

# DECEMBER 2009 New Milford High School Monthly Report

Compiled by Eric Sheninger

## 1. Observations

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Observed by</u>
April Millian	Elem/Geom.	12/3	1	Eric Sheninger
Sue Grabowski	Geometry	12/4	2	Eric Sheninger
John Coviello	Sociology	12/4	8	Eric Sheninger
Joe Tusa	AP Am. Hist.	12/8	5	Eric Sheninger
Carina Porr	Guidance	12/11	4	Eric Sheninger
Lou Manuppelli	Admin.	12/15	N/A	Eric Sheninger
Pam Miller	H Geometry	12/16	6	Eric Sheninger
Nora Aivars	H Precalc	12/17	1	Eric Sheninger
Yvonne Haskill	Geometry	12/18	1	Eric Sheninger
Katherine Vargo	Spec. Ed.	12/1, 12/2	3	Jerry Perrone
Nicola Schneider	Spec. Ed.	12/14, 12/16, 12/17	7	Jerry Perrone
Kerr Lockhart	English	12/8-12/10	7	Lou Manuppelli
Jerry Engstrom	English	12/21-12/23	3	Lou Manuppelli
Jen Lyons	Spanish	12/15-12/17	2	Lou Manuppelli
Daniela D'Amato	Italian	12/15-12/17	6	Lou Manuppelli
Lisette Morel	Art	12/03-12/06	6	Lou Manuppelli
Lauren Bettini	Art	12/03-12/06	2	Lou Manuppelli

Summaries:

## 2. Guest lecturers

- On Monday, December 14, 2009, Ms. Gina Plotino, founder and president of GMP Consulting—a consulting firm that supports government and non-profit organizations, came in to talk to the students about philanthropy and charitable organizations. It was a fascinating fifty minutes where Ms. Plotino shared her experiences with such organizations as Shelter our Sisters and The United Way; students were able to ask her questions, where she would serve as a primary source, about their research paper project. The research paper topic is for the students to select a charity and research the history and mission statement of that specific charity. Ms. Plotino was welcomed and greatly appreciated by the students.

## 3. Innovations:

- Students created beautiful “Wordles” to Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities in Mrs. Collentine’s Honors English 9 class. Wordles are word clouds created using a free web 2.0 tool (<http://www.wordle.net>). Their choice of words emphasized character names, themes and plot points. They really enjoyed doing them. A few students even made personal wordles about their own lives! They were cute, too! Ms. Collentine will continue to use this new technology tool. It is a quick homework assignment for them, it is creative, and it assesses what they understand as being significant from a piece of literature. The project is creative, too, so it appeals to the artist type of student.
- Mrs. Keesing recently learned about Pageflakes, a Web 2.0 application. She has created a series of “pagecasts” that she has customized to serve different parts of the curriculum. The pagecasts include podcasts, rss feeds, webpages, and more. To date, Mrs. Keesing has published pagecasts for science, language arts, math, current events, and world languages. Additional pagecasts for health, history, art & music, and sports are in the works. She hopes that Pageflakes will be popular with teachers and students. Mrs. Keesing has requested that faculty members give her specific curriculum-based requests

for yet more pagecasts. Go to <http://www.pageflakes.com/Lkeesing> to access her pagecasts. Please note that the link takes you to the science pagecast. Click on the tabs at the top to access the other pagecasts. For some of the individual “flakes” (the boxes on a pagecast), you need to scroll to the right to find the place where you can view the flake in full-screen mode or in a new window.

- On Friday, December 11, 2009, Ms. Lyons’ Spanish II classes learned how to use iPods for the first time to record their voices. This was in preparation for a dialogue that they would be recording the following week. On this day, students worked in teams of three to record dialogues describing different careers and professions, as well as introducing themselves and others in the target language. These dialogues were based directly on the Chapter 2 vocabulary that students had been working with in class. The students did a great job on their dialogues and loved using the iPods!
- Students in Mr. Devereaux's Biology class held their own Copenhagen Climate Conference during the week of December 17, 2009. Students worked in groups, and each represented a different country. Each group researched the actual conference, and developed action plans for each country that would help them reach the goals that are set forth by the conference. Discussions were held to see how the world could work collectively to stop global warming.
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#### **4. Student honors**

- Senior Ben Nesimi’s incredible interception has been selected as one of MSG Varsity’s Top 25 Plays of the Year – a seasonal celebration of football, volleyball, and soccer. MSG Varsity reviewed their coverage of nearly 1,000 sporting events and posted the most amazing plays and game changing moments of the Fall 2009 Season.
- NMHS was proud to announce that 345 out of 650 students made the Honor Roll during the first marking period (all 3 levels). Congratulations to the students on this achievement!
- Senior Lavinia Galido’s art portfolio was accepted to the Maryland Institute College of Art after being interviewed by the school at Pratt Institute’s National Portfolio Day. During this November field trip with Miss Bettini, she had the chance to share her art with the college among many others. MICA has put her portfolio in the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for portfolios entered so far this year.

#### **5. Field trips**

- NMHS Band participated in the Town Tree Lighting at Borough Hall on Sunday, December 6, 2009. They performed Jazz versions of holiday songs. On Saturday December 12, 2009, the Band attended a highly anticipated concert by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra at the Izod Center at the Meadowlands. The performance was electrifying!
- Students have been studying a unit on banking through the Skills for Independent Living curriculum taught by Ms. Schneider. By touring the Greater Alliance Federal Credit Union students were able to see the various jobs within the bank and understand the interpersonal skills a person must possess to work in a bank.
- Throughout the Skills for Independent Living curriculum, the students have been exploring how to become an independent and knowledgeable consumer in their own community. To reinforce the skills learned in the classroom they took a trip to holiday shop, at the Christmas Tree Shop, and have lunch, at Wendy’s, on Monday, December 21, 2009. Prior to the trip, students completed a comparative shopping budget for a parent/guardian holiday gift using the sales circular from the Christmas Tree Shop. While at the store, the students located the items on the list they had prepared,

maneuvered appropriately through the store, located a cashier, waited on line, paid, received and counted back change. Students have also been studying a unit based on personal eating habits and the nutritional value of the choices they make at fast food restaurants. Through the Wendy's experience, the students had the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to make healthier choices, order appropriately, calculate the cost of the meal, pay, receive and count back their change.

- On December 15, 2009, twelve students in the Teacher Cadet Class taught by Mrs. Rose DePoto entertained the kindergarten and first-grade classes at Berkley and Gibbs Schools with dramatic readings of holiday stories. The members of the high school class, all aspiring teachers, practiced dramatic reenactments of children's stories after a model demonstration of "Becoming the Character" by Mrs. Ruth Beiner, a guest lecturer in the class. The importance of making reading come alive was emphasized by Mrs. Beiner and reinforced by Mrs. DePoto in subsequent lessons. The children were enthralled by the readings and participated themselves in creating sounds and singing along with the Cadets. A small gift was given to each student in both grades, compliments of the Future Educators Club. A hearty "thank you!" was heard as we left the schools for our return to the high school and a promise to come back in the spring, on Dr. Seuss Day, was made to the children.



## 6. Guidance

- On Thursday, December 17, 2009, a representative from Felician College visited New Milford High School to offer our students an Immediate Decision Day. All students interested in applying to Felician College were invited to interview with the representative, have their application reviewed onsite, and receive a decision that day. Immediate Decision Day allowed our students the opportunity to experience a quick, easy, and personalized admissions process.
- On Wednesday, January 6, 2010, NMHS will be welcoming back a panel of recent graduates to speak with 11th & 12th grade students about college life. This year, the Guidance Department will be changing the format for the day. Instead of large group assemblies, students will hear from the alumni in smaller group settings. The alumni will be discussing the application process, college adjustment, academics, the first year experience, etc. The students will have an opportunity to ask the panel all their questions.

## 7. Professional Development

- Mr. Sheninger attended at workshop sponsored by the NJ Association of School Administrators (NJASA) entitled “Social Media: A New Frontier” on Monday, December 7, 2009. This is the description of the workshop provided by NJASA: *Facebook, MySpace, Sexting, Twitter...all common and familiar words to us as school administrators. As we go forward into the Internet communication frontier, how do we deal with students and employees who seem to be crossing the line? What are the legal and criminal implications for schools? Come to this thought provoking and informative workshop to gain additional insight into recent cases and legal decisions.*
- Mr. Perrone attended a workshop entitled “Differentiating Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms” on Friday, December 11, 2009. The purpose of the workshop was to help develop a framework for thinking about differentiation in a logical way. Definitions of differentiation were shared and discussed. Opportunity to engage in thinking about the key principals and ideas of differentiation in order to ensure the successful translation of differentiated instruction into the classroom was provided. The provision of multiple options for students to express what they learn is a key concept of differentiation. Our classrooms contain a variety of students. It was demonstrated through research that students learn at different rates, have different interests, and learn in different ways. Providing different degrees of difficulty is essential in meeting these individual characteristics. A “one size fits all” teaching approach is not suitable in meeting the diverse needs of our student populations. During the workshop, the key concepts of differentiation were presented, classrooms practicing differentiated instruction were shown, and anecdotes and samples of activities used in differentiated classrooms were presented.
- On Thursday, December 17, 2009, Mr. Sheninger presented a workshop to District staff members on Delicious and Skype. The purpose of the workshop was to illustrate how both of these web 2.0 tools could be utilized to improve instruction. Delicious is social bookmarking web service for storing, sharing, and discovering web bookmarks. Teachers can store their favorite educational sites on this free service and access them anywhere. They can also categorize their bookmarks by content area or instructional strategy. Skype is a free technology that allows you to make audio and video phone calls from your computer! Teachers were informed how they could "Skype" to connect with experts, educators and other classrooms all over the world, as well as how to set up virtual field trips using this service. During the presentation, Mr. Sheninger Skyped in Shelly Terrell, a colleague and teacher from Germany, who spoke about all of the exciting ways that this free video/audio conference technology can be utilized in the classroom.
- Mr. Frederick and Mr. Kelly attended the 28th Annual U.S. All-Star Track/Field/Cross Country Clinic held in Atlantic City on December 17 & 18, 2009. The two-day clinic provided coaches the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the latest rules, techniques, and safety measures. They were fortunate to have the opportunity to attain National Certification in the Pole Vault through the NPVCA (they are currently waiting the results of the test). Throughout their stay, they met with and learned from both world-class coaches and athletes as they lectured and demonstrated how to get the most out of our Student-Athletes. Presenters included Greg Hull (pole vault coach at Arizona State and former coach of World Record Holder Stacy Dragila), Willie Banks (former World Record Holder in the Triple Jump), Marcus O'Sullivan (coach at Villanova and former World Record Holder in the 1500m indoors), Tom Pukstys (6-time US Champion in the Javelin), and businessman Jeff Piersall ("Gaining the Competitive Edge") were just a few of the speakers who gave insight into becoming better coaches and teachers.

## 8. Facilities

## 9. Theatre Arts

- Thanks to an initiative by our Superintendent, Mr. Pollizi, NMHS has entered into an educational alliance with Bergen Performing Arts Center (Bergen PAC) in Englewood. Among the areas of cooperation: Bergen PAC will be supplying tickets for key events to be raffled or auctioned to support theater and other educational activities at New Milford. In addition, at least three NMHS students will be shadowing backstage personnel at Bergen PAC to become more familiar with these career tracks. Furthermore, students will develop and create their own production for the Halloween season as part of the Bergen PAC fall schedule. We are confident that these steps mark the beginning of a substantial and mutually rewarding relationship between our institutions.
- In other NMHS Theater News, we are pleased to announce the presentation of the School Edition of *Rent* by Jonathan Larson. Based on the classic opera, *La Boheme*, it tells the inspiring and empowering story of artists in love, making choices for good and ill, being redeemed by art and by love. We are equally thrilled to announce the return of alumnus Alexander Diaz to direct for a second year. Performances will be Thursday, March 25, 2010, at 7:30 PM, as well as Friday and Saturday, March 26 and 27, 2010, at 8:00 PM. Tickets will be \$15.00, but a special \$10 discount will be offered for New Milford District students, faculty, and staff attending Thursday night's performance. NMHS teacher Kerr Lockhart will be returning as music director and NMHS teacher John Coviello and DEOMS teacher Heidi Kolb will produce.

## 10. Other

- Congratulations on the selection of The Emerald Yearbook for inclusion in Ideas That Fly, Volume 15. This nationally published book of ideas will be released this Spring. The New Milford High School yearbook will appear alongside 216 others from the United States and Canada representing the very best in junior high, high school and college/university yearbooks printed by Herff Jones. This volume of Ideas That Fly showcases books printed in the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009. It concludes with a directory listing the yearbook name, school name, address, adviser's name(s), editor's name(s) for all included yearbooks and layouts of their publication. Last year's publication of The Emerald titled, "We Are New Milford," received one of six Showcase Awards for Layout and Design given by Herff-Jones in the State of New Jersey.
- Genesis, the school's Literary Magazine club, raised over \$100 with their carnation sale during the month of December. This club is advised by math teacher Frank Jacob.
- The freshman class sponsored their first fundraising babysitting night on Thursday, December 17, 2009 in the high school cafeteria. New Milford students in grades k-5 were invited to attend. The cost was \$15 per child for 3 1/2 hours of crafts, pizza, games and a movie. Over forty students from the freshman class volunteered to babysit and twenty-five students in grades k-5 signed up for the event. The night was a huge success.
- The High School's Mock Trial team will participate in mock trial competitions sponsored and organized by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation in collaboration with the Bergen County Bar Association. This year's team comprises the following members: Attorneys Diane Montecucollo and Melissa Milne, with witnesses Anita George, Alvin George, and Jessica Milne, will represent the Prosecution; and attorneys Nishant Patel and Sheryl Mathew, with witnesses Aimee George, Corey Fetzer, and Ryan Bigger, will represent the Defense. The team has assiduously been guided from

its inception by Mr. Keith Bachmann, a local attorney and town council member. Pedagogical emphasis is placed on learning court room procedures in both criminal and civil trials - in this area, Mr. Bachmann's contribution has been invaluable - as well as critical thinking, doing research, writing, public speaking, cooperation and teamwork. The team, open to all students grades 9 through 12, will compete on January 6, 13, and 20, 2010, at 5:00 PM at the Bergen County Court House.

- The NMHS Community Service, David E. Owens Middle School, Berkley Street School, and the High School joined together to encourage students to bring in new teddy bears to bring a smile to a sick child in the hospital this holiday season. On December 18, 2009, students delivered over 800 new teddy bears to children at Englewood Hospital.