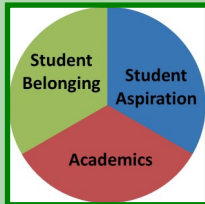




New Milford Public Schools  
50 East Street  
New Milford, CT 06776  
860-355-8406  
[www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org)



**New Milford High School**  
860-350-6647

Mr. Raymond Manka, 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

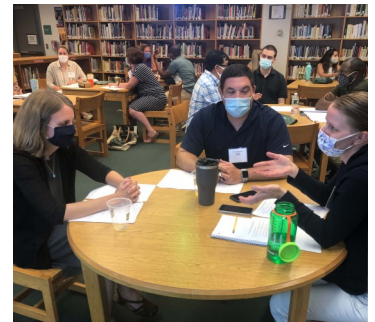
Volume 12, Issue 2

August 2021

## Back to School: Not Just for Students

With students return to school set for August 25, New Milford Public Schools' focus is all about getting ready. Our Facilities staff has worked diligently this summer to make sure our schools are clean and polished, inside and out. Superintendent DiCorpo and New Milford Public Health Director Lisa Morrissey walked through all schools on August 19 and 20 to review social distancing in classrooms and common areas. Principals are reaching out to families with school specific information and updates.

New Teacher Orientation took place from August 10-12. "Our teachers are our greatest asset," says Assistant Superintendent Holly Hollander. "It is important that we provide the support they need to begin their journey with New Milford Public Schools." The three day orientation includes topics such as professional learning, safe return to in-person learning and restorative practices. The new teachers got acquainted with district email, Google suite and School Messenger, all important tools in connecting to students and families. They started to make community connections as well, meeting with New Milford Public Library Director Lorna Rhyins and New Milford Youth Agency Director Jason O'Connor.



NMPS administrators held their annual retreat on August 16 and 17, both remotely and in small groups. Day one included collaborative planning, reflection and analysis followed by an overview of district data and goals. Day two focused on day to day operations of the district including PowerSchool training, School Safety/Security Committee work, transportation protocols and HR policies.

"We are committed to opening the 2021-22 school year in a planful manner, recognizing that our focus is to keep students safe, support their academic success and their social emotional wellness," says Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo. "We are poised to do just that following two days of intensive learning and collaboration."

On August 23, all district staff convened at the various school locations for the annual Welcome Back Convocation, which included the announcement of the district's Teacher of the Year (see below for that special announcement!). A couple of wonderful slideshows were shared, one [highlighting all five nominated school-based teachers of the year](#), and a second recognizing the perseverance and [good work done in 2020-21](#). After the announcement, district staff were treated to a Mindfulness presentation and a discussion on "How we do what we do" in conjunction with School Climate Consultants. The afternoon finished with PowerSchool training and area specific professional development.

As a district, we are ready and looking forward to welcoming students on August 25th!

### **Congratulations to New Milford's Teacher of the Year Lisa Montemurro!!**



This year's Teacher of the Year process for New Milford was a little different from previous years, as it was expanded to include school-based nominees. From the many nominations, the Teacher of the Year Committee was pleased to recognize Randi Gray (NES), Donna Nash (HPS), Lisa Montemuro (SNIS), Gina Bernard (SMS) and Kimberly Ginn (NMHS). Choosing just one representative from these deserving five to represent the entire district was difficult, but the TOTY Committee ultimately chose Lisa Montemurro, Grade 5 teacher at Sarah Noble Intermediate School.

Mrs. Montemurro's teaching journey began in 2001 as a reading and math tutor at John Pettibone Elementary School. Then, Mrs. Montemurro was hired in September 2001 as a 5th grade teacher at Northville Elementary School and moved to Sarah Noble Intermediate School in January 2002. "I believe my greatest gift as a teacher is to provide my students with engaging experiences where my students are active participants in their learning process, to provide them with meaningful feedback, and to design lessons that are purposeful and relevant," says Mrs. Montemurro.

Mrs. Montemurro promotes student growth in other areas as well. Each year, her class participates in the "Buddies" initiative that connects 3rd grade and 5th grade students. Mrs. Montemurro says, "When the 3rd grade students enter SNIS, it is a brand new experience for them and a much larger school to navigate compared to their elementary schools. Each year the "Buddies" program begins by assigning 5th grade students as mentors to their 3rd grade mentees. This mentor-mentee relationship helps students develop important social skills that prepare them for a lifetime of healthy interactions."

For the past 15 years, Mrs. Montemurro has been the team lead for the Sarah Noble Walking Project. This project is a month-long annual program created through the joint effort of SNIS staff and a committee of community health leaders. It focuses on the 4E's that promote healthy bodies and minds: exercise, eating well, environmental awareness and emotional health.

In speaking to her colleagues at convocation, Mrs. Montemurro recognized their resilience over the last year or so and encouraged them to build on it going forward. Here are a few

excerpts from Mrs. Montemurro's speech to her colleagues:

“As my family and I were returning from our vacation in Yosemite this summer, I noticed a sticker on a girl's luggage in the airport that read ‘I teach during a pandemic. What's your superpower?’ As I reflect on the past 17 months, I am convinced that teachers and staff began acquiring their superhuman powers by embracing online teaching for the very first time in March 2020. You learned how to bring your voices to your students during the global pandemic from your homes, classrooms, and hometowns, creating empowering lessons to engage all learners, delivering your teaching on a digital platform, discovering your network of colleagues to collaborate and share ideas, and developing supportive relationships with your students and families.

The power of building trustworthy relationships with your students and their families is a superpower that comes deep from the heart. We all know that relationships between a student and a teacher and a parent are important to maintain, and with this compassionate superpower, you were able to deepen this connection during the months of the pandemic.

As we begin a new school year - hopefully one filled with new light and promise, I ask you to reflect on all that you learned during the pandemic, on all of your accomplishments, and ignite those superpowers that you have acquired. Grab that energy and momentum to begin this new school year.”

Use your superpowers to be that superhero and continually push yourself beyond your comfort zone in search of ways to be there for your students, families, and colleagues.”

### **Nominate a NMPS Star of the Month for 2021-22!**



Parents, students, and fellow staff members are invited to [complete a short online form](#) to nominate a New Milford Public Schools staff member: whether it be a teacher, guidance counselor, nurse, paraeducator, school psychologist, secretary, social worker, administrator, cafeteria worker, custodian, coach or another support person 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, honorees will be randomly selected each month for public recognition by the Board of Education at its monthly meeting and they will receive a "star" lapel pin as a small symbol in recognition of their many star qualities.

## Reopening of Schools Guidance

On August 18th, Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo sent welcome back letters to all parents and staff where she also shared the district's [Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan 2021 \(Updated August 2021\)](#). The Plan has detailed information regarding the mitigation strategies that will be in place when schools reopen. The CSDE has also updated [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#) for Fall 2021.



Governor Lamont has issued an Executive Order effective through September 30, 2021, which carries the force of law and mandates masks be worn in all school buildings. This will ensure that all students can remain in school with very little disruption to their in-person education. See additional guidance here: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/Addendum11-Interim-Guidance-for-the-Use-of-Facemasks.pdf>.

In addition to the Executive Order that the Governor issued, the CDC issued guidance on July 26, 2021, requiring all students to wear masks on school busses to and from school. Therefore, mask-wearing on bus transportation is not optional at this time. The school district will support the bus company by supplying masks for distribution to students who need them. School Bus Routes are now online and may be viewed on the district website under Transportation [here](#).

In her letter, Superintendent DiCorpo shared her hopes for the coming year. “As we embark on the 2021-22 school year, I am filled with anticipation and hope for a strong academic and social-emotional, supportive environment for our students, especially when we are coming off of a year where students were isolated from peers and were accessing their education in a remote learning platform and/or attending school for in-person learning for only a few days per week. This year, we are committed to keeping children in school full-time five days a week. We recognize that new or updated information and guidance can change the landscape of what we are able to provide, however, as a district, we are committed to keeping children and staff safe in all the ways we can, providing the mitigation strategies that will support in-person learning for as long as is possible. I look forward to our continued partnership in the weeks and months ahead.”

If you are looking for a vaccination site, John Pettibone Community Center will continue to host vaccination clinics. Information on the vaccination schedule may be found here: <https://www.newmilford.org/vaccineInfo>

COVID-19 PCR testing is also offered. For more information, go to <https://newmilford.as.me/testing>

This year, the district will also be working in conjunction with the New Milford Health Department to offer on-site flu clinics for staff and children. More information will be forthcoming.

## Stay Connected...



**One of the best sources for information about New Milford Public School events and happenings is our website: <http://www.newmilfordps.org>**

From the home page, you can visit websites of the individual schools, see a calendar of events, email staff using the staff directory, download district forms and more.

### Can't find your answer on the website?

Call the Central Office for general questions or individual schools for school specific inquiries. Phone numbers are listed on page 1 of this newsletter.

### Like your news faster?

Customize our [School Messenger](#) service for important alerts and district emails.



**Are you a twitter fan? All our schools (and many staff members) tweet!** Follow them at:

**@NMHS\_CT**

**@SMS\_CT**

**@SNIS\_CT**

**@NES\_CT**

**@HPS\_CT**

**@nmps\_supt**

### PowerSchool Parent Portal (Coming Soon!)

The district is in the process of converting to a new Student Information System, PowerSchool. The Parent Portal will be available shortly. Watch your email for updates.



### Want to know what's happening at the district level?

Attend Board of Education meetings or watch video recording. Links to the schedule, plus the minutes of all Sub-Committee and full Board meetings that have taken place, are posted [on our website](#) under the Board of Education tab.



**REMEMBER:** Staying informed works both ways. Please make certain that your child's school has your most up-to-date contact information by completing the back to school forms distributed at the beginning of the school year and by providing any needed updates throughout the year.



**FREE**  
**Breakfast**  
**& Lunch**  
**FOR ALL STUDENTS**

### **FREE School Breakfast & School Lunch!!**

The Food and Nutrition Services Department has exciting news. Through funding by the USDA, all school meals will be FREE for all students K-12 for the 21-22 school year! All students are entitled to have one free breakfast and one free lunch every day.

A variety of lunch choices are offered daily. Menus can be viewed at <https://newmilford.schoolinsites.com/menus>. Selections include both hot and cold options with lean proteins, whole grains, a variety of milk along with colorful portions of fresh fruits and vegetables. All meals served meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Concerned about allergies??

Labels of all the food we serve are readily available for viewing.

A la carte snacks are available for purchase. All snacks meet strict nutrition guidelines. For your convenience, an easy online payment system is offered to fund and view your student's meal account at [www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.MySchoolBucks.com). Payments can also be made with cash or a check in the cafeteria. Additional information can be found on the district website under the Food and Nutrition Services tab.

Even though meals are FREE this year, it remains critical that you complete and submit your free and reduced-price meal application in order to determine eligibility for other programs, like the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), discounted technology, Wi-Fi programs and more.

If you have qualified for Free/Reduced meals in the past or feel you may qualify at the present time, please complete an application. Applications for free and reduced-price school meals with detailed instructions are available online at: [www.myschoolapps.com/Home/DistrictRedirect/NEWMILFORDPS\\_CT?langid=1](http://www.myschoolapps.com/Home/DistrictRedirect/NEWMILFORDPS_CT?langid=1). Paper applications are available at each school.

Questions? Contact Food and Nutrition Services at 860-354-3712.



**New Milford Public Schools**

50 East Street  
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**Ms. Alisha DiCorpo**  
Superintendent

**Ms. Holly Hollander**  
Assistant Superintendent

**Mr. Matthew Cunningham**  
Facilities Director

**Mrs. Catherine Gabianelli**  
Human Resources Director

**Mr. Anthony Giovannone**  
Fiscal Services & Operations  
Director

**Mrs. Laura Olson**  
Pupil Personnel &  
Special Services Director

**Mrs. Sandra Sullivan**  
Food Services Director

**Board of Education**

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**Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan**

**Mrs. Olga I. Rella**

**Ms. Leslie Sarich**



**Promise Yourself**  
by Julie Hebert

Of all the things you can do,  
Promise yourself you will try.  
If doesn't even matter if you win,  
As long as you apply.

No one can ask of anything,  
Of you, except yourself.  
If you don't want to make a move,  
It's you who'll be left out.

So don't allow yourself to miss,  
Out on important things.  
You may not feel that they are worthy,  
Yet turn out to be your wings.

Experiences make us whole,  
And make life feel fulfilled.  
And when it's time to look back,  
Don't let yourself feel unskilled.

So don't allow yourself to stop,  
For no apparent reason.  
Promise yourself you will try,  
And take on any season.

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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.