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New Milford High School
 860-350-6647

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Mrs. Liz Curtis, Ass't. Principal
Ms. Linda Scoralick, Ass't. Principal
Mr. Eric Williams, Ass't. Principal



Schaghticoke Middle School
 860-354-2204

Dr. Len Tomasello, Principal
Mrs. Kerri Adakonis, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Ass't. Principal
Dr. Christopher Longo, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Ass't. Principal



Sarah Noble Intermediate School
 860-210-4020

Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal
Mrs. Emily Gervasio, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Ass't. Principal



Hill & Plain Elementary School
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Mrs. Paula Kelleher, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Ass't. Principal



Northville Elementary School
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Mr. Susan Murray, Principal
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Ass't. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

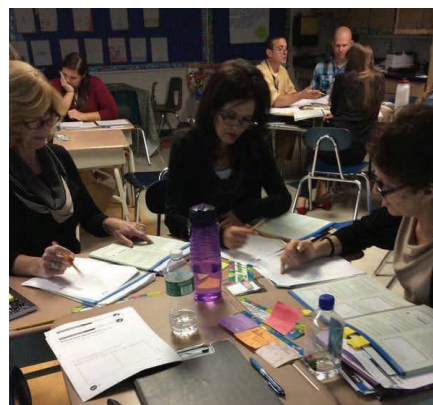
Volume 6, Issue 4

October 2015

Spotlight on Using Data to Improve Instruction

Many of you have probably heard the age old question of whether teaching is an art or a science. While the topic often leads to fascinating discussion, accomplished educators across the country will tell you that successful teaching requires both sides. Expert teaching is truly artistry - a context dependent blend of creativity – as well as data driven instruction. The science half of the equation is a significant piece of the whole and here in New Milford teachers, instructional coaches and administrators are using data as part of their arsenal to improve student achievement.

Deputy Superintendent Joshua Smith says, “The use of data takes many forms throughout the district, but the intent is always the same. How do we know our students are mastering the important content and skills they need to be successful? If they are not, where do they get stuck and if so, how do we help them and challenge them further?”

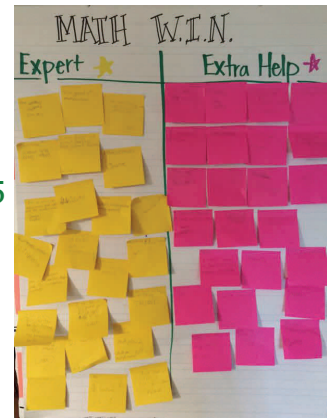


Over the past several years the district has reprioritized how we schedule the student day in order to increase instructional time and ensure that every teacher meets regularly as part of a Professional Learning Community (PLC). During PLC time, teachers often meet to review available data and instructional practices to help meet the learning needs of our students. District instructional coaches

are extremely helpful in this regard as they are tasked with compiling and analyzing student data into reports for the teachers' use. The teachers can then primarily focus their time on a review of the information collected in each of their classes to look for data trends in student learning, e.g. what is working, are there a few students who need extra support, or do they need to reteach any aspect of the unit. The goal is for students to master the concepts and to not just march through a curriculum. The student data helps teachers adjust instruction accordingly.

Examples of the type of work that happens during these meetings vary by group, but include review of data in the form of district performance on assessments and review of student work. Some examples of what is happening during these meetings are outlined below:

Teachers are using end-of-unit assessment questions from our Math programs to determine who needs more time with a concept, who needs to work on more efficient computation strategies, and who meets the purposes of the task. These students are then grouped in “WIN” groups based on this data. (WIN groups happen in grades K-5 and are designed as “What I Need” instructional time for students to receive more individualized instruction or enrichment on a specific skill or concept).



Deputy Superintendent Smith says, “In Language Arts the same concepts hold true, even if the type of student data looks different.

We use On-Demand Writing Challenge rubrics to monitor what students can do and assist teachers in developing the next steps in specific writing types (narrative, informational, opinion) and genres.” Teachers also use Milestone Performance Assessments. These quick checklists help to assess a student’s ability to use the strategies taught in reading and writing and to give teachers opportunities to notice and record data on standards-aligned indicators during the lesson set.

The variety of information collected about student learning helps teachers determine a student’s ability to demonstrate grade level mastery of content. These grade level standards are clearly communicated to parents through our K-5 report cards and the work students are doing helps to demonstrate their mastery of these standards.

At higher grades the same structures exist and a variety of information is utilized, ranging from district and state assessments to common content based rubrics. At the high school level midterms and finals are being standardized so that learning trends and gaps in content mastery can be identified.



In the end, no matter what form the teaching takes, the ultimate goal remains that the student learns. The use of data, while effective, is but one tool for the classroom teacher. As author Robert J. Marzano says in *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, “Educational research is not a blunt instrument that shatters all doubt about best practice. Rather it provides general direction that must be interpreted by individual districts, schools, and teachers in terms of their unique circumstances. In short, research will never be able to identify instructional strategies that work with every student in every class. The best research can do is tell us which strategies have a good chance (i.e., high probability) of working well with students. Individual classroom teachers must determine which strategies to employ with the right students at the right time.”

Mr. Joshua Smith Named Interim Superintendent of Schools



At a Special Meeting on Friday, October 23, 2015, the New Milford Board of Education appointed Mr. Joshua Smith as Interim Superintendent of Schools effective February 1, 2016. Mr. Smith will serve as Interim Superintendent Elect beginning December 1, 2015 in order to ensure a smooth transition.

Mr. Joshua Smith was named Assistant Superintendent of Schools in July 2012 and Deputy Superintendent in July 2015. Mr. Smith joined the New Milford Public Schools after serving as Director of Information and Technology in the Ridgefield Public Schools for five years. From 2000 to 2007, Mr. Smith worked for Area Cooperative Education Services and served in the following roles: Assistant Director of Professional Development and School Improvement, Coordinator of Educational Technology and Educational Technology Specialist. Mr. Smith was an eighth grade teacher of United States Government and Economics at Schaghticoke Middle School from 1997 to 2000.

Mr. Smith's educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with minors in History and Education from Southern Connecticut State University, a Master of Arts in Instructional Technology from Southern Connecticut State University, a Sixth Year Master's Degree in Educational Administration from the University of Bridgeport and completion of the Educational Leadership Cohort Program from the University of Connecticut. Mr. Smith holds the following certifications: Grades 7-12 Social Studies teacher, Educational Administration and Superintendent of Schools.

Mrs. Angela C. Chastain, Chairman of the Board of Education, stated, "Mr. Smith emerged as the best candidate for the position. He is well qualified for the interim assignment and is familiar with the new financial system, the capital improvement projects underway and the district's comprehensive instructional initiatives. He is the right person to lead the district through the end of the academic year."

NES' Plant Patch Keeps on Growing

Northville Elementary School students continued their love affair with gardening this year thanks to the efforts of volunteers who keep their school's Plant Patch thriving. Principal Susan Murray says "The parent volunteers are simply amazing. Many continue to support our garden even though their children no longer attend NES."



One volunteer, Mrs. Clare Runyan, recently provided an update on the garden's progress. "After a beautiful and successful spring planting with students, this was one tough summer, weather-wise. The intense heat and complete lack of water made for a challenging growing season at the garden. We volunteers and the school community are very grateful to the Northville Fire Department, who filled our barrels THREE times this year. Usually they only have to give us water once, early in the spring."

Mrs. Runyan says that potatoes, corn, beans, snap peas, and peppers all did relatively well, and the carrots were the most beautiful they've had in the garden so far. The tomatoes, while producing plenty of fruit, developed a disease in early July that inhibited their growth and development. Even the flowers were not as healthy as they have been in previous years. All in all, the struggling crops took a toll on the soil, sucking out all the nutrients. Garden volunteers are looking into donations/purchases of compost to replenish the soil, which has become like concrete in the drought, since healthy soils make for healthy crops.

Every NES class made it up to the Plant Patch for harvesting and science investigations:

- Kindergarteners were sensory scientists, using their five senses to explore. They tasted tomatoes (which they picked themselves) and peppers, smelled herbs, listened to birds and wind in the corn, and saw the beauty of the garden.
- First graders dissected sunflower heads and bean pods, and harvested tomatoes (for eating) and marigold seed heads (for seed saving next spring).
- Second graders harvested tomatoes, carrots, herbs, beans, and dug up potatoes...and many classes used their harvest to make a crockpot soup in the classroom.



Art teacher Mrs. Waldman worked with students to create bead poles that are now on display in the Patch. Every second and third grader created their own strand of beads, which were then gathered together into "bouquets", organized by classroom, and placed on poles in various parts of the garden. They are lovely and a fun addition to the space!

NES will be looking for volunteers to help weed, water, and maintain the Plant Patch next spring and summer. If interested, send an email to slimemold@earthlink.net

SNIS Third Graders Integrate Character Ed with Language Arts

Over the last eight to ten weeks, SNIS Grade 3 students in Mrs. Lawlor's class have been focused on "The Journey to Meaning" character unit in Language Arts.



Students first read a series of books in conjunction with their Language Arts unit. As part of the character unit, students were asked to think about themselves and their life experiences in relation to the characters in the books. With the help of Mrs. Lawlor, students identified major and minor traits in themselves before looking at the traits of the characters. Then they were asked to reflect on whether the characters in the books remind them of themselves as a reflective mirror or did they learn something new, like looking out a window? Mrs. Lawlor says, "After students developed a firm grasp on these new friends/characters in the books, they read deeper to decipher how characters change. Getting to know the characters well helps to understand their motivation and the reason why characters act the way they do." Mrs. Lawlor then had the students turn to inward reflection of their own character, asking them "Would I do the same thing?" At the end of the unit, students wrote summaries and book recommendations. They created their own bookstore display with reviews and opinions to help others choose books.

SNIS 4th Graders Practice Orienteering

All Sarah Noble Intermediate School 4th grade students recently participated in an orienteering program as an enhancement to their Social Studies curriculum. Orienteering is defined as an activity in which participants find their way to somewhere on foot as quickly as possible by using a map and a compass. Diane Swanson and Haley Nedderman of the Pratt Nature Center led an exploration of the SNIS grounds, teaching students the basics of a compass. Students learned how to find the cardinal and intermediate directions as well as how to set a specific



heading. Each class created their own map of the area using landmarks attributed to each direction. SNIS Grade 4 teacher Justin Mack says this annual program is a great addition to the curriculum. "Not only did students get outside and learn a practical skill but they also applied their math and writing skills when working with the degrees of a circle and crafting vivid descriptions of their landmarks; a great experience all around!"

Autumn in New Milford Public Schools brings with it several annual events, a few of which are pictured on the next few pages.



HPS Fall Festival



3rd Annual Maureen Haas PK-5
Cross Country Meet
(Mrs. Haas was a longtime paraprofessional at HPS who helped with morning announcements and always stressed good health and exercise to the students.)





A sampling of SMS fall athletics



NMHS Homecoming Week





New Milford Public Schools

50 East Street
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Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote
Superintendent

Mr. Joshua Smith
Deputy Superintendent

Ms. Ellamae Baldelli
Human Resources Director

Mr. Kevin Munrett
Facilities Manager

Mr. Jay Hubelbank
Fiscal Services & Operations
Director

Mrs. Laura Olson
Pupil Personnel & Special Services
Director

Ms. Roberta Pratt
Technology Director

Mrs. Sandra Sullivan
Food Services Director

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Chairperson

Mr. Dave Littlefield
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Mr. David A. Lawson
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Mr. David R. Shaffer

Mrs. Daniele Shook

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Mrs. Theresa Volinski



National Knock Knock Joke Day

National Knock Knock Joke day is observed annually on October 31.

A type of pun or play on words, the knock knock joke is a “call and answer” exercise in which there’s a person who tells the joke (the protagonist) and a person who plays along (the antagonist). The basic five step format of the knock knock joke is well known.

*Knock knock. (Who’s there?) Boo. (Boo who?)
Don’t cry – it’s only a knock knock joke!*

It seems like knock knock jokes have been around since the beginning of time, and no one really knows how they came about. There are a couple of theories, but neither has proved to provide definitive proof of the joke’s origins.

Some people believe knock knock jokes developed as a result of “call and answer” routines that castle guards used to identify people after dark in the Middle Ages. When people would approach the castle after dark, they would have to call out to the guards to get inside. The guards would answer, “Who’s there?” They would then carry on a back-and-forth conversation about their identity and reason for wanting into the castle. Guards must have occasionally teased people with this routine, perhaps to alleviate the boredom of keeping watch throughout the night.

*Knock knock. (Who’s there?) Annie. (Annie who?)
Annie thing you can do, I can do better!*

Others believe knock knock jokes may have gotten their start with William Shakespeare’s Macbeth. In this famous play, a character delivers a long, humorous speech that follows the familiar pattern of the modern knock knock joke.

*Knock knock. (Who’s there?) Little old lady. (Little old lady who?)
Gosh, I didn’t know you could yodel!*

Whatever their origin, these classic non-rhyming jokes are fun for all ages. What parent, grandparent or teacher hasn’t heard a knock knock joke? Children seem to revel in telling these silly little jokes, even if they don’t make much sense. Today, knock knock jokes can provide more than just a chuckle. Developmental psychologists now study young children telling knock knock jokes to assess their language development skills!

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 31st