

# New Milford Knightly News

## Superintendent's Newsletter

a publication of the New Milford Public School District  
Administrative Offices, 145 Madison Avenue, New Milford, New Jersey 07646



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*1.1 At the heart of the educational program:*

## School security high on list of district priorities

Although schools still among safest public buildings in U.S., campus security remains major preoccupation nationwide

As events locally, nationally and globally evolve, Central Administration for the New Milford Public School District (NMPSD) would like to remind school families about a number of initiatives critical to its commitment to campus safety and security.

Campus leadership has been working with Central Administration in collaboration with the NMPSD Safety Committees, the New Milford Police Department and local emergency services in the creation, refinement and implementation of three basic contingency plans should an emergency situation develop. The Board and Central Administration continue to consider the welfare of students and staff beyond usual circumstances—one of its highest priorities. While New Milford schools are warm and welcoming places, the district has taken necessary, proactive steps to prepare its faculty, staff and students for quick and appropriate response to emergencies. The entire staff is well informed, alert, and ready.

Even though, according to a recent survey of school safety, schools are still among the safest public buildings in the U.S., the issue of security in schools remains a major preoccupation on campuses nationwide. Recent incidents underscore the importance of campus safety, which is why school safety and security are top priorities for New Milford Public Schools.

### **What has the NMPSD done to provide a safe haven for its children?**

Because active involvement of the larger community is essential for schools to thrive, parents, faculty, students, and local police have contributed to solutions appropriate to district schools. NMPSD school security is driven by two central interests: the protection of its people and the protection of its property.

- **A District-wide Safety Committee** works proactively with all campus administrators in the management of students and the supervision of the campus environment. Each school building has been assigned a member/s of the committee to monitor hallways, facilities, designated student areas, and outside campus grounds.
- **I.D. Tags** are issued to all high school students, in addition to all district adult faculty and staff. The expectation for all staff and students is that I.D.'s be visible or on person' at all times while in school or on school grounds during school functions. With a glance, I.D. tags indicate who belongs in a building and who does not.

### 1.1 *School Security (from p.1)*

## Campus Safety

- ◆ **Officers Billy Wilde and Keith Wester** of the New Milford Police Department have been assigned as full-time Resource Officers on the high school and middle school campuses. They are active members of an extended school staff. The New Milford PD continues to be a critical partner in securing the safety of NMPD students and the emergency response readiness of school personnel.
- ◆ The Board of Education has adopted strict **Emergency Action Policies** in compliance with New Jersey statute. These plans are reviewed annually and updated as needed.
- ◆ Each campus has its own campus-specific **Emergency Action Plan** developed in cooperation with and endorsed by the New Milford Police Department.
- ◆ Each school has an Internal Emergency Alert Notification System.
- ◆ **Monitored Security Cameras** have been positioned strategically throughout school buildings and outside school grounds.
- ◆ School leadership and personnel receive **Ongoing Emergency Response Training** on how to respond to violent acts or threats and other emergency situations, often in partnership with the New Milford Police Department.
- ◆ **Emergency Action Plan Drills** are conducted, practiced and reviewed annually in collaboration with and under the advisement of the NMPD security team and the New Milford Police.
- ◆ NMPD **staff** and **counselors** have been **briefed in disaster psychology**.

- ◆ **Building Crisis Teams**, consisting of administration, faculty, and maintenance personnel, meet throughout the year to review safety and security issues, emergency action procedures, and other matters of concern.
- ◆ Beyond physical security enhancements, this district has been a model in instituting strong **Conflict Resolution Programs** supported by child study teams, which believe in the principle that *intervention is prevention*.

Campus security is not limited to recent initiatives. Many aspects of school security are taken for granted but contribute to the environment in subtle but very significant ways. These include vigilant teachers, administrators and other district staff, alarm systems, intercoms, and outdoor lighting, to name a few.

#### THREE LEVELS OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- **Emergency Closing:** organized system for contacting bus services to dispatch buses to transport students home earlier than scheduled. This system is identical to that which has been used for early closings due to snow.
- **Emergency Evacuation:** organized system of building evacuation as a result of crisis in the building, such as fire. Evacuation drills are conducted with all students and staff regularly in compliance with State law. In the event of evacuation, safe evacuation centers have been established at locations throughout the community.
- **Shelter in Place and Lock Down:** organized system for keeping students inside the building should outside conditions pose potential risk for students. Shelter in place/lock down drills are rehearsed and reinforced.

These measures have been designed to emphasize a highly visible security presence; they reflect the NMPD's proactive position on campus safety and underscore the NMPD's continued commitment to work with local, county and state law enforcement officials and emergency services in the refinement of district action plans. The security initiatives which have been taken consider prevention as the best way of preserving student rights to the highest degree possible.

### 1.2 *Net Cetera:*

## CHATting WITH KIDS ABOUT BEING ONLINE

The Internet in visualizing itself seeks to democratize communication by placing web-based tools into the hands of individuals at literally every strata of society—that means men, women and children, young and old, with or without means, in developed and undeveloped nations, and immune from those barriers that typically separate people from people and limit the spread of knowledge, opportunities and ideas. With the emergence of new social media tools, the vision is now an ever-changing reality that places at one's fingertips the power to publish, communicate anywhere on the planet, and access information in unprecedented quantity and speed.

What becomes increasingly apparent is the need for understanding of these tools and the power they possess.

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## Parents have crucial role in promoting responsible use.

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As schools nationwide adopt new policies governing the use of social media as a vital and vibrant complement to education, parents must learn about the crucial role they play in working with their children to promote healthy and productive

### 1.3 *New Milford Education Foundation:* Gathering Momentum in Challenging Times

The New Milford Education Foundation is currently involved in several major initiatives.

*(more on p.3)*



Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity, the New Milford Education Foundation (NMEF) is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching, enhancing and supporting New Milford's public education system.

The NMEF supports New Milford Public Schools in providing a challenging and enriching educational experience that maximizes the learning potential of every student and prepares them to succeed in the 21st century. The Foundation provides incentives to stimulate excellence in the New Milford Public Schools by awarding grants for projects, programs and purchases that support the curriculum and facilities, by funding scholarships for students and professional development for educators, and by raising the profile of public education in New Milford.

### 1.2 *Net Cetera* (from p.2)

social media practices. Like all new tools, proper use requires attention and practice.

To begin, check out :

***Net Cetera: Chatting with Kids About Being Online.***

This government-sponsored resource is available at [www.onguardonline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov). Parents and their kids will find very helpful guidance and information about topics such as Kids' Privacy, Scams, Computer Security, Health Online, Identity Theft, and so forth. Awareness is the beginning of good practices at home as well as in school. The District has ordered free copies of *Net Cetera* for all families, hopefully in time to include in summer packets. As the District moves forward with its plans to expand educational use of Web 2.0 tools, it is important for parents to be on board with new online applications and acceptable use policies for home and school.

### 1.3 *NMEF* (from p2):

## Gathering Momentum

Going into May with a balance of approximately \$1,700 in initial contributions from school PTO's and private donations, the NMEF is finalizing its application for tax exempt status with the IRS. Additionally, the finance committee is developing the Foundation's accounting systems as well as its capacity to collect and process credit card payments and produce annual tax filings and annual Nonprofit GAAP Financial Statements.

NMEF's efforts have been focusing on the first major fundraising campaign which will target school alumni. Given the competition for general in-town fundraising, the committee has decided that at this point alumni represent the best source for direct contributions.

Beginning with a letter writing campaign—with a fundraising goal of \$10,000 to \$15,000—the NMEF hopes to expand fundraising initiatives to include event-based functions.

Knowing how important arts education is to the New Milford community, the

### NMEF FOUNDERS & BOARD:

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Jose Camacho  
Marlenis Camacho  
Megan Farricker  
Celeste Scavetta  
Stacey Sidorsky  
Joanne Spurlin  
Colleen Tambuscio

**Special thanks to our donors for their generous contributions which help seed the establishment of the foundation and support its ongoing activities.**

**To make your donation, please send your check made payable to:**

**"New Milford Education Foundation"**

**and mail to:**

**NMEF  
145 Madison Avenue  
New Milford, NJ 07646**

**p: 201.639.6633**

**f: 201.639.6634**

**c: 201.294.8421**

**For information on how to give, please email:**

**[info@newmilfordfoundation.org](mailto:info@newmilfordfoundation.org)**

**Stay tuned for website coming soon:**

**[www.newmilfordfoundation.org](http://www.newmilfordfoundation.org)**

Foundation has begun to identify capital projects focused initially on renovations to the high school theater. This concept is part of an exploratory conversation with bergenPAC. Additionally, committee meetings will be held in the coming weeks with administration and faculty to identify specific educational programs to set as part of the Foundation's near to intermediate term objectives. The NMEF will be building its general fund over a two to three year time frame, so major spends should occur after establishing a base endowment.

The NMEF advocates for projects significant to the advancement of our students. With initial momentum and tremendous potential to permanently influence the lives of New Milford students, the NMEF looks forward to support through donations and volunteers to help with the important tasks that lie ahead. Your tax deductible gifts will have a direct and significant impact.