

SEPTEMBER 2008 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>
Mary Bilali	Guidance	9/22	2	Eric Sheninger
Dorene Zacher	S.A.C.	9/22	7	Eric Sheninger
Jim Carr	Guidance	9/24	2	Eric Sheninger
Carina Porr	Guidance	9/25	7	Eric Sheninger

Summaries:

2. Guest lecturers

3. Innovations:

- Mrs. De Poto, along with Mrs. Tambuscio, will advise a Future Educators Club at the high school this year to encourage those students who are considering teaching as a profession. A new course called Teacher Cadet Program will tentatively be offered to all 11th and 12th graders next year. This course will be comparable to a college-level introductory course in education. It is anticipated that the core group in the Future Educators Club will be the first students to enroll.
- This year's fall theatrical experience will be an original comedy written and directed by Mr. Lockhart. *The School Inspectors* promises to be an exciting, laugh-a-minute show for all those who attend. A cast of over twenty-five students began rehearsing the show the week of 9/22 and cannot wait to make the community laugh out loud. Mr. Coviello will be producing the show with the help of parents, students, and colleagues such as Ms. Perna, Mrs. Vicari, and Mr. Pevny. This three-act comedy will involve almost one hundred other students who will assist with graphic design, set construction, stage crew, stage management, playbill design, house management, ticket sales, artistic design, sound design, set dressing, lighting, pyrotechnics, and costuming. Tickets will go on sale in early October for \$8.00; admittance will be \$10.00 at the door.
- The Teachers of Freshman roundtable met for the first time this month. At the top of the agenda was discussion of the difficulty of impressing freshmen with the importance of doing homework on time, a particularly acute problem for courses that depend on cumulative development of knowledge and skills. It was agreed that finding a quiet time and place for homework with supportive adults nearby was a problem for many students. Some teachers mentioned individual efforts they had made to require students to attend a "homework club" which met with some success in bringing students up-to-date with work. It became the sense of the room that this would be a good idea if put into wider practice and made voluntary for students for 30 to 60 minutes after school. Incentives to attend a homework club includes attendance slips which teachers, for whose class work had been completed, would give students extra points for in accord with their own grading system. Teachers could rotate supervision of the room, and additional support could be provided by the Future Educators club, the Honor Society and by seniors seeking Community Service hours. Committee members will be investigating the feasibility of these proposals and reporting back next month.
- The Gifted and Talented program at the high school level has been revised this year. Under the direction of Ms. Schlamp, G&T will consist mainly of the following new and exciting components:
 - **The Student View:** This is a new, unique and effective opportunity for students to both communicate *and* share their views beliefs opinions and knowledge on

different topics in society today. Be it a global, national, community, or personal issue this student-generated and student-run forum will take on today's "hot topics" in a daily panel made up of 3 to 4 G&T students. Based on the WABC television show, *The View*, each day a different G&T student will serve a turn as moderator of the panel and, therefore, will be responsible for independently preparing in the form of researching, selecting, and presenting the topics for discussion for that day. Fellow G&T students not on the panel for the day will make up the audience and can also interject ideas, thoughts, and comments throughout the discussion.

- **Alphabiography:** This is a twist on the traditional written autobiography. In an Alphabiography, each student will prepare both a visual *and* a written entry for each letter of the alphabet. Each entry will record an event, person, object, or feeling associated with, and that begins with, that particular letter of the alphabet; the visual will represent the event, person, object, or feeling in one image. At the end of each entry the student will sum up the story by recording the life lesson/lessons learned from the event. Since an Alphabiography does not go in chronological order, and only goes in the order of the alphabet, the student can write about anything at any time in their lives.
- **Independent Learning Project: (ILP)** The ILP is the G&T student's opportunity to design, research and present an Independent Learning Project. If students decide to complete an ILP, they will choose individual topics for research and presentation based upon their unique talents, abilities and interests. Each student will draw up a project proposal in consultation with the G&T Coordinator (GTC). This proposal will outline a Learning Area, Specific Topic, Presentation Format, and an initial Bibliography.

Completed projects will be presented to the entire G&T community and, quite possibly, the entire student body and faculty. Credit will be given for fully completed and presented projects only.

4. Student honors:

- For the first time ever NMHS will be participating in Cablevision's "The Challenge". This is a televised academic competition featuring the brightest students from the tri-state area testing their knowledge on a variety of subjects. NMHS was selected along with 31 other schools at random from 100 that registered. Our team will compete against Waldwick HS on Wednesday, November 19th, 2008 at the Hotel Pennsylvania in NYC. The News 12 air date for this round 1 competition is scheduled for Saturday, February 21st, 2009 at 6:30 PM. NMHS will be represented by seniors Kinjal Desai, Angela Wan, Kristi Saporito, Trisha Javaluas, and junior Filip Piasevoli. The team will be coached by Mr. Keith Devereaux from the Science Department. "These are some great young men and women we have here representing New Milford. I am excited to be involved with this program and these students, and I am confident that they will represent New Milford well", stated Mr. Devereaux. For more information on "The Challenge" visit <http://www.powertolearn.com/challenge/>.
- Abigail Talla attended Otis College of Arts Summer program in California after receiving a half-tuition scholarship. She received college credits for the beginning drawing and fashion designing course.
- Judy Koo was accepted for a six week summer art program at the Cooper Union School of Art in Manhattan. This challenging program was for serious students who intend to pursue an advanced degree in art. It was a full tuition scholarship program with free materials. She will also attend the fall Saturday program.
- Matt Kaprielian worked over the summer vacation on various pieces of art including sculptures in stone, oil paintings, prints, and 3D objects. He also volunteered at the Bergen

County Players theatre in Oradell, building and painting the set for the Full Monty. He is currently taking a sculpture class at night and two AP art classes in school.

- Members of the Art Honor Society, along with Mrs. Bettini, their advisor, have designed a mural for the gym wing's wall of fame. They will be painting six foot figures representing the school's sport activities.
- The annual Herff-Jones Yearbook Workshop was Thursday, September 25th today at the Double Tree Hotel in Mahwah, NJ. Advisors Mr. Pevny and Ms. Buzzelli escorted student layout editors Christian Pecoraro and Lavinia Galido. Ideas were exchanged with other schools and individual workshops were attended by all. The 2008 Emerald Yearbook was awarded one of the top Herff-Jones Awards for "Excellence in Layout and Design." All those who contributed should be commended. The 2009 yearbook is off to a great start this year and we hope it continues to be something our students can be proud of.

5. Field trips

6. Guidance

- On Wednesday, October 8th, NMHS will be participating in the field test for the Algebra 1 EOC exam. All students who were a part of the Algebra 1 program during the 2007-2008 school year will be participating in this field test.
- On Wednesday, October 15th, 10th, and 11th grade students will be taking the PSAT. The PSAT will be administered in homerooms from approximately 8AM-10AM. All 9th and 12th grade students will be on a delayed opening schedule that morning. The PSAT provides students with the opportunity to receive practice for the SAT reasoning test and to have a chance to enter the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship program.
- On Tuesday, October 21st, NMHS will be holding an 8th grade parent orientation and school tour. The night will begin with a presentation on athletics at 6:30, followed by a presentation about the high school at 7:00PM, and concluding with a tour of the school. Parents of children in David E. Owens Middle School, private, and parochial schools are welcome to attend.
- On Thursday, October 30th, all 11th grade students will have the opportunity to participate in a practice Math HSPA. This will allow students to prepare for the HSPA, and have the chance to view the format, as well as the types of questions that will be on the test.

7. Professional Development:

- Rose DePoto spent 3 days at the College of New Jersey in order to receive training for the Teacher Cadet Program sponsored by CERRA, Center for Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of South Carolina from 6/30/08 – 7/2/08. The three-day workshop was offered through the department of education at The College of New Jersey to address the imminent shortage of teachers in the state, as well as to encourage young people to enter the profession.
- Kerr Lockhart (English), Jen Lyons (World Language), Linda Keesing (Media Specialist), John Coviello (Social Studies), April Millian (Math), Amy Solimano (World Language), Maria Grompone (World Language), Joyce Monroe (World Language), Rich Cella (Math), and Keith Devereaux (Science) attended an intense 3 day workshop (8/5, 8/6, 8/19) on Utilizing iPods for Authentic Learning . This training took place here at NMHS and was provided by the Madison Institute (<http://www.themadisoninstitute.com>).
- Colleen Tambuscio was invited to participate in a one day workshop at Liberty Science Center sponsored by the 9/11 Memorial Museum, The NJ Holocaust Commission and The Families of 9/11 to begin collaborating on a school based curriculum to address 9/11 in schools. This coming school year Mrs. Tambuscio will work with a small group of New Jersey teachers to begin creating this educational resource that will be available in the Fall of

2009. Former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean led the day's events by outlining the need for a school based program that addresses this issue from a perspective of gaining knowledge as well as dealing with this sensitive subject in public education. His role in heading the 9/11 Commission will play a key role in the content strands that develop as a result of this curriculum effort. This curriculum/teacher resource is being developed in cooperation with the NJ Department of Education and will be distributed in New Jersey and the tri-state area.

- Colleen Tambuscio participated in an annual seminar of 30 educators associated with The U.S. States Holocaust Memorial Museum's program for Regional Museum Educators in Washington, DC, from 7/30/08 – 8/2/08. During this multi-day program new scholars were introduced to the educators along with ground breaking research and opportunities to work with fellow colleagues around the nation on current pedagogy in the field.
- Over the summer, Keith Devereaux attended the College Board AP Institute for AP Biology Instructors at Middlesex County College. At the conference, Mr. Devereaux became familiarized with the AP Biology Curriculum and AP Biology Exam. Half of the course dealt with incorporating the curriculum and the themes of biology into the class, while the second half of the course was hands on training of the 12 required AP Biology Labs.

8. Facilities

9. Other

- The New Milford School District was ranked 99 out of 316 schools in the state. The rankings are compiled in association with Monmouth University's Polling Institute. What people don't realize is how well our schools rank when compared to similar districts based on district factor group. District factor grouping is an index of socioeconomic status established by the Department of Education with districts being arranged in 10 groups (A – J). When comparing NM to similar schools by district factor group, in this case FG, we are ranked 8 out of 88 schools. This puts the NM school district in the top 10% of like schools in the state!!!!!! For the complete NJ Monthly report, visit:
http://njmonthly.com/articles/towns_and_schools/highschoolrankings/top-highschools08.html
- The NMHS Drama Club, the Opening Knights and the Stage Crew, have started activities again this year, with an estimated combined membership of 75 students. The Opening Knights meet every two weeks and under the leadership of its officers; committee chairs will present or support four major performance activities.
 - First is the Fall Comedy, described elsewhere in this report. Second on the calendar is the Interactive Murder Mystery, coming in early February, directed by Mr. Coviello and written—under his guidance—by a team of students. With a mixture of scripted and improvised scenes, “guides” will lead audience members through a number of different sites around the high school to gather clues and together solve the mystery. This should be a welcome relief from the mid-winter blahs.
 - March brings the annual Musical, to be directed by NMHS alumnus Alex Diaz. The name of the show, which will be contemporary, exciting, and tailored to our talent pool, will be revealed in November as the fall comedy comes to a close. We expect this to be not just another musical, but a galvanizing event for the entire school.
 - In May the Knights will repeat the very successful student playwright festival from last year, in which students not only write, but direct and produce original short works for the stage. It is our plan at this time to encourage students to enter their works in the 2008 New Jersey Young Playwrights Contest sponsored by the New Jersey Writers Project. Winning plays will be presented during the NJ Young

Playwrights Festival. Statewide winners will receive a staged-reading performance by professional actors during the Festival on May 19, and May 20, 2008, at Kean University. In addition, the Knights offer a scholarship to the student whose life course has been most changed or affected by becoming involved in high school theatre, and a senior award for contributions to theater at NMHS.

- The girls' tennis team has qualified for the NJSIAA tournament and is awaiting the announcement of their first round opponent later in October. The girls' soccer team is also off to a strong start and will qualify for the fast approaching county tournament. After losses to league powers Bogota and Cresskill, the volleyball team also appears to be headed in the right direction and has high hopes for qualifying for the county and state tournaments. The cross country team opened its season with a strong showing at the Season Opener Invitational at Garrett Mountain and a dominating home win over Dwight Englewood and Saddle River Day. The boys' soccer team is currently at .500 and is looking to go on a run to qualify for the NJSIAA tournament. After a season-opening loss to Becton, the football team travels to Hasbrouck Heights this week. Their home opener is scheduled for 10/3 at 7:00pm.
- Mrs. Keesing learned about the Letters About Literature Contest for high school students, and she will promote participation in the contest with several English classes. The contest is offered, through the collaboration of the Library of Congress and Target Department Stores, as a "national reading and writing promotion program". Students will select a piece of literature to read. The contest requires submission of a letter, written by each student, to the author of their selected work of literature. The letter must relate how the book impacts the student. Winners will receive prizes. As students work through this process, Mrs. Keesing will provide updates.