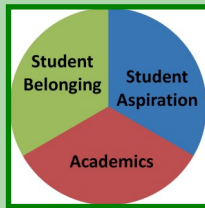




New Milford Public Schools
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New Milford High School

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

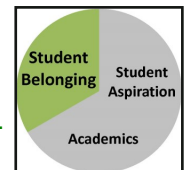
Mrs. Susan Murray, Principal
 Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Asst. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 8, Issue 11

May 2018

Working to Ease the Transition to a New School



Entering a new school for the very first time can be a difficult experience for most students. In an effort to reduce students' anxiety surrounding this experience, the New Milford Public Schools asked Dr. Len Tomasello (a.k.a. "Dr. T") to coordinate each school's efforts to make the transition to their respective schools a truly positive experience for all students.

The planning for each transition (Preschool-K, Grades 2-3, Grades 5-6, and Grades 8-9) began several months ago. Working under the direction of Assistant Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo, Dr. T collected information about each school's current transition plan. After reviewing those plans, he worked with each of the building principals to consider helpful revisions.

The transition from Preschool to Kindergarten was a particular focus of the district's work this year. The registration timing and process were adjusted to better meet the needs of students and parents. Instead of one large parent evening meeting, each elementary school scheduled three registration dates in early spring when parents could drop in to their respective schools to meet with the school's registrar and nurse. After presenting and reviewing all required registration forms, parents were given several options to schedule their children for a one-hour simulated kindergarten experience.



This "Mini-K Experience" was something new for all incoming students. It was designed to give these kindergarteners-to-be a chance to interact with other incoming students and to demonstrate their readiness for kindergarten. As part of this hands-on visit, the children worked with kindergarten teachers and other school staff in different learning centers.

One of these centers was a listening experience where the children heard a picture book read by the school's principal.

While the children were in the kindergarten classroom, their parents or guardians attended a meeting where they learned about the importance of school attendance, as well as school programs and community services available to families. They viewed a video that described a typical day at school. Each school's principal joined this presentation to answer parents' questions.

The new "Mini-K Experience" ended with each child receiving a goody bag filled with school supplies, some parent literature, and a copy of the book that was read by their principal. The highlight of the day for many of the children was taking a short ride with their parents on a school bus. The final step in this process is the "Open House" scheduled for the last day of summer vacation. On this day next August, students are invited to visit their respective schools to meet their new teachers.



The district was eager to hear from parents about this revised kindergarten registration and orientation process, so it surveyed parents who participated. The feedback from these parents was extremely positive.



The transition from 2nd grade into 3rd grade at Sarah Noble begins early each spring with evening meetings for each of the elementary schools. Parents and children meet Principal Anne Bilko in a large group for an introduction to SNIS. In a slide show, Mrs. Bilko explains some of the programs and activities that are available to all students. During her presentation, she makes several "connections" to show how much of what the students have experienced at their elementary schools is similar to life at SNIS. Following the presentation, students and their parents take a building tour conducted by the intermediate school staff members.

As another part of the transition process to the intermediate school, current 3rd grade students send letters to each 2nd grade classroom. This initiates a "pen pal" program that continues until the 2nd graders visit SNIS later in the spring. As part of that visit, the 2nd grade classrooms get to meet their 3rd grade pen pals. Similar to the elementary school experience, the transition process concludes with a district-wide Open House held on the final day of summer vacation where students and parents are invited to visit school to find their new classrooms and meet their new teacher.

Transitions don't get any easier for older students. Entering middle school can be a very stressful time for many students, so the middle school administration worked closely with Dr. T to make this transition as supportive as possible. The process begins with an evening meeting typically held in the spring (delayed this year to June due to weather!). Parents and

students are invited to listen to an introduction by SMS Principal Dr. Chris Longo, and then learn more about the school by watching a video. Following the video, students have an opportunity to ask questions before taking one of several tours of the building that are led by current 6th grade students and staff. Students also receive an informational booklet describing school expectations, programs, and extra-curricular activities.



Later in the spring, Dr. T accompanies a small group of current 6th graders to SNIS to visit each 5th grade classroom. These “student ambassadors” are selected by the middle school staff for their positive citizenship, school involvement, and ability to clearly articulate the middle school experience for 6th graders. Each of

these classroom visits ends with 5th graders receiving a “Getting to Know You” form that they complete. These forms are distributed to each student’s new 6th grade teacher so they can learn about their students prior to the new school year. On this form, students can also ask questions about the middle school experience. Dr. T answers these questions personally when students provide their email addresses. All middle school students receive their new schedules in the summer via email. Shortly after, they attend “Open House” at SMS, which gives them another opportunity to settle in.

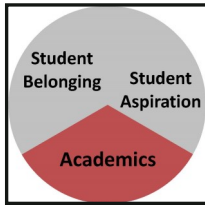
Transitioning to New Milford High School includes an evening meeting for students and parents from New Milford and Sherman. This meeting occurs very early in the spring. After a presentation by NMHS Principal Mr. Greg Shugrue, the guests are invited to proceed to the cafeteria where they meet informally with department heads, athletic representatives, and Unified Arts staff. This gives students a chance to ask questions and learn more about the school’s many learning and extra-curricular opportunities.



Later in the early spring, NMHS counselors visit the middle school to meet with all 8th grade students. At this meeting, the counselors discuss school programs, expectations, clubs, activities, etc. They also talk about student schedules and course selection. Part of the spring transition plan includes a daytime school visit for students with special needs.

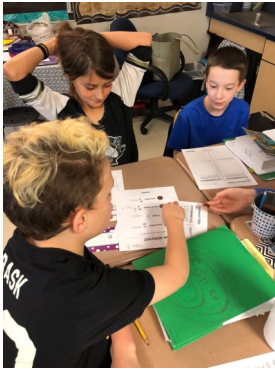
The transition to high school ends with a summer orientation experience. All incoming 9th graders take small group tours of the school that are led by “student leaders” who currently attend the high school. Students receive their schedules and locker assignments, and have student I.D. photos taken. To cap off the event, students and tour guides enjoy a pizza lunch in the school’s cafeteria.

The process of transitioning from one school to the next can be a challenging experience for most students. We believe New Milford students make a smooth, comfortable transition because of the work each of our schools does. We look forward to a new beginning for all our students with each new school year.

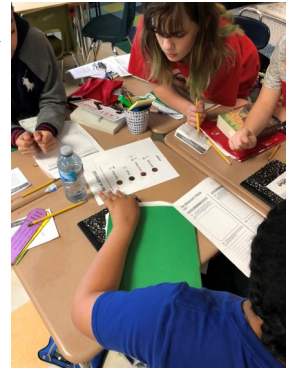


Mystery Science – Hands on Learning at SNIS

SNIS teachers and students are loving their Mystery Science lessons. This is the third year that the district has used this K-5 science curriculum which provides hands-on science and engineering lessons that are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards.



Mrs. Klee's Grade 5 class recently used a lesson designed to answer the question: *Are magic potions real?* In this Mystery, students were introduced to the alchemists, a historic group of people who experimented with "potions" that could transform materials. In the accompanying activity, students tested whether different substances changed the appearance of copper pennies.



The grade 4 classes of Mrs. Strell and Mr. McKay worked together on a lesson on chain reactions that they modified from Mystery Science. Prior to building their own chain reaction machines, students built rollercoasters. They found out that the higher the starting point of the rollercoaster, the more potential energy the object had. After they experimented with their rollercoasters, they moved onto the chain reaction machines. Students watched videos which demonstrated chain reaction machines before creating their own, using materials that were in the classroom.

Mr. McKay says "The machine needed to have a minimum of five parts in order to be considered a success. Students worked in collaborative groups of four to five students. They needed to convert potential energy into kinetic energy. The lessons focused on potential energy with specific emphasis on height. Other curriculum areas came into play too. Since we are also studying angles in geometry, we took it further and studied the angle of descent and how that impacts the speed at which objects traveled. Another added benefit to this concrete learning opportunity was the fact that students had an opportunity to work with students from another class. They were also able to see a concrete representation of cause and effect relationships which is something that we focus on in language arts. We were able to connect many parts of our curriculum in a way that allowed students to be creative and have fun."

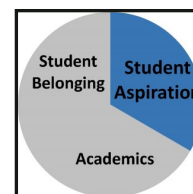


One student enjoyed the lesson so much that he built his own chain reaction machine at home. [Click here to see the video clip of it in action.](#)

HPS Teacher Participates in Exchange Program



HPS Kindergarten teacher Jennifer Andrea visited Lebanon in February as part of an exchange program sponsored by the Lebanon American Club of Danbury. Each year, the Club sends up to two teachers to Lebanon to observe the International College, a K-12 school in Beirut and Ain Arn, and to Tyr, in southern Lebanon, to spend time at Cadmous College - also a K-12 school. Five local school districts are involved in the program: Danbury, New Milford, Monroe and Ridgefield in Connecticut, and North Salem, in New York. Interested teachers do not have to be of Lebanese descent to participate.



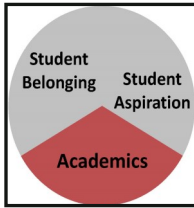
This year, Ms. Andrea (pictured in the middle in the picture to the right) was the only teacher from the area who went on the exchange. She spent nine days in Lebanon as part of this educational and cultural voyage. “It was an amazing trip,” says Ms. Andrea. “Lebanon is a beautiful country, with the glory of the mountains, the beauty of the sea, and the bustling cosmopolitan city of Beirut to explore. There was not a time that I did not feel absolutely safe while there.” Snapshots of her stay are pictured below.



As part of the exchange, two teachers from Lebanon came to America to visit the participating districts. This happened in April when the two teachers spent a week in Connecticut observing at area schools, one of which included HPS on Monday, April 2nd.



Before the teachers headed back to Lebanon, the Lebanon American Club hosted a dinner where all the teachers involved in the exchange gave presentations about their experiences. Ms. Andrea says, “I would encourage teachers to look into this amazing program. It really is life changing.”

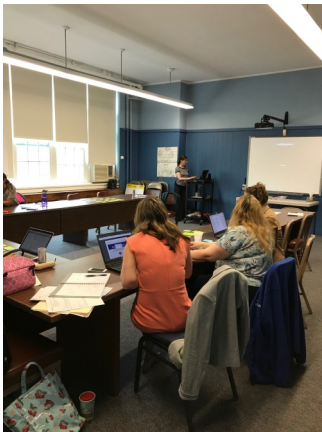


Updates from Committee on Learning

With the year winding down, the Committee on Learning utilized spring meetings to review the last few curriculum up for adoption. These included the new Advanced Placement courses of Human Geography and Environmental Science, which are in their first year, and revisions to AP US History and AP Language and Composition. The Committee also approved revisions to the curriculum for Writing Research and Workshop and for Introduction to Engineering Design.

In March, the Committee heard a presentation on the newly revamped Kindergarten registration and orientation featured in this month's cover article. As you can see, the district is working hard to make it a comfortable transition for our preschoolers as they officially begin their school career.

April featured a TEAM Review of Practice by Assistant Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo. Ms. DiCorpo said TEAM (Teacher Education and Mentoring) is the support program for new teacher induction that includes mentorship and professional development support for new educators. There was a change at the state level and the state no longer provides funding, so districts have had to come up with their own program. The district is working with EdAdvance on a review of practice model for teachers that includes collecting evidence, analyzing, processing and action on the teacher's part.



At the district level, there is a TEAM Coordinating Committee that is working through the process as well. The Committee made some important decisions regarding the new TEAM process for next year and that afforded the district the opportunity to conduct training *this* year for teachers who would like to become new mentors for next year, so that they will be ready in advance of implementation. Ms. DiCorpo says, "I am excited by the number of teachers who have volunteered to receive the training. Twenty new teacher mentors will be available to work along with current mentors to ensure that our new teachers are supported throughout their first two years with New Milford Public Schools and beyond."

In May, the focus was on upperclassmen as PLTW Engineering Design and Development students gave updates on their final projects. The Committee had heard from the students back in November when they were developing their preliminary plans. This time, student presenters summarized their projects including: providing a review of the problem, examining possible viable solutions, looking at design requirements, reviewing need/want survey results, looking at products already on the market, doing patent research, detailing the scope of their project which includes consultation with outside experts, reviewing product designs including a design matrix for their choices, stating what STEM principles were used, examining different product models and materials, constructing of prototype and testing for workability. Whew!



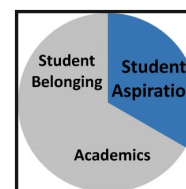
Products presented included a water turbine to charge jet ski batteries, a “LiftaBike” which will provide a means for people to transport a bike up and down stairs without having to lift it up and down, “Skatenamo” which will use the rotational motion of skateboarding to charge electronic devices, the “Disturbance Defender” which is an improvement to riot shields used by law enforcement, and a table designed to help a disabled person move and identify ownership of packages.

Also at the May meeting, Assistant Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo provided the Committee with highlights from the first annual Alumni Survey. Any member of the Class of 2017 for which the

district had a personal email, in this case 249, was mailed the survey, which was open from January 4 through January 31. The response rate was 24.9% or 62 students.

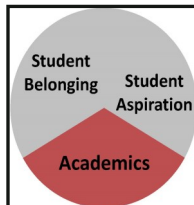
High school administrators and Board members gave input into survey questions and these questions were also shared with the high school faculty for input. Panorama, the district’s survey vendor, crafted the open-ended responses. Questions included courses taken in high school, AP courses taken, current status of postsecondary pursuits, major course of college study for those enrolled, and reason for stopping college if applicable. [The full results can be viewed here.](#)

Ms. DiCorpo also distributed materials regarding college and career readiness, including how that is defined by the state of CT, and definitions of key concepts in college and career readiness. The goal is to have a common language for discussion in determining where the district stands in these areas. Ms. DiCorpo also shared the “[Seven Principles of College and Career Readiness](#)” as well as examples of what a college and career ready student should be able to do, according to state guidelines. She said this focus begins as early as kindergarten with the building of skills. The goal is for all students to have these elements, to help students think about their pathways to future plans, and align courses appropriately to serve the needs of the many.



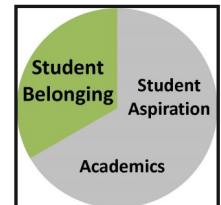
Some NMHS Seniors proudly represented their colleges of choice on May 1st, National Decision Day.

The final Committee on Learning meeting for this school year, which will take place on June 5th, will focus on the Phonics Pilot and Summer Reading.

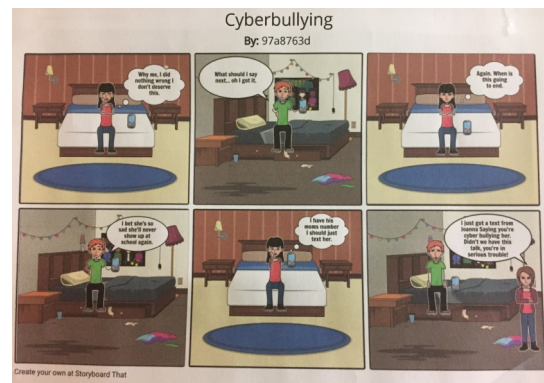
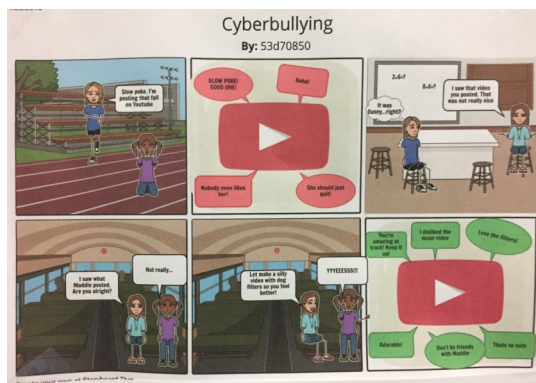


SMS Technology Students Create Storyboards

All 6th grade students at SMS were put to the task of creating a 6-panel storyboard on the topic of cyberbullying. The project took place in Ms. Santovasi's Technology classes, using a free, web-based program called *StoryboardThat*. Students

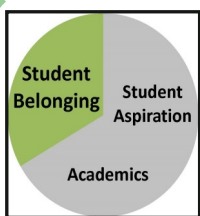


were challenged to create a digital representation of a cyberbullying situation that they have seen, heard about, experienced themselves, or something similar. By the end of the storyboard, they had to show how they would try to make the situation better and more positive, such as talking to a parent, teacher, or friend; reporting the cyberbully to a web-site administrator; or deciding not to give into peer pressure and instead befriend the person who is being cyberbullied.



Ms. Santovasi says, "There were many great solutions that came out of this fun activity! The kids really enjoyed doing these digital comic-strips." The final projects were displayed on a "Wall of Storyboards" pictured below.





Northville Elementary C.A.R.E.s!

The motto for Northville Elementary School is “Northville...where everybody counts!” This month, Northville Elementary School held a whole school dance party to celebrate the great character of NES students (Mrs. Tuozzoli’s class is pictured to the right). The moment was part of this year’s NES C.A.R.E. initiative which was developed by the new NES Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Team. C.A.R.E. captures the school-wide positive expectations framework of: **C**ooperation, **A**ct Responsibly, **R**espect, and **E**ncourage.

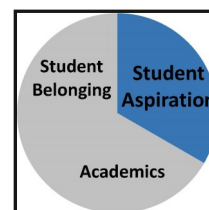


Students receive “Caring Coins” from staff members for exhibiting the expected behaviors, and the coins are added to the classroom bucket of coins. A monthly school-wide C.A.R.E. assembly is held with the school mascot, Nessy the Caring Cow, and all of the class buckets are emptied into a common bucket. A full bucket means getting to vote on a school-wide celebration, in this case, the dance party. It will be interesting to see what students pick next time.

HPS Preschoolers Practice Mindfulness



In the chaos of everyday life, it can be hard for children to learn how to find centeredness and calm. The Hill and Plain afternoon EXCEL preschool classrooms are excited to incorporate *Yoga and Mindfulness with Dawn*.



For six week, yoga instructor Dawn Delpha will be coming to the classroom to teach yoga, with the intention of helping the students (and teachers) feel renewed and centered. She will focus on strategies for breathing and posture. HPS EXCEL teacher Marney Roberts reports that, “After only two classes, the students are having a blast! They are even using the positions outside the classroom.”



Be the SURGE: Grow!

G



G

Part 4 of the 5 part video series on SURGE at Schaghticoke Middle School is online and the focus is on the letter G: Grow!

[View it here.](#)

Congratulations to May's New Milford Public School "Stars"!



Jennifer Andrea
Gina Bernard
Kelly DeYorio (not pictured)
Yvonne de St. Croix
Michael Fitzgerald (not pictured)
Shayna Sexton

Special congratulations to **Jennifer Andrea** who will drive the
Ingersoll Auto of Danbury NMPS courtesy car.
Thank you to all who submitted nominations this year.



New Milford Public Schools

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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

Mrs. Tammy McInerney

Vice Chairperson

Mrs. Angela C. Chastain

Secretary

Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan

Assistant Secretary

Mr. Bill Dahl

Mr. Joseph Failla

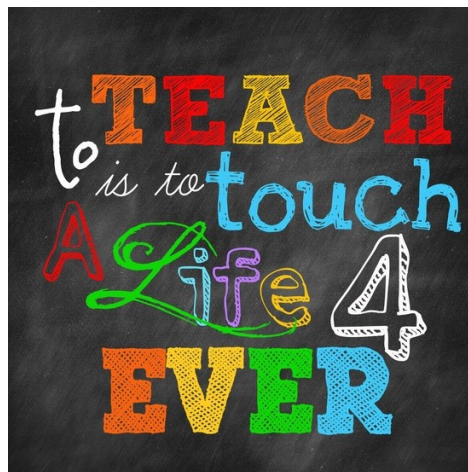
Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach

Mr. Brian McCauley

Mr. J.T. Schemm

Teacher Appreciation Month

"Your words are the fuel
to our child's dreams,
and your guidance
is the motivation
that our children need
to pursue their dreams.
Every word you say
and every action you take
has the power
to change our children's lives.
Thank you for taking care
of our children
and giving them
the encouragement
that they need
to dream bigger
and do more."



~ <https://bestwishesandquotes.com/thank-you-messages-teachers-parents/>

May 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.