



NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Strategic Plan 2007-2012

In November 2006, the New Milford Public School district accepted the challenge of developing and building a strategic plan. The strategic planning process fosters the school/family/community relationships necessary to realize the vision we feel is important for our students' education. The process was facilitated by Dr. Howard Feddema from the Cambridge Group, one of the country's leading authorities in strategic planning for schools.

The 26 member Strategic Planning Team met for three intensive days to envision the future of the New Milford Public Schools. During the three day working retreat, the diverse members of the team shared perspectives and beliefs about education, reviewed school data and identified both challenges and opportunities in the school district. This information guided the development of the draft of a Strategic Plan. The draft was shared with the school community and an invitation was extended for involvement in the next phase of the process—the development of action plans.

From January 2007 through April 2007, volunteers serving on seven action teams dedicated their time to outline the action steps necessary for the strategies to be achieved. The volunteers were drawn from the staff, students and the community at large.

The Strategic Planning Team convened at the beginning of May 2007 for two days to hear and evaluate each of the proposed action plans. After intense scrutiny and discussion, the action plans were accepted, modified, or rejected. The Strategic Plan, along with the 44 final action plans, was prepared for the Board of Education to review. On June 12, 2007, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Strategic Plan as a dynamic working document.

Working together with an established mission, shaped by specific beliefs and objectives and driven by the dedication and determination of all stakeholders, we will be able to create the best future possible for New Milford's students. Implementation will begin in the fall of 2007 and continue through 2012. Regular public updates and reviews will ensure the plan remains a practical tool throughout the five year period.

This publication outlines the plan which will guide the district in our decision-making process for the next five years.

Very truly yours,

JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Mission



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.

Beliefs



We believe that...

- all people are unique and have intrinsic worth;
- all people can learn;
- people learn in a variety of ways and at different rates;
- high expectations challenge people to higher levels of performance;
- motivation, hard work and perseverance are necessary to reach full potential;
- all people are responsible for their choices, decisions and actions in all facets of life;
- family is the primary influence in the development of the individual;
- learning throughout life is necessary in a changing world;
- education is a shared obligation of all members of the community;
- everyone benefits when people willingly contribute to the health and well-being of the community;
- honesty and integrity are the basis for building trusting relationships.

Objectives



The following objectives are long term, end results, which if accomplished, will bring us closer to achieving our mission.

All students will demonstrate proficiency on state assessments; no less than 85% of students will achieve goal or above on reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Each student will set, pursue and achieve challenging educational goals tailored to his or her interests, abilities, and aspirations.

All students will develop and consistently demonstrate positive character attributes necessary to be successful, contributing citizens.

Parameters



- We will always operate safe environments conducive to learning.
- Site-based decisions will always be consistent with the Strategic Plan.
- No new program or services will be accepted unless it is consistent with the Strategic Plan, benefits clearly exceed costs, and provisions are made for professional development and program evaluation.
- No program or service will be retained unless it makes an optimal contribution to the mission, and benefits continue to justify the cost.
- We will practice fiscal responsibility by balancing the educational needs of our students with the community's willingness to pay.
- We will not tolerate behavior which demeans the worth or dignity of any individual or group.



Strategic Plan 2007-2012

Strategy 1

We will improve communication to ensure all members of our collaborative partnership understand our mission and objectives, and are actively engaged in achieving them.

Action Plans to accomplish strategy:

1. Centralize consistent communication within the school system.
2. Create a variety of methods by which the schools reach out to the community to provide a culture of openness in the exchange of information.
3. Create a dynamic, user-friendly website.
4. Actively involve the media in frequent dissemination of positive information regarding the school system.
5. Create a system for ongoing feedback between the schools and the community.
6. Develop a predictable schedule of school events to which the community is invited to participate.
7. Strengthen dialogue between administration, staff, and students throughout all schools.
8. Develop and administer a community-wide survey to determine the community's relationship to the schools and make appropriate changes to the community plan.

Strategy 2

We will develop and implement a system-wide Character Education Program consistent with our mission and objectives.

Action Plans to accomplish strategy:

1. Establish common core character education attributes to be integrated into our schools, families and community.
2. Promote a school culture and climate that reinforces positive character attributes.
3. Ensure that the specific attributes are understood and integrated within the curriculum at each grade level.
4. Build a strong partnership with families to engage with their children in promoting positive character attributes.
5. Promote strong partnerships with community organizations to endorse positive character attributes.
6. Integrate the character attributes into the curriculum review cycle (i.e. Five-Year Plan).

Strategy 3

We will actively engage students, families, and educators in implementing a system that will enable each student to set, pursue, and achieve educational goals tailored to specific interests, abilities, and aspirations.

Action Plans to accomplish strategy:

1. Implement a New Milford High School personalized learning plan.
2. Implement a New Milford Public Schools grades 7-8 goal setting portfolio.
3. Implement a New Milford Public Schools grades 4-6 goal setting portfolio.
4. Implement a New Milford Public Schools grades K-3 goal setting portfolio.
5. Establish advisories at the middle and high school levels.
6. Institute career awareness grades K-6, career exploration grades 7-8 and career preparation grades 9-12.

Strategy 4

We will effectively and appropriately integrate technology throughout the system to achieve our mission and objectives.

Action Plans to accomplish strategy:

1. Update computer systems – hardware/software.
2. Redefine and adopt Grade Level Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy Student Competencies based on updated state & national standards, and develop curriculum-embedded, project-based assessments.
3. Implement flexible and optimal access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities and resources to ensure that all students and teachers have equal opportunities and assured experiences that lead to attaining ICT competency goals.
4. Promote the ethical and responsible use of technology in a manner consistent with school-wide positive character attributes and the student competencies related to digital citizenship.
5. Establish Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies for teachers, and develop an assessment tool to determine current baseline ICT skills for all teachers.
6. Establish an ongoing professional development system that ensures every teacher has allotted time and resources throughout the year for professional development relating to technology and its integration into the classroom.
7. Ensure that the implementation and integration of the educational technology plan is supported and sustained. This is a three-phase plan.

Strategy 5

We will provide the necessary time, resources, and support to ensure that teachers can implement the approved curriculum, use effective instruction, and analyze assessment data so that students are engaged in achieving the strategic objectives.

Action Plans to accomplish strategy:

1. Implement a program for parent and community involvement in each and every school through volunteering, tutoring, and mentoring to maximize effective use of teacher time.
2. Ensure curricula in all areas will meet or exceed state and national standards and be reflective of the best practices in the field of education.
3. Ensure that all staff are prepared to deliver the approved curriculum.
4. Ensure the curricula are presented in ways that engage students in their learning and improve students' achievement/outcomes.
5. Improve the analysis of assessment data and allow teachers to collaborate to maximize effective teaching practices so that students are engaged in achieving strategic objectives.
6. Provide grade level or discipline-specific collaboration time in each school to strategize how to improve the engagement and achievement of all students.
7. Ensure and protect the integrity of instruction by eliminating disruptions in the classroom.
8. Improve student achievement of strategic objectives through appropriate staffing.
9. Provide teachers with sufficient time to increase parent communication and to address non-teaching responsibilities to help students meet the strategic objectives.

Strategy 6

We will attract, develop, evaluate, and retain highly qualified staff.

Action Plans to accomplish strategy:

1. Promote our district as a progressive, dynamic, and collaborative public school system with competitive salaries and benefits.
2. Build a professional development program that focuses on accomplishing our district-wide mission, objectives, and strategies.
3. Revise evaluation process for all staff to align with the district's mission, objectives, and strategies as stated in the Strategic Plan.
4. Establish incentives to retain talented, dedicated, and skilled staff.

Strategy 7

We will identify and utilize the support and resources available within the community to enable all students to achieve our strategic objectives.

Action Plans to accomplish strategy:

1. To create an information fair that will inform students, family and community members of the local resources available and to use those resources to increase student skills and talents or obtain needed services for families.
2. To compile a comprehensive community resource directory to inform students, parents and community members of the resources and services available.
3. To create a database/community resource center on the web that will provide a link for students, parents and community members to get information and provide feedback in a two-way communication between the school and the community.
4. Strengthen the alumni connection to the school in order to help students, teachers and community organizations to benefit from the expertise, community service and possible fundraising efforts of the alumni.
5. Strengthen the community connection to the school in order to help students, teachers and community organizations to benefit from the expertise, community service and possible fundraising efforts of the community.
6. Establish a positive working relationship between the Board of Education and the Economic Development Commission.



NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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