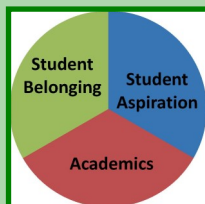




New Milford Public Schools
50 East Street
New Milford, CT 06776
860-355-8406
www.newmilfordps.org



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



Schaghticoke Middle School
860-354-2204
Dr. Christopher Longo, Principal
Mrs. Catherine Calabrese, 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
Mrs. Catherine Calabrese, Asst. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 10, Issue 6

December 2019

JJMO Enriches NMPS Students and Community



The John J. McCarthy Observatory (JJMO) is an astronomical observatory open to the public that works very closely with teachers of New Milford Public Schools to further science education in our district. Observatory volunteers host class visits, invite students to participate in events and research, and visit classrooms to present information on a variety of topics ranging from meteorites to their annual “Bug-O-Rama” presentations at Hill and Plain and Northville Schools. NMHS Science teacher Danielle Ragonnet, who is also on the Observatory’s Advisory Board, gives an update on recent happenings below:



New Milford High School freshman science classes have been visiting the Observatory over the last few weeks to tour the facilities and learn about meteorites. Meteorites are pieces of rock and metal that come from space and fall through Earth’s atmosphere as meteors, also known as shooting stars, and land on the surface. These space rocks are valuable to scientists because they provide information about what the early solar system was like, and scientists have used them to calculate the age of our own planet. Ninth graders had an opportunity to view and even hold some meteorite samples in their hands during their visits. JJMO has an extensive meteorite collection that catalogs some of the most famous meteorite falls and finds in the world, as well as a state of the art teaching microscope so you can get an up close and personal look at their beautiful structure.

The Observatory is a valuable resource, not just for science classes, but for many other disciplines as well. Last month, Amy Brazauski’s English classes visited the Observatory to learn about the astronomical references that are included in *The Odyssey*. They learned about circumpo-



lar constellations (constellations that are visible from the northern hemisphere all year long, including Ursa Major) and even discussed the possibility that the solar eclipse of 1178 BC was the event that marked Odysseus' return home.

JJMO hosts monthly open house events called "Second Saturday Stars". These events take place on the second Saturday evening of every month and are open to the public. Each month's open house includes an informative presentation on current astronomy topics, viewing from multiple telescopes (weather permitting) and refreshments at no cost to the attendees. If you are interested in learning more, JJMO also offers small group visits, training on the use of the telescopes and opportunities for research for students and adults.

The Observatory is located on the campus of New Milford High School and its mission is to further science literacy for both students and adults of the Western Connecticut region. All are welcome to come and learn more about the universe and our place within it.

For more information about the JJMO, or to schedule a visit, go to www.mccarthyobservatory.org

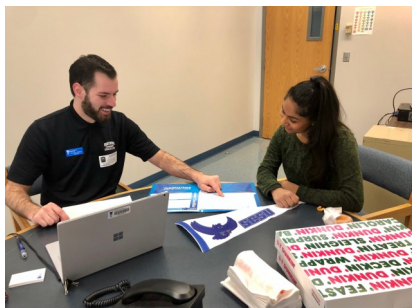


NMHS Hosts Annual Instant Decision Week



NMHS held its annual Instant Decision Week from December 2-6. Admission representatives from seven colleges were on hand to meet with seniors, review applications, and give an answer, yes or no, regarding admission, eliminating the nerve-wracking wait for an answer in the spring.

This year's participating colleges were Central Connecticut State University, Iona College, Mercy College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Southern Connecticut State University, University of New Haven and Western Connecticut State University.



Representatives reviewed 111 student applications, with 100 accepted to the school to which the student applied - a 90% acceptance rate. Congratulations seniors!



'Tis the Season for Kindness

Our New Milford Public Schools staff, students, and parents are generous in spirit and deed throughout the year, but especially so during the holiday season. Community service takes many forms, some as school-wide initiatives, others from particular clubs or grades. Initiatives include everything from the Santa Fund in the youngest grades to the Star Project at the high school. All grades collect winter clothing to “Warm Hands, Warm Hearts” and spread “Warmth from Head to Toe”. At SNIS, students are writing letters and designing art work for nursing homes. Choruses are serenading our seniors. Schools are also hosting pajama/flannel days where staff and students make a donation to the CT Children’s Medical Center in exchange for wearing the comfy clothes to school. Take a look below to see a sample of the kindness in action.



SADD Spreads Fun and Awareness

The NMHS SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club was busy in December. The Club sponsored the “Warm Hands, Warm Heart” mitten drive, collecting for local distribution. In addition to that program, SADD took advantage of the fact that Friday the 13th arrived not long before Christmas this year to spread some awareness in a fun way.

SADD Advisor and NMHS Health teacher Elizabeth Schlicher says, “Students created little flyers with pictures and quotes from *Nightmare before Christmas* that contained QR codes. The flyers were attached to lockers throughout the school for when students came in on that Friday.”

Each code brought students to one of the following sites:

- ♦ *Text Less, Live More*: facts and statistics on distracted driving
- ♦ *Truth Initiative*: strategies to quit smoking/vaping
- ♦ *Drug Free World*: information on the harmful effects of marijuana
- ♦ *US News and World Report*: article on the most recent data on teen vaping



As a bonus, some students' QR code told them to visit Mrs. Schlicher's room for a prize of SADD swag!



Looking for
Vaping Prevention Resources and links?
[Click here](#)
 for a comprehensive resource list
 provided by Western CT Coalition.

CMEA Northern Region Music Selections



On November 2nd, NMHS Band, Orchestra and Chorus students participated in the CMEA (Connecticut Music Educators Association) Northern Region Auditions held at Avon High School. Nineteen students were selected to participate in this year's Region Festival, to be held at New Britain High School this January. Kudos to Jazine Dionne, Sloan Gubner, Allan Lian, Riley Malke, Yae Young Min, Eliza Peery, Kelsey Stewart, Charles Vogt, Terrell Willimas and Cory Woolley who were selected for the Northern Region Band; Henry Runyan who was selected for the Northern Region Orchestra; Joshua Abel, Olivia Esposito, Brian Hinger, Madison Lafontan, Leah Lawson, Kayla Machado, Ian McNulty and Cassandra Williams who were selected for the Northern Region Chorus. Congratulations to all of our hard working NMHS music students!

Learning About Curriculum

NMPS is providing parents opportunities to learn more about the curriculum instruction their child is receiving. Assistant Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo says, "This year we structured our parent nights to be very different than in the past. We are working to create opportunities for parents to engage in the learning that children take part in daily, by helping parents understand the curriculum and instruction in their child's classrooms. By crafting parent engagement opportunities focused on learning, it is our hope that parents will feel empowered to help their child at home and to feel comfortable reaching out to their child's teacher about supports and enrichment opportunities." To that end, the district offered several opportunities for parents:

K-2 Family Math and Literacy Curriculum Night

On November 21, 2019, the Math and Literacy Coaches from the K-2 schools hosted a Math and Literacy Curriculum Night. During the evening, each coach provided an in-depth look at the K-2 math and literacy curriculum.

The K-2 Math Coach, Carrie Allen, highlighted the major standards of each grade for the parents, allowing them to see the build from one grade level to the next. This was supported by Graham Fletcher's progression video on Addition and Subtraction, giving the parents an

understanding of what each grade needs to learn in order for the students to be ready to learn the next step. The parents learned how the teachers are building a conceptual understanding of math along the way. In addition, Mrs. Allen introduced an app, Bedtime Math, that students can use at home with their parents to facilitate Math discussions. Lastly, Mrs. Allen urged parents to PLAY games with their kids as often as possible to help students use math concepts. She created a Holiday Gift Guide, inspired by Kent Haines Games for Young Minds, that gave the parents ideas of games to play. Along with this, Mrs. Allen explained the math associated with each game and questions to ask the children while playing.



The K-2 Literacy Coach, Kate DeBarber, reviewed the district's K-2 reading, writing, and phonics curriculum. This review included a close look at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Units of Study in reading, writing, and phonics. Ms. DeBarber also covered the progression of literacy skills across grades K-2, providing examples of student work and characteristics of books at particular levels.

The event was attended by several parents who left with a clearer picture of what students experience daily in the classroom. The K-2 coaches hope to continue to host events that include sharing the work of the district with families.

Parents Explore SMS ELA and Social Studies Curriculum

Over the course of three separate nights, one for each grade level, parents at Schaghticoke Middle School were invited to work with the Humanities Instructional Coach, Betsy Stewart, to dive deeply into the English Language Arts and Social Studies Curriculums. Parents and guardians of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students were led through a series of activities that focused on understanding the major works of the grade level and accompanying texts, and most importantly, how to support their child with extended learning opportunities outside of school hours at home.

During one of the activities, parents were given the opportunity to look at the universal screeners used by the district, as well as data gathered within the classroom through various assessments. By looking at the data, parents were able to gain a better understanding of how the data we collect is used to drive the instruction of the teacher, meaning how the teacher uses that data to create individual supports and extensions for students.



At the end of the evening, parents were afforded the opportunity to view all the different units of study and get a glimpse of the overall structure of the Literacy and Social Studies classes. Parents were able to ask questions and have an experience like that of their child by taking part in a lesson. The premise of the night was to give the community a glimpse into a "day in the life," of a middle school student and to develop a better understanding of what questions they can ask teachers to support all learners.

Family Learning with Adult Education

New Milford Adult Education has offered several wonderful nights of learning, reading, and family fun this fall with three themed events: Fall, Thanksgiving and Dinosaurs. Families had the opportunity to participate in crafts, interactive learning games and reading opportunities for students in grades PK-1 and their families. Each activity or game could be played quickly, giving students the opportunity to try their skills at many different learning games. Parents also enjoyed taking away ideas to help their children at home. In addition, at the end of the night each family left with an activity, book or game to use.



Adult Education Facilitator Christy Martin says, “Parents play a big part in helping their children learn. They are their children’s first and most important teachers. Spending time together doing fun learning activities as a family reinforces skills, strengthens bonds and allows a comfortable atmosphere for children to try new things.”

“In the Adult Education program, we are always looking for ways to achieve learning in multiple ways. In this case, our high school students got a glimpse of the early childhood education pathway as they helped put together some of the games and observed our Dino night in action.

In return, our families got to enjoy several fun educational evenings and learn some new ways to extend the learning at home.”



Adult Education strives to provide low cost/no cost events such as these to benefit the community. Grants, as well as funds obtained from enrichment class fees, help make this possible.

Look for more fun coming soon in the Adult Education Winter/Spring brochure that will be available in January and online at www.newmilford.coursestorm.com.



Student Creations Enhance Learning

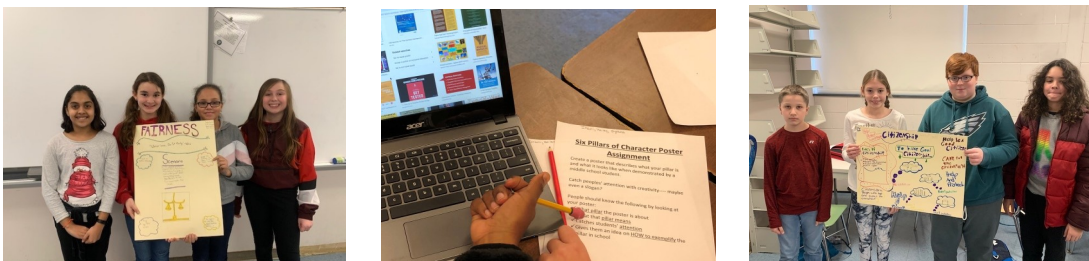
Who doesn't like a good board game, especially when it complements a good book? SNIS students in Ms. Da Ros' grade 5 classroom recently combined both for their book club unit. "Book clubs are awesome," says Ms. Da Ros. "Who doesn't love meeting up with fellow bookworms and discussing the written word? In fifth grade, we do book clubs throughout the year. Students love the social aspect, but it also pushes them out of their comfort zone and introduces them to a variety of genres."

During book clubs, students complete their reading independently, at home. While they're reading, they create "Notice and Notes" which are signposts that have key reading concepts attached to them. This helps create attentive readers who look closely at a text, interpret it and reflect on what it means to them. During class time, students discuss the notes that they've made with their groups.



To end this unit, Ms. Da Ros' students created board games using their notes about the book. They created a game path and illustrated the game board with scenes from their books. Then, they used their notes to create playing cards for their game. After the work was complete, it was time to play the student-created, challenging and fun games.

Not to be outdone, a group of SMS students turned their creativity to poster design. Miss Holden's Grade 6 Health classes have been learning about the Six Pillars of Character. The six pillars are: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. Students worked in groups to design posters based on one of the pillars.



"This project is a way for middle school students to conduct an in-depth study of the pillars in order to learn how to exemplify the traits represented by the acronym T.R.R.F.C.C. – pronounced Terrific!" says Miss Holden. The posters' display at SMS will help spread information on how to create a positive school climate and spread kindness throughout the school.



Congratulations to the New Milford Public School "Stars" for the month of December!



Kristan Giroux



Sarah Herring



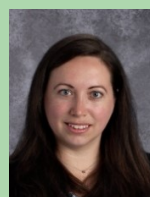
Chuck Lynch



Carolin Preusse



Tracy Robidoux



Kristen Stolle

Thanks to **Ingersoll Auto of Danbury** for their donation of the NMPS courtesy car.
Don't forget to visit the district website to [submit your staff nomination](#).

New Milford Board of Education Holds Annual Meeting



The NMBOE held its annual meeting on December 19, 2019. The Board welcomed new members Pete Helmus, Cynthia Nabozny and Olga I. Rella. The election of officers took place with Angela C. Chastain elected Chairperson, Joseph Failla elected Vice Chairperson, Wendy Faulenbach elected Secretary, and Eileen P. Monaghan elected Assistant Secretary (officers pictured above).

NMHS Athletic Program Receives Michaels Achievement Cup Award



The NMHS Athletic Program has been selected by the CIAC (Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference) to receive the Michaels Achievement Cup. The award recognizes the achievements of, and work done, in the Athletic Program to foster good sportsmanship during the 2018-2019 academic year. This is the second time that New Milford has been selected for this award since its inception in the early 1980s.

In 2016, the *Class Act School* program was launched at the CIAC's Annual Sportsmanship Conference. The program is designed to empower schools, and more specifically students, to enhance sportsmanship. Since then, the NMHS Athletic Department, in collaboration with the NMHS Athletic Council, has implemented many new ideas to help foster an athletic environment of sportsmanship and positive fan behavior. Some of these ideas have included pregame sportsmanship announcements, a sportsmanship video created by the students, and a Student Spectator Code of Conduct Pledge that all student spectators must agree to prior to attending a NMHS athletic event. These initiatives have helped create a positive culture and climate at NMHS athletic events. New Milford was honored at the CIAC Sportsmanship Conference at the Aqua Turf in Southington on November 21st.



NMHS Math Teacher Wins Statewide Award



NMHS Mathematics teacher Linda Cervone has won a statewide mathematics educator award, the Albina Cannavaciolo award, from the Associated Teachers of Mathematics in Connecticut (A.T.O.M.I.C.). This is a prestigious award given annually to a recipient who demonstrates the following characteristics: working as a mentor to both students and teachers; working to improve the mathematics community; consistently helping build numerical fluency, problem solving, creativity, reasoning, perseverance, and love for mathematics for the students in their classroom; and working collaboratively with other educators to improve mathematical skills and concepts for their own students as well as students in their building, district, or other organizations.

NMHS Assistant Principal Kevin Best, who was the Mathematics Department Chair for three years previously, says "Linda is the 'go to' person for the department for fresh ideas on activities and projects as well as student centered lessons." Linda received her award at the A.T.O.M.I.C. Annual Conference on December 9, 2019.



TRANSITION 101 WORKSHOP
For Parents of Special Needs Students
January 15th (snow date 1/22/20)
TIME: 6:00 – 7:30 PM

What Parents/Guardians Need To Know About High School Transition Planning & Services...

Transition – Moving from High School to Post-School Options

Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library
(25 Sunny Valley Rd, New Milford)

Please join us if your son or daughter attends middle or high school or a transition program. It is never TOO early to start planning!!!

- Parents and other family members are vital participants in the transition planning process- You provide a unique perspective on your student's needs
- The goal of this presentation is to inform all parents or interested parties and students of the IDEA regulations specific to IEPs and transition services at the secondary level.
- In addition we will discuss ways to make this transition into career/employment, postsecondary education/training, and/or independent living smoother and less stressful.

Sponsored by **Litchfield Hills Transition Center**

Admission is **FREE!** Light refreshments will be provided.

Questions/RSVP? Call Ashley Albanese or Roxanne Kraft 860-210-2222

Email: albanesea@newmilfordps.org or kraft@newmilfordps.org





New Milford Public Schools

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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

Mr. Brandon Rush
Technology Director

Mrs. Sandra Sullivan
Food Services Director

Board of Education

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Chairperson

Mr. Joseph Failla
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Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan
Assistant Secretary

Mr. Pete Helmus

Mr. Brian McCauley

Mrs. Tammy McInerney

Mrs. Cynthia Nabozny

Mrs. Olga I. Rella

Budget Planning



With the new year on our doorstep, planning is underway regarding the 2020-21 Board of Education budget. This is a long process that begins almost as soon as the school year starts, as Superintendent Parker and the administrative leadership team evaluate current programs and look ahead to future needs.

The Board of Education will hold formal budget hearings on:

Tuesday, January 21, 2020 with

Discussion of the 2020-21 School Budget including, but not limited to, PK—Grade 5

Wednesday, January 22, 2020 with

Discussion of the 2020-21 School Budget including, but not limited to, Grades 6—12

Tuesday, January 28, 2020 with

Discussion of the 2020-21 School Budget including, but not limited to, District-wide

Wednesday, January 29, 2020 with

Discussion of the 2020-21 School Budget including, but not limited to, wrap-up issues and questions AND a vote on adoption

All budget hearings are [live streamed](#) and [recorded](#). Budget documents are added to the [district website](#) following the hearings.

There is an opportunity for the public to be heard each evening. If you are not able to be present in person, you can still offer thoughts or ask questions by emailing BOE@newmilfordps.org.

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.

December 2019