The holiday season is upon us and the winter vacation is about to begin. All of the students are excited about spending time with family and friends over the winter break. All of the students deserve a much needed break to relax and decompress. As you know, the State of Connecticut is still facing daunting challenges caused by the pandemic. I am so proud of our students and staff for their perseverance during the disruptions caused by the pandemic. We will continue to further our resolve by working collaboratively to overcome these challenges. We are truly grateful for our partnership with all of the parents with the district’s number one goal being the safety of our students and staff. We will continue to strive to individualize our instruction to meet the needs of every child. We continue to be blessed to work with your child, and our staff is committed in providing the best educational opportunities for every student in the district.

I am pleased to inform you the New Hartford Public Schools continue to improve our delivery of instruction and increase programming for all students. We have implemented many new curriculum initiatives and technology based learning opportunities for kids. The district’s new Science curriculum (Mystery Science) has been embraced by all students. The new curriculum is more closely aligned with the state’s Science Standards and incorporates a student centered approach with inquiry based learning. The district’s science standardized student achievement outcomes have improved with this new implementation.
Students in preschool through second grade are engaging in new daily lessons that cover ten new phonological awareness skills. This new program (Heggerty) is making such a positive impact on all of our young readers. There is an article in the newsletter regarding this exciting new initiative.

As the district continues to navigate through these unparalleled times, students face residual effects of the pandemic. One byproduct of the past year and a half has been the negative impact on learning. We are committed to accelerating the learning in all kids across every grade level. To help achieve this goal, we have implemented a Tutoring Academy before school for students who may need the extra help. The Tutoring Academy has mitigated learning loss and benefited kids immeasurably.

The start of the school year has been challenging but gratifying. We have accomplished so much by partnering with our parents. We value our partnership and will continue to strive for excellence in all of our endeavors. Our focus will remain on the needs of each student. Our dedicated and talented staff is committed to seeing your child flourish. The success of the New Hartford Public Schools is due to the collaboration of students, parents, and staff. We would also like to thank the New Hartford Board of Education for all of their support. We are honored to be given the responsibility of educating your child every day, and we will continue to do our best every day. I hope you have a peaceful and safe holiday season!

Sincerely,
Brian Murphy
Superintendent of Schools
Tutoring in New Hartford

If your children have been in the New Hartford Public Schools for a while, you may have heard the acronym SRBI and wondered what it means. SRBI stands for Scientific Research Based Interventions, which is a term used by the State of Connecticut to outline the way in which districts provide additional support to students with learning or behavioral difficulties. At any time, 10-15% of students may be in SRBI for intervention in math, reading, writing, or behavior.

This year, to build upon our existing SRBI practices, we are excited to be offering before school tutoring to a select group of students to accelerate their learning. In a recent research study completed by Nickow, Oreopoulos & Quan, tutoring was found to have a significant impact on student growth and achievement with the strongest effects in the earlier grades. The study found tutoring to be the most versatile and potentially transformative educational tool in use today (Nickow, et al., 2020). Providing tutoring before school ensures that students are able to receive targeted intervention and support that they need while still fully participating in their classroom instruction during the school day.

Our tutoring program is being implemented in all three schools. Students are identified as potential candidates for the program by the SRBI teams at each school. We look at assessment data and classroom performance when determining who may benefit from the program. Parents are notified and asked to provide transportation for their child. Students participate four days per week from 8:00-8:30 am. They work in a small group with an interventionist or paraprofessional to support reading or math skills. Currently, 18 students in grades 1 through 6 are participating in this program.

Our SRBI teams monitor the progress of students participating in before school tutoring and in all other interventions. Every 6-8 weeks, we evaluate progress and make decisions about the next steps for each child. At the end of a 6-8 week cycle, students may be exited from their group, they may continue with their group, or they may need additional intervention.

We are pleased with the progress we have seen during the first several weeks of the tutoring program, and we look forward to including more students as the year progresses. If you have any questions, please reach out to your building principal.
The New Hartford Public Schools are committed to supporting the social emotional wellness of our school community. It is our district goal to continuously improve school climate that will allow students and staff to maximize their potential in a positive learning environment. Knowing that our emotions influence our actions throughout each day and guide our thoughts and interactions with others, drives our efforts in sustaining a positive emotional climate. We continue to build our emotional intelligence through the RULER approach. As part of our ongoing learning through RULER and desire to continuously support all of our students, all classrooms are working as a team to create Classroom Charters together. The purpose of the Charter is to allow everyone in a school, classroom or group community the chance to express how they want to feel at school. Next, they work together to agree upon the actions that can support those feelings.

Teachers facilitate a group discussion around the feelings we all want to have at school. The conversation centers on two questions: How would we like to feel in school? How will we help each other and ourselves to experience these feelings? These feelings and actions become agreed-upon norms for how everyone wants to feel in their classroom. For example, a classroom might agree that everyone wants to feel valued. An action that would support this feeling is to listen to each other. It is important that we recognize that we may want to feel differently in different environments. In an art classroom, the Charter may indicate that everyone wants to feel creative. An action to support this feeling would be to always explore new art tools with an open mind.

We recognize that all of us contribute to the emotional climate at school. The Charter focuses on enhancing a school’s emotional climate both as a teaching tool as well as a reflection tool. We care about each other at school and know that emotions matter. Each of us play a role in our school community to support each other in growing our emotional intelligence and ensuring that everyone feels emotionally valued. The Charter strengthens our collaborative efforts to becoming an emotionally safe and supportive school.
Leveraging Supports

New Hartford believes in striving for excellence by ensuring access for all students. Ensuring equitable learning conditions is complex work that acknowledges the unique characteristics of each child. The Department of Student Services takes a holistic approach with an eye toward equity when leveraging supports.

“Equity in education is achieved when student outcomes are not predicted by gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, language or ability. And where all students reach a level of efficacy and competence that supports a rewarding and productive life.” - Center for School Change

In New Hartford, equitable holistic access means going beyond test scores and considering the other needs that will enable our learners to reach their full potential. This includes partnering with our families to ensure we are looking at areas of emotion, behavior, communication, motor, and academics.

Behavior & Emotional Screening System (BESS)

Social Emotional

In the fall of 2020, the District piloted screeners for trauma and social emotional health. This year, our department streamlined this practice and significantly increased the number of students screened by targeting our focus specifically on behavior and emotion. Over 300 students were screened and 25% of those students screened have been identified to receive targeted interventions to support internalizing behaviors like anxiety, adaptive skills, and self control. Intervention groups will take place over 6 week cycles. Our mental health team will utilize a variety of research based strategies and programs to support our learners. Ultimately, the department goal is to see an overall increase in the percentage of students falling in typical ranges by the end of the school year.

Communication & Technology

The ability to exchange information is a fundamental life skill. Within the New Hartford Schools, we acknowledge and celebrate that our students are able to communicate in many forms. Our speech language pathologists use tools called (AAC) augmentative and alternative communication to leverage this critical skill. Our occupational therapist uses assistive technology to support communication of thoughts and ideas as an output tool during writing. Examples include low tech items such as visual picture cards, and visual schedules to prompt directions. A high tech AAC example includes student use of an ipad to
request or respond as their primary method of communication. Assistive tech tools include speech to text or predictive texting programs.

Consultation on the effective use of these tools is an important part to ensuring we are implementing practices aligned with what the research says is best practice. We are proud of our internal and external partnerships through the RISE Program, Extended Resource and Preschool. Each program works closely with specialists such as Behavioral Consultants, Boston Children’s-Speech and Language, The Bureau of Educational Services for the Blind and Oak Hill’s New England Assistive Technology.

**Academics**

We recognize that providing students access to core reading and math content is essential to building foundational academic skills. This year, students with specialized reading goals will receive a double dose of reading. This means that students will remain in class receiving support during the literacy block and then will receive a second dose of targeted multisensory reading instruction. Progress is monitored every 6 weeks to ensure growth.

In Math, we have also committed to ensuring all students remain in class during the core math lesson. Students requiring additional scaffolded supports are provided that instruction along with progress monitoring. Students in need of additional support may be identified for our expanded extended school year program (ESY). By effectively partnering with families, consultants and our own district expertise, we are confident that we have the programs and resources to effectively support our students’ individualized needs.
Building Blocks of Reading
The National Reading Panel defines the pillars of reading as phonological (phonemic) awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These five pillars are critical for students who are learning to read in the primary grades. In the intermediate grades, these skills enable students to use reading as a means to learning. To ensure that students receive research-based instruction in the areas of phonological awareness and phonics, we have incorporated two new curricular programs into some of our grades. This year, students in preschool through second grade will participate in a daily ten-minute phonological awareness lesson, using a program called Heggerty Phonological Awareness. Students in preschool through second grade have been using the Fundations program for phonics and spelling, and this program has now been expanded through fourth grade.

What is Phonological Awareness?
Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of sentences and words. For example, being able to identify words that rhyme and segmenting a sentence into words. The most sophisticated skill is called phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to work with individual sounds. For example, segmenting a word into its individual sounds. These skills build overtime and are crucial to decoding and spelling words. See the figure below for the progression of skills.

Heggerty Phonological Awareness Lessons
Students in preschool through second grade engage in a daily lesson that covers 8-10 phonological awareness skills. During this time, students use hand motions to segment words and sounds, count syllables and isolate initial, medial and final sounds. All of this work is done auditorily.

What is Phonics?
Phonics instruction teaches students the relationship between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. Phonics is necessary for decoding and spelling. Decoding happens when students sound out words using their phonics knowledge.

Fundations
Fundations offers a multisensory and systemic approach to teaching phonics, spelling and handwriting. Students use magnetic letters tiles, whiteboards and gross motor skills to build and spell words. Throughout the program, students are also building high frequency word knowledge, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills.

Support At Home
One of the best ways to support your child’s reading development is to have them read every day. Reading aloud together can also be a great way to have conversations about what they are reading and build vocabulary.

follow us on Twitter @newhtfd
The music program in the New Hartford Public Schools has much to offer all students from kindergarten through sixth grade. Fundamental skills needed for becoming a musician are taught from the beginning and the students are prepared for their music experiences in middle school and beyond. Vocal and instrumental music, steady beat, rhythm and note reading, music history, creating music, and music appreciation are the main areas of focus throughout the years at the New Hartford public schools.

Kindergarteners begin their musical experiences by learning about different musical opposites, like loud/quiet, high/low, fast/slow, and up/down. They also learn about the differences between their speaking voice, their quiet voice, their outside voice, and their singing voice. In a typical year, we sing a variety of songs and learn to play different percussion instruments; additionally, students begin to express themselves artistically through dance and art in conjunction with music from different eras and cultures.

1st graders build upon their musical skills learned in Kindergarten. They begin to develop more independence in music-making, and begin to play instruments like xylophones and metallophones. 1st graders also learn how to read basic music notation and how to sing melodic patterns found in our songs.

In 2nd grade, students continue their musical literacy by learning how to read more complex musical notation and symbols. They also learn musical vocabulary words and apply them as they listen and respond to music they hear. We continue to incorporate diverse literature, dance, and music from various eras and cultures. When students leave 2nd grade, they are ready to begin 3rd grade with strong content knowledge and skills to foster greater musical independence.

Students in 3rd grade work on building proficiency in more complicated rhythms and melodic patterns. They learn cooperation and coordination through dance and other movement activities. Additionally, students learn about the instruments that comprise bands and orchestras, including instrument families and the roles of conductors and composers.

4th graders have a strong focus on performance. They learn how to read a piece of music, including how the staff works, time signature, clef, and how to read the notes. In a typical year, students would use recorders; this year, they will be using barred instruments to learn and perform a variety of short songs.
Students in the upper elementary grades continue to expand their knowledge of music in their general music classes. Fifth graders learn to count rhythms and write melodies on the staff using traditional music notation. They also learn to compose short pieces using dynamics and explore music history through the study of composers of the Romantic Era.

Sixth graders broaden their knowledge of music by learning to improvise, arrange music, compose minimalist pieces, and develop an understanding of chords and how they function within a piece of music. Music history continues into the 20th century through the study of both Stravinsky and minimalism.

Students in 5th and 6th grade have the exciting opportunity to join the instrumental music program at Antolini School. Learning a band instrument involves both small-group instruction as well as full-band rehearsals. Throughout lessons students learn to perform on an instrument using the correct posture, embouchure, tone production, air support, tonguing, sticking, and reading music for their particular instrument.

Students in 6th grade further grow their skills through performing chamber music such as trios and duets. Full-band rehearsals for both grade levels give the students the opportunity to learn how to play together, balance their sound, listen across the band to coordinate their music, and create a beautiful tone while many instruments are playing at once.

4th graders have the chance to sing in Chorus at Antolini School. This year, they meet in the multipurpose room, spaced apart, to learn about healthy, safe, and joyful vocal production. Students learn proper posture and tone, how to sing in a group, literacy skills, and songs and dances from all over the world. In a typical year, Chorus would perform at seasonal concerts and community events.

Music is a wonderful way for students to express themselves, build self-confidence, and understand who we are as humans. We hope that when students move on to Northwestern Regional 7, they feel they’ve had a well-rounded musical experience throughout their time in the New Hartford public schools.
STEAM education continues engaging the students of New Hartford Public Schools. Students in all grades participate in collaborative learning, cognitive thinking, and elements of design through a variety of challenges and activities. Technology usage in a variety of forms is instrumental within instruction.

6th grade students are participating in the year long Advanced Manufacturing program in cooperation with Goodwin University. Matthew Dadona, Connecticut River Academy’s (CTRA) Advanced Manufacturing Program Administrator, conducts an on-site class each month with the students co-taught with Mrs. Pfeffer. CTRA, which is run by LEARN and Goodwin College, promotes themes of advanced manufacturing and environmental science.

Students have reviewed computer-aided design and have created name tags using 3D printing. Students were introduced to robotics and will spend the next months learning more about coding a robotic arm. They will then begin a project in which they will identify a need within their community, develop a solution and design a workable prototype.

5th grade students are engaged in a modified manufacturing program. Mr. Dadona and Mrs. Pfeffer co-teach a live class on a rotating schedule with the students. Students have used the Engineer Design Process to create individualized game pieces that they will create using a 3D printer and Tinkercad. Students will then move on to coding and circuitry work.

Students in grades 3-4 are working on building projects as they review the steps of the engineer design process. Students will engage in coding activities and robotics.

Kindergarten to Grade 2 students are currently learning about computational thinking as they work with coding and robots. They will then learn more about the engineer design process as they work collaboratively to solve STEAM building challenges.
Digital Teaching and Learning

Our district continues to recognize and embrace the changing landscape of education and the essential role that technology plays. Planning and implementation of instruction is streamlined to infuse lessons with technology and applications designed to improve student learning and achievement while increasing 21st Century skills.

1:1 Device Program

At the beginning of the school year every child is assigned their own chromebook for daily use in the classroom. This means that teachers and students have convenient access to devices whenever they need them, even when it is spontaneous. Once signed on to their device, students have access to their Clever dashboard which gives them easier access to the online applications they will use for instruction.

Classroom Promethean Boards

Promethean Boards are interactive boards that have not only simplified the learning process and made learning more “fun” they have also increased the level of engagement between teachers and students. Since their use teachers have noticed students become instantly engaged during instruction. Our teachers enthusiastically welcome the Promethean Boards in their classroom. Our goal is for every teacher to have a Promethean Board for instruction.

Digital teaching and learning does not replace traditional offline skills. Our teachers and staff continue to place huge emphasis on reading physical books, writing on paper and collaborating face to face. Digital devices in our classrooms work to create an interactive vigorous learning environment. The use of technology capitalizes on the joy of learning and challenges students to enhance their skills, abilities and knowledge.
Technology Update 2021 Edition

This time around we would like to give a brief overview of how we as a district shield our staff and students from cyber threats and inappropriate content at school and at home.

Layers of Protection for Staff and Students

In school, our first line of defense is our district firewall. Specifically, this is a UTM, a Unified Threat Management device. All traffic into and out of the district passes through this device. Incoming traffic is monitored and email alerts are dispatched to IT Staff in the event of suspicious activity. Nothing comes across our network without first passing through the district firewall.

Additionally, we employ a content filter through which all web traffic is directed. This system automatically checks for and blocks access to harmful or inappropriate web content for both staff and students.

The main device for student use continues to be the Chromebook. We now use a product called Securly to provide visibility into online activity, and to allow for notifications of flagged content. Securly provides content filtering both at home and in School and allowing for the blocking of inappropriate and time wasting content 24/7. It should be noted that at no time do we have access to, or control of chromebook web cameras. Web camera access is not a feature of Securly.

New this year is the implementation of an on-line Cybersecurity training system that is provided to all staff. This training consists of various short lessons on subjects like phishing, malware, cyber scams and the like. Additionally we conduct periodic email phishing tests to measure our level of readiness.

As the calendar year comes to a close, we are pleased with where we are. However we will not be complacent, we will continue to look at ways we can improve our technology, cybersecurity, and content filtering practices to support the mission of New Hartford Public Schools.

Twitter

With the help of social media outlets such as Twitter, our teachers and administrators connect positively with other educators, students and parents.

@newhtfd

Please contact your child’s classroom teacher for individual teacher accounts.
# New Hartford Public Schools Newsletter

Brian Murphy, Superintendent of Schools  
December 2021

**NEW HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
APPROVED SCHOOL CALENDAR 2021-2022

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5-Fourth of July Holiday  
17-Board of Education Meeting  
25, 28, 27-Professional Days  
30-First Day of School  
6-Labor Day Holiday  
5-Board of Education Meeting  
8-Professional Day  
11-Columbus Day Holiday

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2-Professional Day  
16-Board of Education Meeting  
22 & 23-1:00 Dismissal for Parent/Teacher Conferences  
24, 25, 26-Thanksgiving Recess  
7-Board of Education Meeting  
23-1:00 Dismissal  
24-31-Winter Recess Begins  
14-1:00 Dismissal for PD  
17-Martin Luther King Holiday  
19-Professional Day  
21-22-February Break

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11-1:00 Dismissal for PD  
23 & 24-1:00 Dismissal for Parent/Teacher Conferences  
15-Good Friday  
18-22-April Recess  
39-Memorial Day Holiday  
9-1160th Day/Last Day  
1-60 Dismissal  
10-Professional Day

**APPROVED BY THE BOE:**  
February 16, 2021

- Early Release Days  
- Professional Day for Teachers  
- No School

**SNOW DAY LEGEND:**  
- Blue = School Closing  
- Green = Late Opening  
- Yellow = Early Release  
(CLOSINGS WILL BE ADDED TO THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, IF NEEDED)

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| August 25 - November 12  
Report Card  
November 19, 2021 | November 15 - March 11  
Report Card  
March 18, 2022 | March 14 - Last day  
Report Card  
Last Day of School |