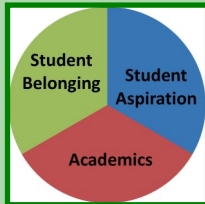




New Milford Public Schools
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New Milford High School

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

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Mrs. Gwen Gallagher, Principal
Mrs. Catherine Calabrese, Asst. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

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NMHS Teacher Steve Donahue Named Teacher of the Year



NMHS Math teacher Steve Donahue has been named New Milford Public Schools Teacher of the Year for 2019-20. Mr. Donahue has taught at NMHS since 2001. He is a graduate of Western CT State University where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a focus in Math, and his Masters degree in Educational Technology. Here's more about Mr. Donahue, in his own words.

"Teaching is my second career. I did not start college until the age of 35. I did not start teaching until the age of 40. I actually found that I had a gift for teaching through my son and daughter. As they became old enough to be involved with sports and scouting and clubs, I became involved as a volunteer coach and leader. I found that I related well to high school age students and I had some skills I wanted to impart to them. In my first career as a self-employed carpenter, I had the opportunity to hire some teenage students for summer work. I was surprised to find that even though they had an understanding of higher math concepts, they often did not have a good handle on how to apply math to the real world. It was almost like learning math and applying math were two totally different things. Something as easy to me as reading a ruler or calculating angles was beyond them outside the classroom. They truly never understood the answer to their question 'When will we ever use this stuff?'. I decided at that point to pursue becoming a math teacher and to include as part of all of my lessons the real world applications of whatever concept we were studying. I wanted to work with the students to create a bridge to span the void between memorizing facts and applying those facts to problem solving and real world applications. I found that my twenty years of work before becoming a teacher gave me a huge collection of experiences I could draw on to connect higher level math concepts with work situations that actually presented an opportunity to use those concepts.

The greatest contribution that I have made in my teaching career is that I have taught a generation of students to be thinking problem solvers. Math is pretty much using a set of rules and formulas to solve problems. Every word problem I have ever taught in class starts out

with the same set of questions: What am I being asked? What do I already know? How does this resemble other problems I have been faced with? What I focus on with the students is that these questions can be applied to any problem or decision that they will ever have to deal with. I like to put it in the context of weather forecasting. Every time you read the weather, it is based on analyzing the result of what happened when these conditions occurred before. You use the data you have to plan an approach and execute it using the tools you have learned.

My personal teaching style is to have as much of the learning be as self directed as possible. This is not always easy in math because of the fact that we have to learn the rules that surround each chapter we cover, but at some point in every chapter lessons like this occur. The students call it the 'Donahue-it-yourself' section of the chapter. It always involves having students dive deeper into the application aspects of the material. By the time the students get through my class, they understand that there will be times where I purposefully challenge them with tough problems. I do not believe that I am doing my job if I am not giving the students hard problems to work through. When they leave me and go off to college or the work force, I don't want any of my students coming back and telling me that they were not prepared to work through tough problems."

In addition to teaching Algebra 2, Honors Calculus, and AP Calculus, Mr. Donahue is also co-advisor to the high school's Gay Straight Alliance Club. "While I am involved in a lot of our school's community life, this club seems to be the best fit for something that has impact on the school's culture," says Mr. Donahue. "High school can be a tricky time for many students, especially if they feel that they do not fit in with the rest of the school population. Our club is thriving with approximately fifty active members. In the last couple of years, there have been more students that have joined not because they are LGBTQ, but because they respect the rights of those who are."

During his years at New Milford High School, Mr. Donahue has managed NMHS' theater, producing the school musicals for the past eighteen years, and he has also coached baseball and softball. "While these jobs do not directly connect my students with the community, they do all show how education transcends the classroom. Our musicals in particular have always been a big community event. Frequently there have been close to 200 students and parents involved in the process each year. The idea of being involved in something this big and technical provides the students with an immense feeling of belonging and accomplishment. I have been told by students and parents alike that being involved with the musicals has changed their lives."

In closing, Mr. Donahue says, "I do not think I am anything special. I see a lot of really good teachers every day that are just as deserving of this honor. I work hard and take my responsibility very seriously. I am one of the lucky people in this world that has found a job that I love doing. Students ask me pretty regularly what is the most important part about being a teacher. I think I surprise them when I tell them it isn't about mastering the subject matter, but being able to relate to and enjoy the students. If you love what you teach, and love the students you teach, great learning occurs all on its own."

Summer Math Success!

NMPS math coaches Cortni Muir and Carrie Allen are pleased to report on the success of the inaugural Summer Math Passport program. Mrs. Muir says, “The passport program had students visit fourteen local businesses to gather information and then solve real world math problems based on the businesses. The goal was to be a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family, and community working together. Once students completed the problem, the business would stamp their passport as confirmation.” Students were asked to collect at least ten stamps from the businesses; if they did, they would receive a certificate of completion. Students who completed all fourteen stamps would get a certificate and be recognized through social media and other media outlets. Parents and students were able to share their math journey on social media using the hashtag #nmsummermath.

Was the program a success? At Northville and Hill and Plain Elementary Schools, 135 students participated and, of that, 74 completed all fourteen stamps. At Sarah Noble Intermediate School, 215 students participated in the passport program and, of that, 126 completed all fourteen stamps. “We are so pleased with the student response for the first year of this program and look forward to building on it next year,” says Mrs. Allen.



A big thank you to all of the businesses that participated in this fun math opportunity for our students: Hobby Town USA, Village Center for the Arts, Bank Street Book Nook, All Aboard Pizza, Bank Street Theater, Nordica Toys, Webster Bank, Northville Market, H.H. Taylor and Sons, Pratt Center, Nutmeg Olive Oil Company, New Milford Post Office, Dolr Bill'z Bowling, and the Mayor's Office.



SMS Welcomes New Assistant Principal



Mrs. Sasha Salem has been named Assistant Principal at Schaghticoke Middle School. Mrs. Salem comes to New Milford from Henry Abbott Technical High School where she has been the Related Education Department Head for the areas of mathematics, science, computer technology and arts since 2015. From 2012 to 2015, Mrs. Salem served as the Program Coordinator for the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act for the Danbury Public Schools, working with candidates in areas of education and vocational training. She had previously worked as an instructor for Danbury's Adult Education Program and as a Biology teacher for the Naugatuck Public Schools.

Mrs. Salem earned her BA in Biology from WCSU, and a Master of Science degree in Education from the University of New Haven. She has completed her 092 administrative certification and is finishing her 6th year certification in the Educational Leadership program at Sacred Heart University.

CT Grown for CT Kids Week

The Food and Nutrition Services Department will be celebrating CT Grown for CT Kids Week in all of the New Milford cafeterias the week of Oct. 7th - 11th. This event is celebrated annually as part of National Farm to School Month and features Connecticut grown and manufactured items.

The department's farm fresh salads will be made with lettuce from Earth's Palate Farm in Warren, cucumbers from Tara Farm in Watertown, and carrots from Ridgeway Farm in Cornwall.

Roger's Orchards of Southington will be providing all schools with a variety of pears, apples and fresh apple cider. Kimberly Farm from right here in New Milford will be supplying butternut squash which will be served roasted.



Connecticut manufactured items featured on the menu will be all natural organic Pan De Oro tortilla chips made in Hartford, Ardmore juice from Ellington, and Arethusa maple or vanilla yogurt out of Litchfield. All schools will be serving great tasting Yosi hummus from Windsor. Middle and high school students will have all beef Hummel Brothers Hotdogs out of New Haven on their menus as well.

The cafeteria staff is looking forward to serving all students and staff these wonderful Connecticut products.



Please join us in welcoming our new NMPS staff members.

Mrs. Mary Abrantes

Science teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Abrantes has a BA in Animal Science from UConn and an MA in Education from Mercy College. Prior to joining the New Milford Public Schools, she taught in New York State and in Bethel and Darien schools.



Ms. Junara Back

Food Services, Schaghticoke Middle School

Ms. Back has joined the Food Services staff servicing the Schaghticoke Middle School cafeteria. She previously worked as an assistant manager for a fast food establishment and in shipping services.

Ms. Nicole Biele

Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School

Ms. Biele is a recent graduate who student taught at NMHS. She earned her BS in Math from ECSU and her MS in Secondary Education-Math from the University of Bridgeport.



Ms. Jobi Bieluch

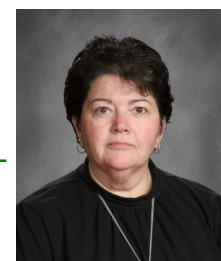
Nurse, New Milford High School

Ms. Bieluch worked at a hospital in Florida before relocating to Connecticut. She has a BS in Psychology from the State University of Florida and a BSN from Rasmussen College where she majored in Nursing.

Mrs. Colleen Boland

Art teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Boland previously worked as a paraeducator and secretary for New Milford schools. She received her BA in Art Education from SCSU and has since worked as an Art teacher in the Bridgeport and Torrington schools.





Mrs. April Breidster

Grade 2 teacher, Northville Elementary School

Mrs. Breidster earned her BS in Elementary Education from SUNY-Plattsburgh and her MS in Reading from WCSU. She has taught for fifteen years in New York State.

Mrs. Kathleen Carlo

Paraeducator, Sarah Noble Intermediate School

Mrs. Carlo joins the Sarah Noble Intermediate School staff as a paraeducator. She previously worked as an elementary school special education paraprofessional in the Greenwich schools.



Mrs. Stephanie Carlson

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) teacher, Sarah Noble Intermediate School/Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Carlson has a BA from Elon University in Foreign Languages and a BA and MA from Fairfield University with a TESOL major. She has taught in Redding schools and in schools in Massachusetts.

Mrs. Kaitlyn Cirella

English teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Cirella has worked previously as a long term substitute at SMS. She attended ECSU, where she received her BA in English/Sociology and MS in Secondary Education.



Mrs. Nicole Doyle

Grade 5 teacher, Sarah Noble Intermediate School

Mrs. Doyle earned her BA in Communication Sciences/Human Development and Family Studies from UConn and her MS in Elementary Education from the University of Bridgeport. She previously worked for the Trumbull schools.

Ms. Shari Duffy

Paraeducator, New Milford High School

Ms. Duffy joins the New Milford High School staff as a paraeducator. She worked previously in Danbury and Bethel in the various roles of administrative assistant, accounting assistant and employment specialist.





Mrs. Maria Fernandes Lopes

Science teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Fernandes Lopes received her BS and MS in Physics and Chemistry from the University of Lisbon in Portugal. She taught for fourteen years in Portugal before coming to the United States. Most recently, she taught in the Ansonia schools.

Mr. Ryan Fitzsimmons

Mathematics teacher and Math Department Chair, New Milford High School

Mr. Fitzsimmons is returning to New Milford, where he previously taught Math for twelve years. He will also serve as NMHS' Math Department Chair. His educational background includes a BA in Math and MS in Elementary Education from SCSU.



Mr. Mason Flynn

Health teacher, New Milford High School

Mr. Flynn is a recent graduate of WCSU where he received his BS in Health Education. He did his student teaching at NMHS and has been a substitute for the district.

Mr. Nicholas Groccia

Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School

Mr. Groccia is a recent graduate who interned at NMHS. He earned his BS in Math from ECSU and an MS in Secondary Education-Math from the University of Bridgeport.



Mrs. Kathleen Hamilton

Social Worker, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Hamilton majored in Social Work, receiving her BSW from the University of Wyoming and her MSW from the UConn School of Social Work. Previously, Mrs. Hamilton worked at Hope Academy and for New Britain schools.



Mrs. Melissa Healy

Special Education teacher, Northville Elementary School

Mrs. Healy received her BS in Behavioral Studies from the University of Hartford and her MS in Inclusion Education from the University of New England. She has previously worked for the State of CT, CREC and Faith Academy.

Ms. Stephanie Heaton

Paraeducator, Northville Elementary School

Ms. Heaton joins the Northville Elementary School staff as a paraeducator. She has been a substitute paraeducator for the New Milford schools previously and has worked as a special services associate for a retail organization.



Mr. Matthew Hirsch

Special Education teacher, New Milford High School

Mr. Hirsch earned his BA from Purdue University, majoring in Elementary and Special Education. He has worked as a long term substitute for New Milford schools, and for Newtown and Indiana schools.

Ms. Ashlee Honiker

Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School

Ms. Honiker is a recent graduate who student taught in Naugatuck schools. She attended UConn where she received her BA in Math and MS in Education and Curriculum Writing.



Mrs. Jaclyn Mattison

Special Education teacher, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Mrs. Mattison attended UConn where she received a BA in English, BS in Special Education and MA in Education. She has previously worked at Faith Academy and for Ashford schools.

Mrs. Patricia McLean

Food Services, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Mrs. McLean has joined the Food Services staff servicing the Hill and Plain Elementary School cafeteria. She has worked previously as a receptionist, file clerk and in marketing assistant positions.



Mrs. Adrienne Mitchell

Interventionist, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Mrs. Mitchell earned her BS in Elementary Education from the University of Hartford and her MS in Education from Walden University. She previously worked in the Bethel schools and as a tutor for New Milford schools.



Mr. Fernando Penaranda

Custodian, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Mr. Penaranda joins the Facilities Department as a custodian for Hill and Plain Elementary School. He has held positions in maintenance, as a cook, and long term substitute custodian for district offices.

Mrs. Agnes Quaintance

French teacher, New Milford High School/Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Quaintance participated in the Alternate Route to Certification for French certification. She previously taught in Region 14 and as a substitute for New Milford schools.



Ms. Rebekka Rosen

Music teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School

Ms. Rosen is a recent graduate from Susquehanna University where she received a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education. She did her student teaching in Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Linda Santoro

Enrichment teacher, Sarah Noble Intermediate School/Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Santoro's educational background includes a BS in Communications from Syracuse University, an MEd in Elementary Education from the University of Hartford, and 6th year certification in Educational Leadership from CCSU. She is an experienced educator, having taught in Vermont and in Colchester, Glastonbury and New Canaan in CT.





Mrs. Jillian Slater

Special Education teacher and Department Chair, Schaghticoke Middle School

Mrs. Slater taught in New Milford previously at John Pettibone School. She has also worked in Waterbury and Torrington schools and at the Wheeler Clinic and Intensive Education Academy. She earned her BS in Political Science from SCSU and her MS in Regular and Special Education from Mercy College.

Mrs. Kimberly Valzania

Secretary, Northville Elementary School

Mrs. Valzania joins the Northville Elementary School staff as secretary to the principal. Her previous work experiences include managing editor of a publishing company, administrative assistant in an area private school, and "client happiness director" for a local company.



Ms. Samantha VanSchaick

Psychologist, Sarah Noble Intermediate School/Schaghticoke Middle School

Ms. Van Schaick is a recent graduate who did her student teaching in New York State. She attended Iona College where she earned her BS in Psychology and MA in School Psychology.

Mrs. Samantha Young

Kindergarten teacher, Hill and Plain Elementary School

Mrs. Young earned her BA in Sociology and Anthropology from Fairfield University and her MS in Elementary Education from Sacred Heart University. She has previously taught in the Stratford schools.



Celebrating NMPS Staff



The NMPS Stars of the Month recognition program continues this year. Mr. Steve Donahue, our NMPS Teacher of the Year, is September's honoree. This is the fourth year for this program where parents, students and fellow staff members are invited to [complete a short online form](#) to nominate a NMPS staff member of your choice. You are welcome to make a nomination at any time and for as many deserving staff members as you wish. From all the forms submitted, six honorees will be selected each month, one from each school and one non-school specific honoree.

To see a listing of previous years' monthly winners, as well as past New Milford teacher of the year recipients, visit the [Staff Recognition page](#) of the district website.



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

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Mr. J.T. Schemm

National Self Improvement Month

September brings the return to school, and with it, all the enthusiasm and determination to make it a successful year. What better month then to be designated as National Self Improvement Month! If you are looking for ideas of where to begin, just enter "self improvement" in any search engine and take a deep breathe. Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

Get organized and make a plan.

Start by writing out your goals and forming a plan. If you hope to start eating more healthy or exercising regularly or to spend more time with friends or family, be sure to make time in your daily schedule.

Make use of the resources available to you.

Self-improvement takes work and we can use all the help we can find. A good start is our local library where we can check out helpful books, search the internet for articles or blogs with tips or find a community group that might have like interests.

Read more.

Speaking of reading, did you know reading is a form of meditation? When you're fully engrossed in a book, you're not worrying about anything else. Choose your reading material based on your mood and just enjoy.

Take time for self-reflection.

It's so easy to get caught up in the busy race of everyday life, that it's hard to slow down and focus on our priorities. Find a quiet moment to think carefully about where you are in life and where you want to be. Self-reflection reminds us what is most important.

Do what you love.

It's very important to set aside some free time for whatever it is you enjoy. Whether it's reading, exercising, playing board games with the kids, doing what you love will give you something to look forward to each day. In the end, it's those moments that will give you energy for the rest of what life has in store.



September 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.