



New Fairfield Schools

2018-2019 Staff Recommended Positions

I. Since 2010, the New Fairfield Public Schools have decreased personnel by 28.90 full-time staffing equivalency (FTE).

II. During this same time, since 2010, alignment of curriculum and resources with the Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and Social Studies Standards, has created the need for personnel to support staff and students.

Staffing requests:

- Life Skills (Secondary)

The following positions are ongoing requests, positions that would help to improve the district. We understand the fiscal restraints under which we are operating, and look forward to the discussion regarding these positions.

- Math Teacher/Instructional Coach at Consolidated
- STEM Coach at Middle School and High School (*two positions*)
- Two School Safety Advocates

These requests increase the overall current full-time staffing equivalency (FTE) by 6.

III. This document also includes the rationale for maintaining the following:

- Team structure in grades 4 and 5 at Meeting House
- Team structure in grades 7 and 8 at the middle school
- Secondary Humanities Curriculum Coordinator and Professional Development Implementer

Life Skills Teacher (Secondary)

The Life Skills courses provide instruction to students who are identified with significant cognitive and/or pervasive developmental disabilities. The needs of these students require a functional curriculum focused on the acquisition of daily living and vocational skills leading to a successful transition to adult life within the community. These grade six through twelve classes provide instruction in practical academics, communication, community, domestic, leisure/recreation, and vocational skills utilizing a functional curriculum in the general education school building. These specialized classes emphasize communication, maximum independence, and opportunities to generalize skills in natural settings, as well as participation in general education activities with typical peers. Our high school and middle school currently have one staff member for both buildings dedicated to teaching life skills classes. Due to an increase in the number of students with significant needs at the secondary level, we are requesting an additional special education teacher to expand our life skills programming at both locations.

This additional person would enable us to offer more life skills classes at both the high school and middle school levels, and would support transition opportunities for our older students. Students will be scheduled for life skills classes, in addition to their mainstream courses. Each student's program will be individualized based on their IEP goals and objectives.

REPORTS TO: PPS Administration

SALARY: Negotiated through teachers' contract

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Comprehensive CT Certification in Special Education (165, 265, or 065)
- Solid understanding of the needs of students requiring life skills and transitional programming
- Excellent teaming, collaboration and communication skills
- Ability to differentiate instruction and provide inclusive education

GENERAL DUTIES:

- Lesson planning and delivery of high quality instruction, based on student IEP's
- Participation in interdisciplinary team meetings, PPT's, and consistent parent communication
- Identify academic strengths and needs to develop sound instructional plans for student growth
- Collaborate regularly with general educators and be skilled in providing on-going training and supervision to paraprofessionals
- Implement formal and informal assessments to track each individual student's progress and learning needs, adjust lesson plans accordingly
- Implement clear and consistent behavior management plans
- Develop and implement Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) for each student

Math Teacher/Instructional Coach Consolidated School

Consolidated currently has one staff member dedicated to serving as math coach to support the teachers in mathematics instruction. We are requesting a math teacher who would serve as an interventionist, primarily working with students who need support, and also assisting teachers as practicable. More time is needed to address students struggling with math. A math teacher will provide us with the ability to address the needs of more children who fall below the expected levels on benchmark assessments. The addition of a math teacher will also allow the math coach to provide more assistance for teachers and develop/adjust curriculum. Meeting House Hill School has a math teacher who supports students in need of intervention and extra support. Similar support is needed at Consolidated. This is the second year the district has tried to add this position.

REPORTS TO: Consolidated Administration

SALARY: Negotiated through teachers' contract

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Certification as a teacher in the State of Connecticut
- Incorporates all components of the Common Core State Standards and has received extensive professional development in effective instructional practices
- Successful experience as a teacher, with a strong math teaching experience
- Ability to work with staff on the analysis of student progress and to implement strategies to improve student learning
- Knowledgeable about current research on effective strategies in the teaching of mathematics

GENERAL DUTIES:

- Provide focused intervention to small groups of students in accordance with the district RTI plan
- Identify academic strengths and needs to develop sound instructional plans for student growth
- Use effective strategies in teaching and applying mathematics
- Work with teachers to analyze assessment data, to improve student learning, and to ensure teacher understanding of student progress

STEM Instructional Coach High School and Middle School (2)

As the high and middle school continue to develop and implement new curriculum in the areas of mathematics and science, it is crucial that teachers are supported with the knowledge and skill necessary to make required shifts in instruction and assessment practices. By providing ongoing, job-embedded professional learning through instructional coaching, the secondary schools will be able to leverage a research-based strategy for effecting positive change on student achievement through expanded and refined teacher practice. This is the second year the district has tried to add this position.

REPORTS TO:

Building Principal or his designee

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The STEM Instructional Coach will serve as a transformational teacher leader for the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. S/he is responsible for supporting the implementation of the high school's curricula, assessment practices, and instructional frameworks through job-embedded professional learning. The STEM Instructional Coach provides leadership in teaching and learning by supporting and advancing the high school's strategic priorities in alignment with district priorities.

SALARY: Negotiated through teachers' contract

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. The candidate shall have demonstrated ability to collaborate with administrators, faculty, students, and the community.
2. The candidate shall have a minimum of 3-5 years of outstanding classroom performance along with extensive experience and expertise in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics.
3. The candidate shall have extensive knowledge of digital learning theory and demonstrated ability to seamlessly integrate technology into the instructional process.
4. The candidate shall have had successful previous experience in instructional leadership.
5. The candidate shall demonstrate a level of professional competence and creative leadership necessary to inspire staff and effectively execute the duties and responsibilities indicated in the position description.
6. The candidate shall have a Master's Degree and teaching certification in a STEM field.

GENERAL DUTIES:

1. **CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION** - Guides and supports teachers in developing their ability to analyze and reflect upon their teaching and its effects on student learning. In collaboration with administrators and coordinators, supports professional growth by engaging teachers in a variety of formal and informal professional learning activities, including:
 - ongoing, purposeful cycles of collegial coaching that incorporate goal-setting, modeling/demonstrations, observation, feedback, and reflection;
 - professional learning communities, department meetings and/or student assistance team meetings that support data analysis, collective inquiry, and reflective dialogue on shared professional practice;
 - classroom visitations or “learning walks” that strengthen group reflection and inform planning;
 - workshops that facilitate access to sharing, construction, and analysis of information on theories, research, and models of teaching and learning;
 - blended learning that increases the possibilities for personalizing, differentiating, and deepening professional learning;
 - non-evaluative, collegial support for goal-setting, planning, and reflections for the SEED program.
2. **ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT** - Schedules time to:
 - respond to inquiries about curriculum, assessment, and instruction;
 - locate and disseminate instructional materials and resources;
 - support the integration of technology into curriculum, assessment, and instruction;
 - provide oral and/or written updates on the status of coaching goals and cycles;
 - participate in the curriculum development process.
3. **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS** - Maintains effective lines of communication with all stakeholders and interprets the instructional program to various constituencies. Provides oral and written reports to the Building Principal, Chief Academic Officer, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education, as requested.
4. **MANAGEMENT** - Assists coordinators and administrators in researching, ordering, and allocating program resources and materials.
5. **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES** - Serves on standing and special committees in the school when assigned, and attends parent-teacher meetings (in consultation with the Building Principal) and other activities of a professional nature. Participates in professional learning activities, including summer workshops, to develop and enhance skills in coaching and content-specific pedagogy.
6. **GENERAL** - Perform other duties as assigned by the Building Principal or designee.

School Safety Advocates (2)

Having two school safety advocates who could provide additional support for the safety and security of our schools and support the district safety plan would be chief reasons for adding the position. The district has tried to add this position for the past three years. Currently a School Resource Officer is the chief safety advocate of the district. Four crossing guards are currently on duty before and after school at each site--Consolidated, Meeting House Hill, the middle school, and the high school.

REPORTS TO: Superintendent working with School Resource Officer (SRO)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The School Safety Advocate assumes chief responsibility for overseeing the safety and security of our schools by walking the campuses and ensuring the safety plans are up-to-date and operational. This position also promotes positive school climate and culture.

SALARY: \$32,000 per advocate

QUALIFICATIONS:

- High School Diploma or equivalent. Associate of Arts Degree or higher preferred
- Successful experience and training in a security-related field or law enforcement experience preferred
- Dedication to ensuring safety of students and staff
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, a pleasant disposition and an ability to communicate with diplomacy and tact in sensitive situations
- Ability to complete the physical demands of the role
- Ability to maintain confidential information
- Ability to handle multiple, simultaneous responsibilities in possibly stressful situations

GENERAL DUTIES:

- Aid in enhancing school security and security procedures
- Serve as a physical presence at assigned schools and school-related functions
- Become acquainted and communicate with families and students
- Maintain a check on persons entering and leaving school grounds
- Report vulnerabilities at schools
- Remain vigilant of the school grounds and campus activity, and notifies the SRO/an administrator of concerns or violations on campus
- Use training to approach unauthorized persons for questioning
- Work with school staff to ensure entrances remain locked and secure
- Escort visitors to authorized areas as appropriate
- Use technology related to security in an appropriate and confidential manner
- Serve as an active member on safety committees and support the district safety plan

Maintaining the Grades 4 and 5 Team Structure

At Meeting House Hill School we have established an effective instructional team structure for both 4th and 5th grade learners. Since the 2016-2017 school year when we restructured our master schedule to best support the needs of all learners, we established large learning blocks and a daily intervention and enrichment (I/E) block to provide focused instructional support in all content areas. The teachers work in teams, allowing them to develop a deep understanding of a targeted content area. This shift enabled us to move forward with new curriculum standards in science and social studies, while also develop deeper knowledge of our mathematics curriculum. A reduction in staff would have a direct impact on the progress that we have made with training staff for the curriculum changes and their level of expertise for implementation. The instructional and math coaches have worked extensively with teacher teams to focus instructional strategies for varied content areas. Teachers have received ongoing and embedded professional development. The results of this work is evidenced in both SBAC and STAR assessments, which have shown strong gains for Meeting House.

In addition, we have been focusing on the workshop model for instruction in all content areas. This model promotes direct instruction through whole group mini-lessons and targeted instruction in small groups. Teachers provide individualized instruction for all learners through conferring. Teachers meet every two weeks in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to review data and group students based on academic need. The teams also provide targeted instruction through the I/E block.

A shift in 5th grade provides a common planning time for content area teachers. This planning time allows teachers to review and discuss lesson plans and highly effective instructional strategies. By allowing the content specific planning time, our instructional and math coaches can meet regularly with teachers. The structure of our current schedule provided such time. If we reduce staff, this rotation would not be possible and would create a gap for some classes.

We feel strongly that maintaining the team structure provides the best education for our learners and creates a smooth transition to the next level, as this team model continues in the middle school. Teams allow teachers to focus on all learners across the team and creates an environment for students to make connections with multiple staff members. Through this model, we will best prepare our students for success academically, emotionally and socially, as we continue to define excellence in our district.

Future years with lower enrollment would necessitate adjusting the schedule. Several options would be to create a three teacher team, create a cross grade level team for math, or have one self-contained class.

Maintaining the Middle School Team Structure

The middle school structure is defined by teams--a group of teachers who work together to meet the needs of a large group of assigned students. At New Fairfield Middle School the team consists of an English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies teacher. These teachers work with 100 students and have common planning time every day and two consecutive team planning periods every 8 days to discuss student data, interventions, and instructional strategies.

During the 2016-2017 school year the team structure was eliminated in grade 6. Currently the sixth grade is comprised of 7 teachers. Four (4) of the teachers teach four (4) sections of their specific subject area. Specifically, two (2) math teachers have four (4) math sections, two (2) science teachers have four (4) science sections, and the remaining teachers have three (3) sections of their specific subject area and one (1) section of social studies. These teachers work with approximately 85 students, have common planning time every day and two consecutive team planning periods every 8 days to discuss student data, interventions, and instructional strategies.

The enrollment projected for 2017-2018 required us to make a decision regarding maintaining the middle school structure. We kept the current middle school structure and the 8th grade continued to have two (2) teams with each teacher having four (4) sections of their subject. In seventh grade the science and social studies teachers have three (3) sections of their subject and one section of Core 21, a research-based project course. The math and ELA teacher have three (3) sections of their subject and one (1) subject of remediation for students who need work in reading, writing, and math skills.

The Association of Middle Level Educators philosophy is predicated on a team of teachers working together to plan and instruct a group of students. Their website states, "Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships. The ways schools organize teachers and group and schedule students has a significant impact on the learning environment. Interdisciplinary teams common planning time, block scheduling, and elimination of tracking are related conditions that contribute to improved achievement."

If we decrease the seventh or eighth grade by one position certification issues would cause the middle school to adopt a junior high model. A junior high model would mean teachers have multiple grade levels, eliminating the ability for teams of core teachers to review student data, create intervention groups, and differentiate curriculum to meet students at their level. It also prohibits counselors from working with teachers on the social/emotional needs of students, and prevents the intersection of curriculum among subjects and the enrichment of curriculum such as the rocket days that integrate all four core subjects and include the launching of rockets. The team model is essential to the whole child and to the success of each student.

Secondary Humanities Curriculum Coordinator and Professional Development Implementer

The secondary humanities curriculum coordinator has been a productive member of our administrative team in supporting curriculum writing and professional learning at the middle school and high school in English language arts and social studies. In alignment with the district plan since the fall of 2016, he has worked to revise the curriculum in both departments to align with the necessary rigor for new assessments at the state and district level. He worked to locate and implement new resources for social studies for grades sixth through tenth, while also updating the order of courses offered to align with the Connecticut State Social Studies Framework. During the 2016-17 school year, the 6th through 8th grade English language arts curriculum was approved by the Board of Education.

The secondary humanities curriculum coordinator and professional development implementer made strides in teacher learning with a push towards pedagogy that emphasizes student learning, retention, and classroom engagement. Strategic professional development was planned and delivered on the workshop model to support English language arts teachers at the middle school with their revised curriculum. Professional learning also occurred at the high school level in English language arts on intentional teaching practices, using learning targets, and backwards design planning based on the English department competencies. Professional development continues to be offered in both departments in a strategic manner that allows for continuous teacher learning and exploration on topics that lead to student learning.

The curricula for English language arts for grades sixth through eighth was approved by the Board of Education in 2017. Currently, the secondary humanities curriculum coordinator is working to lead the revision process of the high school English curriculum. This process includes an effort towards vertical alignment with the English department competencies as well as with the New Fairfield High School Attributes of the Graduate. The curriculum writing process is organized to create a cohesive experience where students learn the necessary skills at each grade level towards becoming college and career ready. This process will lead to a completed core curriculum ready for use and approval in May 2018.

The curriculum for social studies is in the organization process as teachers begin use of the new resources purchased for grades sixth through eleventh. The secondary humanities curriculum coordinator is leading the writing process and the professional learning with the new resources within the department. Using a variety of new resources and online tools, work is being done to incorporate these new tools to their fullest potential. Within the social studies department, curriculum is also being written and organized to create a cohesive experience for all students. Curriculum is being written to incorporate a more inquiry-based experiences in line with the direction of the Connecticut State Social Studies Frameworks. This process will lead to a completed core curriculum in May 2018.

The position works to assist teachers and improve student learning to accomplish the following:

- Increase teacher effectiveness by providing high-quality, consistent professional development in the implementation of the new curriculum.

- Increase student learning and improve achievement in the core areas at the secondary level by working with teachers to implement the new curricula.
- Assist teachers in clarifying learning targets, and increasing the depth of knowledge and rigor in the classrooms.
- Provide continuous feedback through informal classroom observations and walkthroughs.
- Lead evaluation and reflection practices on current units to ensure units are meeting their intended goals.
- Improve assessment practices to ensure students meet necessary learning standards.

Next steps:

- Updating the high school English curriculum (2017-2018)
- Updating the social studies curriculum for grades 6-12 (2017-2018)
- Continued professional development on the Workshop Approach to teaching necessary skills in ELA and Social Studies. (2017-2019)
- Continued professional development on Historical Thinking Skills and Inquiry-Based Learning Strategies in social studies. (2017-2019)
- Creation of a formal process to evaluate, review and revise curriculum (2017-2019)
- Creation of benchmark assessments for reading and writing grades sixth through twelfth (2017-2019)
- Creation of benchmark assessments for social studies (2018-2019)
- Working to calibrate and fine tune scoring criteria related to the course competencies and Attributes of the Graduate (2018-2019)
- Increased communication to inform parents and the community of learning expectations. (2018-2019)
- Using the competencies, performance indicators, habits of mind, and Attributes of the Graduate to provide context for communication between school and family. (2018-2019)

Curriculum writing is an ongoing process with units needing to be reviewed, reflected on and revised on a yearly basis. This position ensures that New Fairfield's secondary schools are continuously at the forefront of curriculum development in English and social studies, offering our students with the most up to date curriculum centered on sound pedagogy. It also allows for consistent and pointed professional development designed to support teachers in implementing the designed curriculum with fidelity.