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New Milford High School
860-350-6647

Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal
Mr. Marc Balanda, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Liz Curtis, Ass't. Principal
Dr. Christopher Longo, Ass't. Principal



Schaghticoke Middle School
860-354-2204

Mrs. Dana Ford, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Suzi Greene, Ass't. Principal



Sarah Noble Intermediate School
860-210-4020

Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Ass't. Principal



Hill & Plain Elementary School
860-354-5430

Dr. Len Tomasello, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Ass't. Principal



John Pettibone Elementary School
860-354-3218

Mrs. Paula Kelleher, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Ass't. Principal



Northville Elementary School
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Mrs. Susan Murray, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Ass't. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 5, Issue 4

October 2014

Spotlight on Curriculum and Instruction

By the time October comes a calling, New Milford Public Schools students and staff are well into the academic year. Here in New Milford, instruction is constantly evolving as we look at ways to improve student performance, enrich student experiences and increase the academic caliber of our students. All instruction is governed by the district's Five Year Curriculum Plan which is updated and approved by the Board of Education annually.

The district website provides information on this area under the Curriculum and Instruction tab. Here you can find a copy of the current [Five Year Curriculum Plan](#). Curriculum and instruction may change as state and national curriculum guidelines change and new assessment mandates are legislated. Additionally, student test results may warrant a review to determine what needs to be adjusted to improve student performance. Reviewing the plan annually allows flexibility to adjust programs to better meet the needs of students and to provide for those adjustments when preparing the district budget.

As curriculum is revised and new guides approved they are listed on the [district website](#). While the content of the guides will vary from course to course, all guides are designed to identify desired results, provide teaching

strategies, and include learning activities with measurable assessments as well as suggested resources to support learning. The curriculum guides are designed to ensure consistency among teachers and schools. District teachers adapt the guides to their particular class needs and styles within those guidelines.



*HPS students
hard at work
on math
problems.*

The district website is also a great source for additional information in the areas of curriculum and instruction. The [Curriculum and Instruction tab](#) has information on everything from Kindergarten expectations, to common core standards, to student assessments. Under the [Student Success link](#), you will find *Windows on New Milford*, a history of student test data over the years. The newly approved [K-5 Mathematics program](#) has its own link with pages devoted to each grade level, as well as a page that links to mobile apps for numbers and computation. Other resource links are added frequently so make it a habit to check in when you have a moment.

Making Connections at HPS

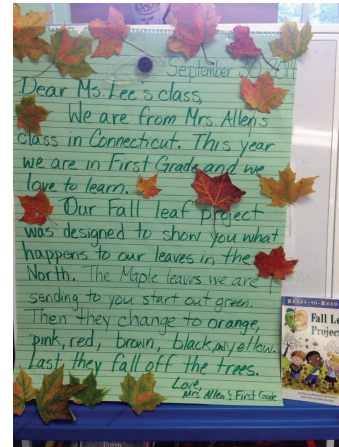
Hill and Plain School has a new principal this year as Dr. Len Tomasello takes over the reins during this transitional year for the district. Though not new to New Milford Public Schools, having served as Sarah Noble Intermediate School's principal for three years, "Dr. T" is new to Hill and Plain Elementary School and is working hard to make connections there.

One of Dr. Tomasello's favorite activities at SNIS was "Let's Do Lunch" and he has brought that tradition with him to HPS. Says Dr. T, "Each week I invite four to six third graders to have lunch with me. This gives me an opportunity to learn more about each of these students in a small setting. I learn about personal interests, what they like about school, what is challenging at school, their pets etc. In the course of one month, I can have lunch with more than 100 students!"

Dr. T has also held his first "Kid Meeting" with all third grade students in September. His goal is to have such meetings once a month. Assistant Principal Jennifer Hankla and the school's guidance counselor, Heliett Sanchez, join Dr. T at these meetings where they introduce the character word of the month, read a story related to the character trait and discuss any other timely issues that have arisen since the last meeting. Similar initiatives are underway for other grades.

Dr. Tomasello has been busy building family connections too through his newsletter, the *T-Gram*, which is sent to parents monthly.

JPS Students Connect with Georgia Pen Pals



Mrs. Allen's first grade class at John Pettibone School is making some connections of their own. The students are pen pals with a third grade class in Georgia that is taught by Mrs. Allen's cousin. Mrs. Allen tells us that they try to connect every year. "We write letters as a class and send them off periodically. The first project this year was a fall leaf project. As a class we discussed why leaves change color and fall off the trees. Because this does not happen in Georgia we sent maple leaves for them to investigate."

The packet went out this month and Mrs. Allen's class is waiting eagerly for their pen pals' response.



REMINDER:

The next
Sit Down with the Superintendent
will be held on
November 12th from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
at 50 East Street.

Adopt a Bus at SNIS

The SNIS community is sponsoring a new “Adopt a Bus” program this year. The idea was generated from the Noble Community Committee to try and improve students’ experience on the bus.

Principal Anne Bilko says, “Mrs. Adakonis, SNIS’ administrative intern, solicited volunteers from our staff. SNIS has 30 buses and all have been adopted! Adoptive staff are taking a few minutes once or twice a week to check in with their assigned bus to see how things are going. They use that time to remind students of the school pledge and bus expectations as well as to promote positive bus behaviors. They are the bus cheerleader, not the disciplinarian. Each bus has received a poster version of our Noble Pledge to be respectful, responsible, honest, and safe. Bus drivers were invited in for coffee so they could hear first hand about the program.



Art teacher Susan Ceglio-Tresca visits her adopted bus.

Adoptive staff are being very creative in building enthusiasm about the bus ride and the bus community. Some buses have a secret rider of the week, some buses have cheers, some have visual reminders, and some students have received OSCARs for positive behaviors on the bus. Our hope is that our students have a positive experience door to door not just bell to bell at school.”

NES Lunch Table Leader Program

SNIS is not the only school trying something new this year. Northville Elementary School has started the Lunch Table Leader Program. According to Principal Susan Murray, “This program is designed to give students an opportunity to lead their peers in a daily self-assessment as well as hold them accountable for expected behavior in the cafeteria at lunch. Table leaders rotate weekly to allow all students to have the leadership opportunity and consistently support accountability.”



A grade 2 Lunch Table Leader in action.

At the end of each lunch period, the table leader polls the other students at the table about their behavior during lunch, asking them to give a thumbs up, down, or to the side. An overall rating is then circled on a clipboard sheet which was designed by school psychologist Lynn Nissenbaum.

Every week the rating sheets will be collected and tabulated. Eventually, selected students will log the information in Excel. Feedback will be provided to the students in the cafeteria and on announcements. Principal Murray says, “Although it’s still too early to state whether there has been a significant change in student behavior, it’s been interesting to see the students reading the table signs listing the expected behaviors and dialoguing about their own behavior.” We’ll let you know the program’s progress in a future issue.

SNIS Students Participate in Pinwheels for Peace

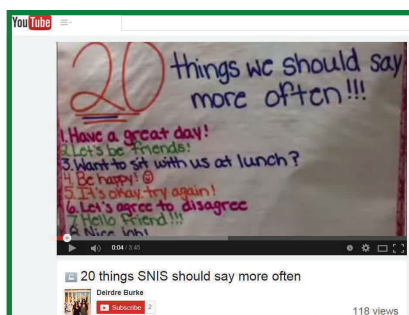
Imagine...millions of pinwheels spinning in the wind – pinwheels in the United States, Great Britain, South America, Australia, the Middle East, Canada, Africa, Europe and Asia; pinwheels all over the world! – big pinwheels, small pinwheels; pinwheels of all shapes and sizes – colorful pinwheels, decorated with drawings, paintings, collages, photographs – pinwheels with words of peace and harmony written on them – fields of pinwheels, pinwheels along roadsides, in schoolyards, in parks, pinwheels EVERYWHERE! In today's world, peace needs to be more than just a word. ~ Pinwheels for Peace

This fall, all SNIS students participated in a school-wide art project entitled Pinwheels for Peace. According to the program's website, this international art and literacy project was started in 2005 by two art teachers in Coconut Creek, Florida, as a way for students to express their feelings about what's going on in the world and in their lives. Students create pinwheels in all shapes and sizes and then "plant" them as a visual statement for World "Whirled" Peace. Program participants can choose to plant the pinwheels in conjunction with World Peace Day on September 21st. In the first year, groups in over 1,325 locations throughout the world sent over 500,000 pinwheels spinning. Last year, over 4.5 million pinwheels went spinning in over 3,500 locations including the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia, the Middle East, Africa and South America!

SNIS Art teachers Jen Amodeo, Susan Sullivan and Susan Ceglio-Tresca helped their students plant pinwheels along the grass in front of Sarah Noble's art rooms for all to see. Keeping in mind the fickleness of our New England weather, they also saved some for an indoor display to be enjoyed by the many visitors to the school. To see pictures of other pinwheel displays from around the world, visit pinwheelsforpeace.com.



SNIS 5th Graders tell us "20 Things We Should Say More Often"



SNIS Health teacher Deirdre Burke tells us about a fun project Health classes did to start the year off on the right note, "As Health lessons began, we launched our year by viewing a video from the 'Kid President' where he creates a list of 20 things we should say more often to build a more positive and friendly environment. From there, SNIS fifth graders brainstormed a list of 20 things we should say at SNIS more often. We then produced our own video representing their thoughts on how to make Sarah Noble an even friendlier school. I am sure you will agree, they are amazing!"

[SNIS video link—Ms. Burke and 5th grade Health](#)

Classroom Visitation Days at SMS



Schaghticoke Middle School Principal Dana Ford is excited to announce Classroom Observation Days for parents, a newly instituted program this year. “We have selected different days throughout the year and will be inviting parents from various teams and grade levels to attend two classes with their students. Parents talk to their student then determine a first and second choice of classrooms to visit. We asked for two choices as we do not want too many parents in any one class. The goal is to have teachers continue with their regularly scheduled activities for learning in order to show parents a true snapshot of their student’s day.”

Each month, a group of parents will be invited alphabetically by last name until, by the end of the year, all SMS parents have had an opportunity to observe. The first visitation day was held on October 16th for students whose last name began A-Bri.

Principal Ford said the initiative is part of SMS’ commitment “to work together with parents to help SMS students progress toward success. By the end of the school year we expect to have opened our classroom doors to all of our SMS parents.”

PLTW Update

Last year, the Board of Education approved the addition of two new elective courses in the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program at New Milford High School: Civil Engineering & Architecture and Digital Electronics. NMHS Science teacher Mrs. Erin Lucia says the program is off to a great start.

“PLTW is in its third year at NMHS with currently 12% of NMHS students taking a PLTW course. Foundational courses offered are Introduction to Engineering and Principles of Engineering and include students from all grades 9-12. Civil Engineering & Architecture (CEA) and Digital Electronics are upperclass electives having a mix of juniors and seniors. Thanks to the support and hard work of NMPS Facilities and Technology staff, my classroom was outfitted with 20 additional PLTW computers to accommodate CEA and our growing program.”

Mrs. Lucia tells us that the new electives offered this year each focus in on specific areas of engineering. CEA allows students an opportunity to study a brief history of architecture, architectural styles, residential design and construction, and commercial design and construction. Topics to be covered throughout the year include everything from building codes and components, cost estimates, energy efficiency, water supply, waste water management, plumbing and electrical systems, to site considerations such as land surveying, soil analysis, parking lot design, storm water management, beam design, roof load analysis and footing analysis. Whew!

Throughout the year students will be using Autodesk REVIT, an industry-used 3D build-

ing information modeling software. They will be creating models of a utility shed, a home built to ADA standards for accessible design, and an industrial warehouse renovated into a library that will incorporate a green roof. Several of these projects involve the students in designing the plans and applying calculations and analysis to components that they choose to incorporate within their buildings.



The student work pictured above shows student built models representing various types of residential architectural styles. Each student in CEA chose a style of interest to them. They then researched the style and created a scale model, based on geometry, that depicts their chosen style. Architectural styles that were created included Normandy, Colonial, Cape Cod, Victorian, Modern, Italianate, Ranch, Garrison, Bungalow, Greek Revival, Farmhouse, Saltbox and more. Students included a short report about the distinguishing features of their style and presented their work to their peers. Students also discussed which architectural styles are most common around New Milford and the northeast as compared to other parts of the country and world.

Mrs. Lucia says “It’s exciting to see students make real world connections in all of the PLTW classes. In essence, that’s what our

program is about. As we continue working to improve the quality of our program and its diversity, we are excited to give New Milford students an opportunity to immerse themselves in engineering and improve their 21st century skills. Our hope is that one day our efforts to ignite the spark in future engineers will spill over and benefit the community as a whole.”

Parent Teacher Conferences Are Coming Soon

All New Milford Public Schools offer parent teacher conference appointments during the month of November. Schedules vary and every principal will be sending home details for his or her individual school.

One thing that will be the same for all schools is how parents will sign up for their conferences.

Appointments will be made on-line using the district’s conference scheduler tool.

The tool will be made active for all schools on the district website beginning November 3rd so if you have more than one student to schedule you can do it all at one time.

The link will be prominently featured on each school’s home page.

Since it is a new site, all parents will be asked to create a new account.

If you do not have internet access, please call the individual schools for assistance.



NMHS CELEBRATES SPIRIT WEEK

THEME DAYS/PEP RALLY AND MORE...





**New Milford Public
Schools**

50 East Street
New Milford, CT 06776
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Mr. Joshua Smith
Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Ellamae Baldelli
Human Resources Director

Mr. John Calhoun
Facilities Manager

Mr. Jay Hubelbank
Fiscal Services & Operations Director

Mrs. Laura Olson
Pupil Personnel & Special Services
Director

Ms. Roberta Pratt
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Red Ribbon Week

October 23-October 31

The Red Ribbon Campaign® is the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation reaching millions of young people during Red Ribbon Week®, October 23-October 31 each year.

Did You Know?

Children of parents who talk to their teens regularly about drugs are 42% less likely to use drugs than those who don't, yet only a quarter of teens report having these conversations.*

The National Family Partnership organized the first Nationwide Red Ribbon Campaign®. Since its beginning in 1985, the Red Ribbon has touched the lives of people around the world. In response to the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena, angered parents and youth in communities across the country began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of the killing and destruction caused by drugs in America.

Today, the Red Ribbon serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities.

For more information or to sign the Red Ribbon Pledge, please visit RedRibbon.org

*Copyright © 2014 National Family Partnership

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.

October brings