at work rebuilding all the set pieces that had to be removed from the stage last year. While we are thankful that we are not starting over completely, there is still a lot of work to be done to get the sets to be show-ready, and our talented student designers and technicians have been working hard to make the show look spectacular.



So you might be wondering, how will you be able to see all this wonderful work? Due to COVID-19, we will not be having an in-person audience. However, though this may seem disappointing, I am thrilled by this new opportunity to make a new type of All-School Musical production: a theatre/film hybrid. As the Video Production teacher at NMHS, I have experience with filming and editing and I am excited to bring that to this production. With a film crew made up of my VP students, the plan is to record the show on stage over two weekends in early April. This won't just be a simple, wide angle of the show from the back of the theatre, but a planned out, multi-camera production (think Hamilton on Disney+). Once all the filming is done, I will edit the production so that it will be ready to stream to audiences in May.

Though it is a later opening night than normal, we still plan to have six shows over two weekends. The dates are as follows: May 14, 15, 21 and 22 at 7 PM, May 16th at 3 PM, and May 22nd at 2 PM.



Tickets this year will only be available to be purchased online through BookTix Live. BookTix Live will allow patrons to purchase a ticket to the performance of their choice, and a StreamPass link will be emailed to the patron to use on the show date. These links are unique, and cannot be shared. Anyone who held onto their ticket from last year will be able to exchange it for a StreamPass. More information on how to purchase tickets will be forthcoming as we get closer to the performance dates.

Everyone has been working extremely hard to make this show a success. It has been a joy to see the students excited to be working on a common goal again. This is their passion, and I am so thankful that the district has allowed us the opportunity to perform again. Thank you for supporting the arts. We look forward to seeing you back in the theatre again soon. It's only intermission!

Would you like to help us make this year a success? Here's how you can support our program. We are currently hosting a Snap-Raise online fundraising campaign and the funds from this campaign will not only help recoup the cost of last year's cancelled musical, but also allow us to build a budget for new equipment that we will need to purchase to maintain

the high-quality of our productions in the future. We understand that this is a difficult time financially for many people, but if you are able to donate any amount, it would be greatly appreciated. Click [this link](#) to donate. If you are unable to donate at this time, we would love it and would be so grateful if you could help spread the word about our fundraiser by sharing it on social media.

We will still be selling ads this year! Local businesses may choose to purchase ad space in our digital program (viewable during the stream) or, new this year, purchase video ad time during the stream itself, which would allow for commercials during intermission. Please email amentaa@newmilfordps.org for more information if you are interested in purchasing an ad in our program or stream.

We are also selling new merchandise to anyone wishing to support our theatre program in style. We have partnered with Images Unlimited to create awesome new NMHS Theatre swag which will be available for students, parents, alumni, teachers, and fans; anyone who would like to show their support for the program. We hope to start selling items through an online store soon. Stay tuned for more information!



Kindness Workshops For Grades 3-5

1st Tuesday of every month
Starting March 2nd

Register at
www.myyouthagency.com

For more information,
contact Sara Wells, LMSW,
at swells@newmilford.org
or call (860) 210-2030.



New Milford Public Schools

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

Ms. Alisha DiCorpo
Superintendent

Mrs. Catherine Calabrese
Interim Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Kevin Munrett
Facilities Director

Mr. Anthony Giovannone
Fiscal Services & Operations
Director

Mrs. Sandra Sullivan
Food Services Director

Mrs. Catherine Gabianelli
Human Resources Director

Mrs. Laura Olson
Pupil Personnel &
Special Services Director

Mr. Brandon Rush
Technology Director

Board of Education

Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach
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Secretary

Mrs. Tammy McInerney
Assistant Secretary

Mr. Pete Helmus

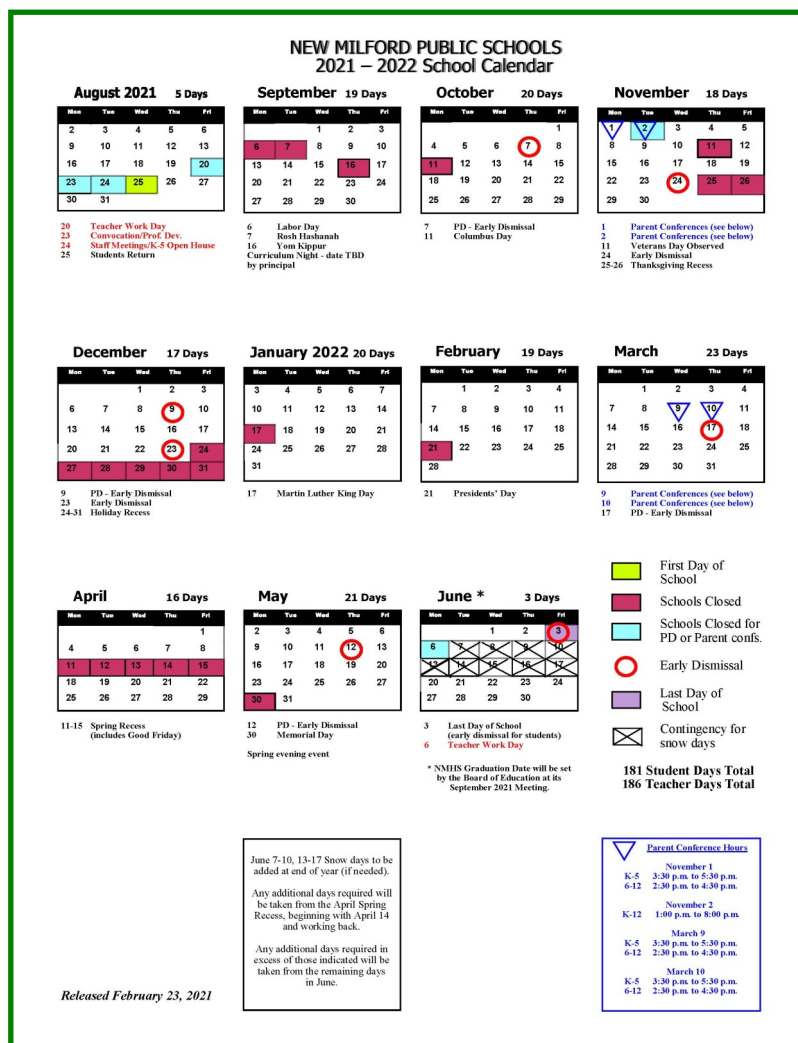
Mr. Brian McCauley

Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan

Mrs. Olga I. Rella

**Never too early to plan for next year
(or at least try!)**

**The 2021-2022 NMPS School Calendar
was released February 23, 2021**



**The calendar may also be viewed
on the district website:**

<https://www.newmilfordps.org/calendar>

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.

Planning Ahead