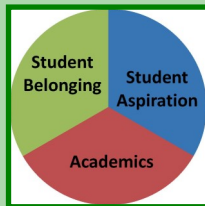




New Milford Public Schools
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New Milford High School
860-350-6647

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 4

October 2019



NES C.A.R.E.s!

NMPS Superintendent Dr. Kerry Parker joined NES students and staff to kick off October at their second C.A.R.E. assembly of the year. NES Assistant Principal Cathy Calabrese started off the assembly reviewing the meaning behind the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program acronym:



C=Cooperate: means to work together,
A=Act responsibly: means to do the right thing,
R=Respect: means to treat all with kindness,
E=Encourage: means to give support to others.

Principal Gwen Gallagher then shared a video illustrating for students how to calm down when they are upset, reiterating the importance of belly breathing as a technique. School counselor Lisa Tarsa showed how to use a "calm down" jar and invited students to make one with their families. The group then watched videos created by Mrs. Knowlen's Kindergarten class and Mrs. Shaw's Grade 1 class that reinforce cafeteria expectations. Students illustrated C.A.R.E. behaviors such as: entering the cafeteria walking quietly, sitting three students to a bench, making the quiet sign when the lights are turned off, remembering to get all your utensils so you don't have to get up once you begin eating lunch, and keeping hands to yourself.



Reading interventionist Meredith Jaskolka delivered the news that overall the students surpassed filling the C.A.R.E. Coin Jar, which is filled when students follow school wide expectations, because of September's amazing behavior. As a result, NES was treated to a whole school reward on October 2nd - a dance hallway!

NES's main hall in front of the office played tunes continuously all day. Teachers and students took the long way to any destination in the school just to dance in the sectioned off hallway.

The assembly ended with "Shout Outs" to teachers. Grade 1 teacher Randi Gray's name was drawn and she was awarded a special t-shirt.

The assembly provides a wonderful example of the school's motto "NES makes every day count!"

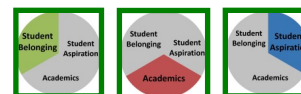


A Sure Sign of Fall

The 7th annual Maureen Haas Elementary School Cross Country Meet took place on October 19th. District Physical Education teachers, with sponsorship by the Hill and Plain PTO in conjunction with local businesses and volunteers, hosted the meet for interested students in Preschool through Grade 5. Both the SMS and NMHS cross country teams were among the volunteers, acting as pacing guides for the younger participants.

The event is named in honor of a former paraeducator at Hill and Plain Elementary School who promoted the importance of exercise and healthy choices on a daily basis within the school. A total of 325 students enjoyed the beautiful fall morning run with friends and family on hand to cheer them on!





A Busy Fall Season at NMHS

The fall months are some of the busiest at New Milford High School as students settle into academics, activities and special events. If you want to keep up to date, make sure to check out the monthly New Milford High School News Blast. Sent to all high school parents and students, it is also available on the high school website [here](#). Even if you don't have a current high school student, it is interesting reading as evidenced by the happenings detailed in the October issue.

One of the most anticipated events for NMHS students each fall is the annual Spirit Week, sponsored by the Student Council. This year was no exception, starting with the Marching Band and Color Guard's Home Show on September 21 and ending with the Homecoming Dance on September 28. In between, there were home games for the many athletic teams and themed days to add to the fun. Click [here](#) to view a short Pep Rally video.

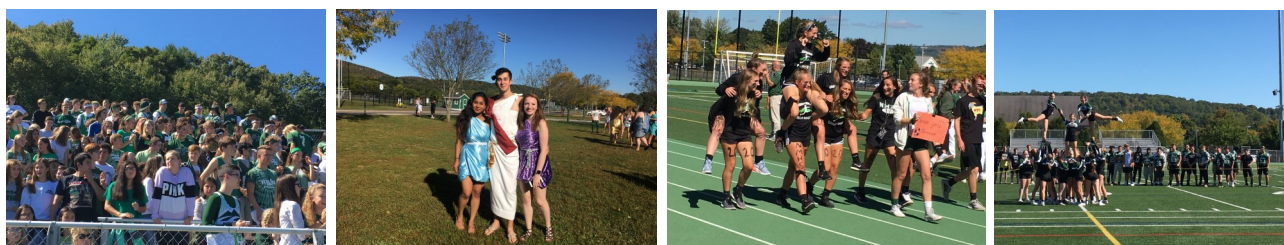


Academic planning takes center stage in the fall as well. On September 13, seniors attended their Senior Seminar during Advisory. Offered by the School Counseling Department, the presentation kicked off the first of the College & Career Planning sequence of programs created to assist NMHS seniors in their transition from high school into the post-secondary option of their choice. If you'd like to see what they talked about, click [here](#) to view the Senior Seminar presentation. This event was followed in October by Senior Planning and College Financial Aid nights.



Fall also has the Career Center bursting with college visit opportunities for students, as representatives from more than 80 colleges share information about their school's programs. In addition, seniors can take advantage of senior workshops that are offered every A-day during Advisory for help with the college and career search, or ask for help from Literary Volunteers regarding writing the college essay.

Finally, keeping in mind that academics are just one part of the high school experience, students also take time in the fall to settle into clubs and activities for the year. Curious to know what choices students have this year? Click [here](#) to see a list of 2019-20 offerings.





NMHS Choruses Host Cabaret Night

The NMHS Regular and Advanced Choruses held their Inaugural Cabaret Night on October 4th. It was a hugely successful night, featuring the singing talents of many chorus members. The audience enjoyed desserts while the students performed Broadway songs. The proceeds from the funds raised will go towards a trip to Boston in May 2020. Wonderful job by all involved in the show, both singers and volunteers assisting!



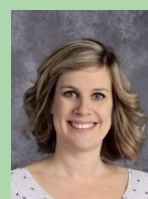
Congratulations to the New Milford Public School "Stars" for the month of October!



Fran Babbino



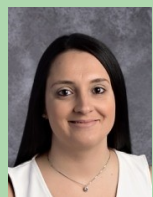
Terri Cooper



Melissa Nihan



Gabrielle Passarelli



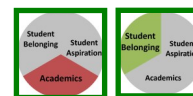
Jennifer Saraiva



Kelly Tait

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](#).

Welcoming Students to the NMHS LLC



This fall, NMHS Library Media Specialist Lorri Cerra welcomed students to the school's Library Learning Commons (LLC) in a variety of ways. All freshmen students took part in a scavenger hunt designed to help orient them to the library's features. New Milford Public Library staff visited to offer library cards to all students, which were printed on-site.

Students have the opportunity to participate in themed weeks, if they sign up to come to the LLC during their study hall. Mrs. Cerra says, "My motivation behind the themed weeks is based on the idea of a makerspace. A makerspace is an area in the LLC where students can design, create or collaborate. Some of our most popular weeks so far have been fall craft week, Lego week, and game week. During one of our mindfulness weeks, students learned techniques to help them cope when feeling anxious or overwhelmed by practicing a controlled breathing exercise. Afterwards, we reflected on the process and when the controlled breathing would be most beneficial. Students also created mindfulness bottles which can be used as a calming tool."



To see a summary of what's been offered in the LLC so far this year, [click here](#).

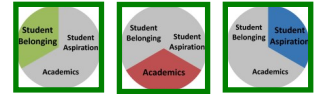


SMS Supports Library Card Signup

With the start of school, SMS welcomed Young Adult Services Librarian Amy Berkun from the New Milford Public Library for an on-site recruitment drive. SMS Library Media Specialist Susan Baerny added her encouragement by emphasizing the library's digital collection, reminding students they can access it from anywhere. Applications may be returned throughout the year.



Reviewing District Assessments and Survey Data



The Board of Education held a workshop on October 15, prior to its regular meeting, to review information on district assessments and survey data.

Superintendent Kerry Parker and Assistant Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo presented the assessment results and various survey data in the context of a SWOT analysis, examining Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to district achievement. In addition to the annual data review, they considered the Leadership Profile Report developed during the superintendent hiring process, focus group data around NEASC standards from last spring, and the Superintendent's Survey offered this summer. As Dr. Parker said, "Data only tells one part of the story. The survey information adds an additional layer."



Information from the Leadership Profile Report was reviewed first. Identified Strengths include a supportive community, dedicated teachers and administrators, strong student bonds with teachers, strong special education and gifted and talented programs along with quality music and art programs, and safe school practices. Weaknesses identified include the lack of a clear vision, administrative and teacher turnover, lack of continuity among schools, technology issues or lagging, facilities needing attention and lack of communication. In light of Opportunities presented, the district may look to its vision for the future, increased partnerships with the community, establishing a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel, supporting students "in the middle" and focusing on best practices and strategies. Identified Threats or barriers to achieving goals are underfunding and skepticism about the budget, low ranking of per pupil expenditure, non-competitive wages and teacher retention, lack of state funding, declining student population, and some perceived inconsistencies.

Ms. DiCorpo continued the presentation with information from staff focus groups who met in the spring. These groups included representatives from all grade levels. Participants worked with the NEASC standards, in conjunction with identified foundational elements, to examine how well we are doing in those areas, and what areas need improvement.

Dr. Parker talked about the Superintendent's Survey results, which strongly echoed strengths identified in the Leadership Profile. "Very clearly, teachers and administrators are appreciated for their dedication. Parents are involved and the PTO is supportive. Strong special education, talented and gifted, music and arts programs continue to be highlights. Respondents appreciated the number of sports, clubs and activities offered to students."

Dr. Parker and Ms. DiCorpo then asked Board members to participate in an exercise where

pairs identified top items in each of the SWOT areas. Regarding strengths, Board members prioritized safe schools; strong support of parent groups and community involvement; students knowing administrators well; and the strong special education, talented and gifted, music and arts programs, as well as sports programs and facilities. They feel the diversity of programs shows the district is all-inclusive.

In the area of weaknesses, Board members identified the need for a strategic plan; technology infrastructure improvements and the professional development to use it; the need for a curriculum coordinator K-12 to assist from the ground up; educating the community about budget; and opportunities for engagement. Areas that offer opportunities were identified as aligning K-2 schools; community relations; additional mental health support; and support for the “middle” student in the classroom. Threats or barriers to growth were identified as inconsistent state funding; teacher retention and morale; the relationship between the BOE and Town Council; and middle school issues.

Ms. DiCorpo said the data and feedback will be used to inform district planning and the global community vision of the graduate going forward. This will then be used to advance professional learning to support students K-12 in preparation for college and career readiness.

To view the workshop presentation for October 15th, [click here](#). Board of Education workshops and monthly meetings are also live streamed and may be [viewed online here](#).

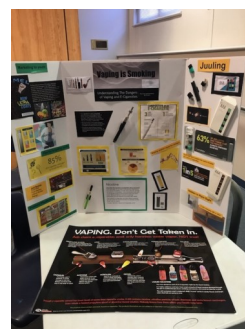
Staff Professional Development Highlights Vaping Education



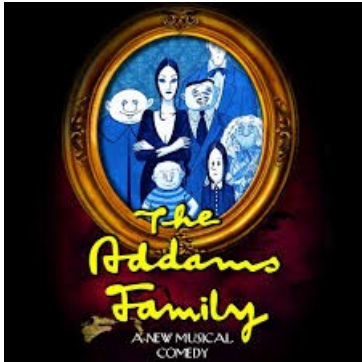
This October, SMS and NMHS staff heard a presentation from Mrs. Kathy Hanley, Behavioral Health Director from the Western Connecticut Coalition, regarding the dangers of vaping and e-cigarettes for youth. The presentation included information on various types of delivery systems, the effects of nicotine and harmful ingredients found in liquids, and trends in use by today's youth. Staff members had the opportunity to see examples of vape devices such as the Juul and see samples of various types of delivery systems.

Mrs. Hanley also shared a summary of federal and CT law on the topic; information related to retailer registration; and advertising/marketing strategies of these products, in an effort to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of this epidemic. She talked about ways that schools are educating students, in addition to associated school policies put into effect to address the issue, and concluded with ideas of how parents can talk to their children about vaping/substance use.

To see a list of Vaping Prevention Resources and links, click [here](#).



The 2020 All School Musical Presents...



**First informational meeting
for interested students:
October 31, Halloween.
How appropriate...**

**Mark your calendar for
performances this spring:
March 20, 21, 22, 27, 28**



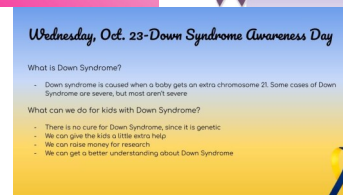
SMS Student Council Hosts Awareness Week at SMS



This year, the SMS Student Council is off and running with its work to add to the positive culture of the school. The Council, made up of students in all grades 6-8, has decided that they would like to highlight awareness for various topics during one week each month. The topics picked are chosen by the members of Student Council based on what they believe will best serve most of the school. SMS Student Council advisors Mrs. Hicks, Mrs. Marsan and Mrs. Nevins, believe

strongly in allowing the students to structure their activities and how their work touches the members of the SMS Family.

For the month of October, the causes the students chose to highlight were: Liver Cancer, Breast Cancer, Downs Syndrome Awareness, and Domestic Violence. The students created a slide show to help spread the word, along with some information about each cause. Staff and students were encouraged to wear different colored clothing on the featured day to coordinate with each cause's ribbon color. As a service project, the students will also be creating tasty desserts monthly to be donated to Loaves and Fishes. Go SURGE!!!





New Milford Public Schools

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Dr. Kerry Parker
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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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

National Dictionary Day

Information courtesy of <https://blog.edgenuity.com/dont-forget-to-wish-someone-a-happy-national-dictionary-day-today/>:

National Dictionary Day is celebrated every year on October 16, the birthday of Noah Webster. Born in West Hartford, Connecticut, Webster wrote the first American dictionary, an undertaking that took him more than twenty years to complete. When he finished the *American Dictionary of the English Language* at age 70, it defined more than 65,000 words.

Webster is remarkable for more than just his dictionary. He was a huge advocate of improving the quality of education for school-age children and is responsible for developing what became commonly known as the “Blue-Backed Speller,” which was among the first American school texts and one of the most successful books of its time. It was used to teach children how to read, spell, and pronounce words for more than one hundred years. There are many ways to recognize Webster’s contribution. Here are a few ideas:

- Learn a new word. [Use a dictionary](#) to look up a word you’ve never used before and learn its definition. Then try using it in conversation. Better yet, teach your new word to someone else.
- Play a word game with friends or family. There are hundreds of great word and dictionary games out there that you can play in person or online.
- Write a rhyme, a poem, or a story. If you’ve already learned a new word, try to include it in your creative writing project.
- Look up the [etymology](#) of your favorite words. There’s a story behind every word we use today. Many words have evolved to have completely different spellings, pronunciations, or uses from what they had when they first came into use. You can visit the [Online Etymology Dictionary](#) to learn more.

[Webster’s 1828 Dictionary](#) is available online. Try entering a few words to see if the 1828 definition still rings true.

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 16th