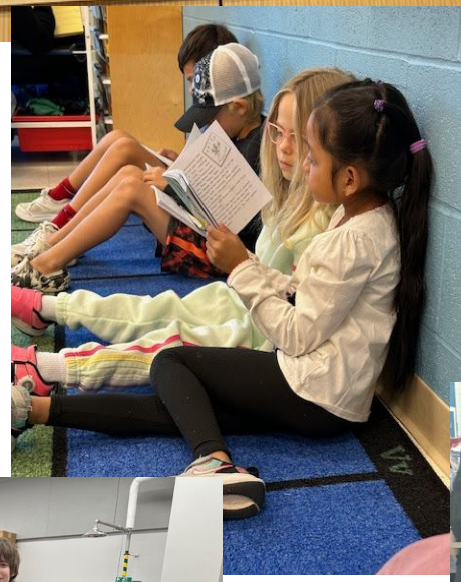
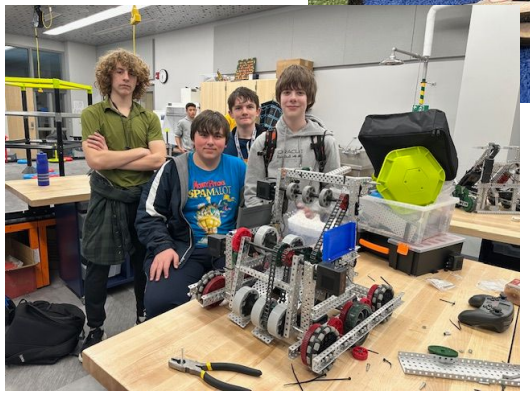
New Fairfield Public Schools Strategic Plan Update

NFPS Board of Education
May 1, 2025


Student Panel
With Introduction by
Kris Woleck
Facilitated by James
D'Amico





Our Vision

The five pillars of our **Vision of the Learner** articulate the desired attributes and outcomes for all learners in their journey through New Fairfield Public Schools.

Knowledgeable Scholars	Talented Communicators	Critical & Creative Thinkers	Engaged Global Citizens	Self-determined & Self-reliant Individuals
				
Pursue their interests and make meaning while developing a depth of background knowledge in all of the core academic domains as well as in life skills such as financial literacy, that they can use to solve problems and succeed in life.	Read, write, listen, speak, create and view skillfully, critically and confidently. They can adapt their style and message for a variety of purposes, situations and audiences. As a result, they have strong relationship skills and can collaborate well. They can manage conflict confidently and respectfully.	Access, evaluate and apply information to solve problems, pursue their curiosities and make decisions. They will grow their creativity through experiences within the fine and performing arts which will further support their ability to think critically and creatively.	Learn about the history of their local community, our country and other countries around the world to understand the value and unique principles of our American democracy. They learn what other cultures are like so that they can understand, respect and embrace diversity, be socially aware, be kind, compassionate, empathetic and respectful. They obtain information from multiple, reliable sources and use it to be active, civic-minded participants within and beyond their community.	Set goals, persevere, and reflect as they learn to understand and regulate their emotions and reactions, which will foster their overall health, wellness and mindfulness. Through this they will become intentional, resilient, independent and most importantly, self-reliant.

Predictable World


Unpredictable World

Curriculum

HOW STUDENTS LEARN

- Professional Learning Sessions
- Student Voice / Focus Groups

SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

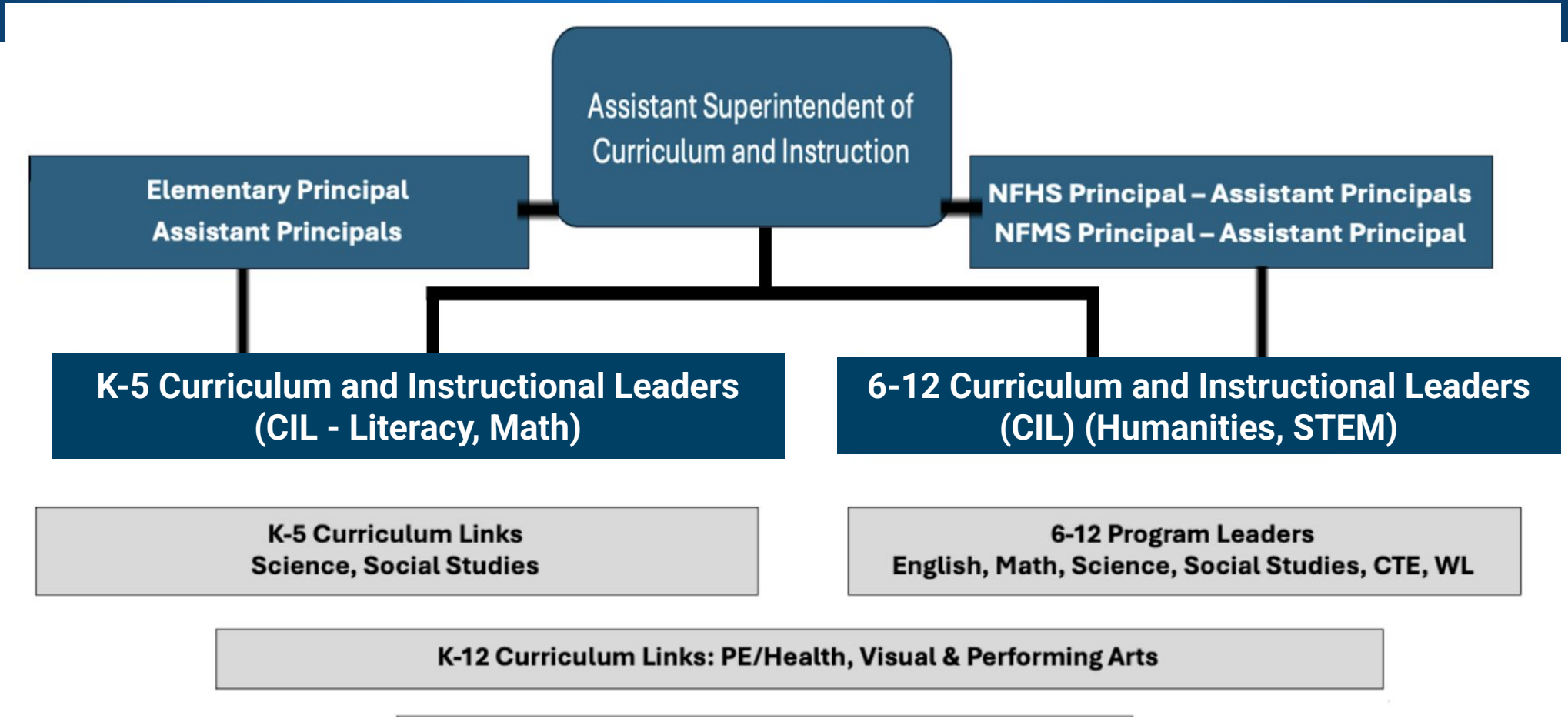
- Curriculum Framework / Criteria / Guidebook
- Curriculum Design Cycle (5-Year Map)
- Electronic Curriculum Platform

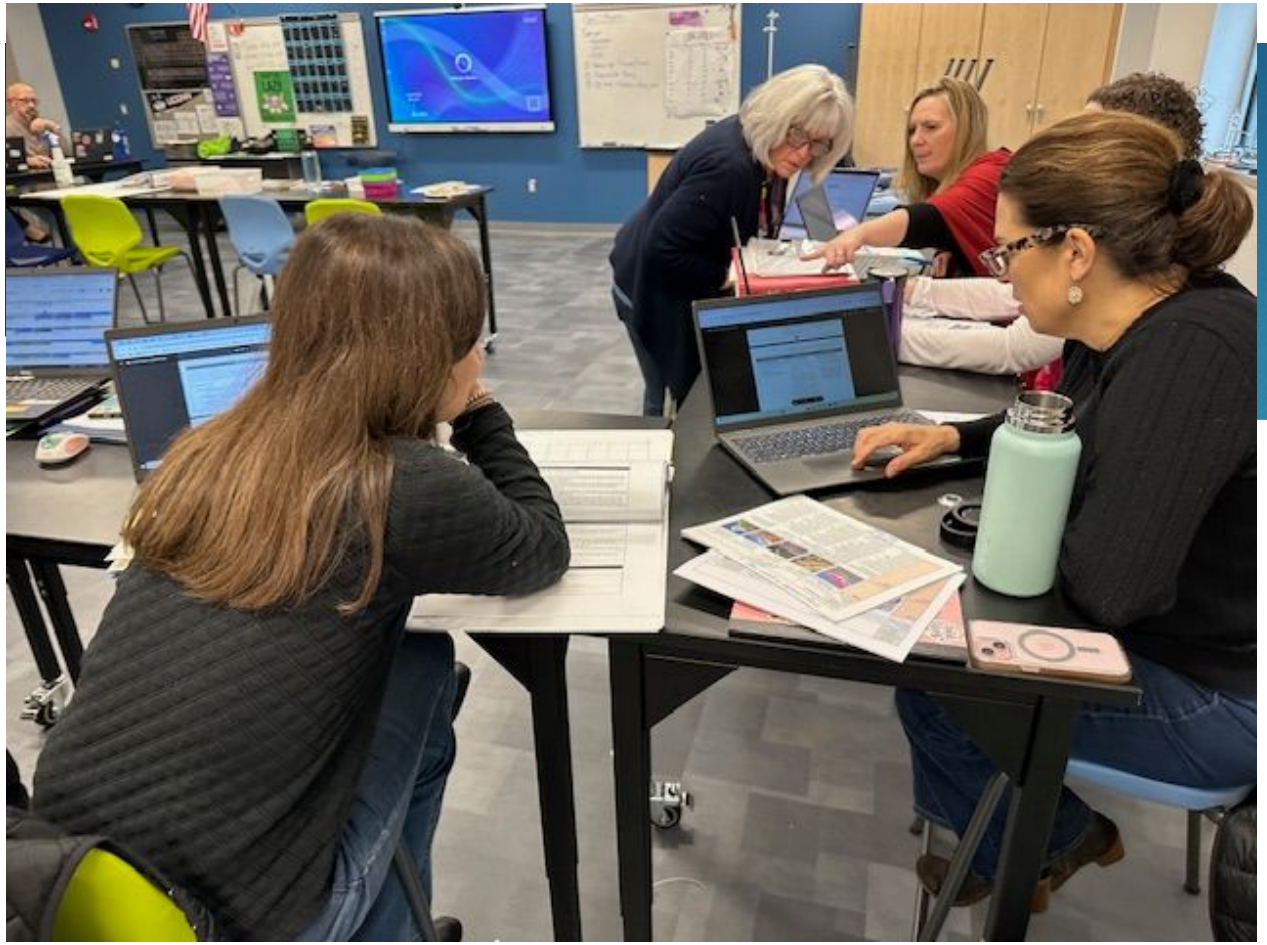
IMPLEMENTATION

- Stage 1 / Transfer Goals - All Disciplines
- Full Curriculum Model - PreK-12 Science
- Standards Review / Research - Social Studies

Knowledgeable Scholars	Talented Communicators	Critical & Creative Thinkers	Engaged Global Citizens	Self-determined & Self-reliant Individuals
				

NFPS PK-12 Curriculum Leadership





Curriculum Design

Stage 1 Unit Design Example

Unit 1: Uncovering the Role of Cells in Life

Draft Date	Course	Grades	Subjects	Team
11-15-2024 @ 02:15	Science - Grade 7	7	Science & Engineering	Jean Gephart

Focus of the Story

Is a corn kernel alive? How do you know?

We begin our year exploring these questions to understand the characteristics of life. By planting corn kernels, using microscopes, and conducting experiments, we gather evidence to answer whether corn kernels are alive to understand the hidden processes inside their cells.

About the Learner

In 6th grade, students built foundational knowledge of matter, energy flow, and system interactions, exploring food webs and molecular behaviors. These experiences prepared them to understand living things as systems, connect cellular processes like photosynthesis to energy transfer, and investigate cell structures and functions. In 7th grade, they deepen this understanding, laying the groundwork for genetics and heredity studies.

Possible Misconceptions:

- Cells are not alive because they are too small to see or act independently.
- All cells are identical and perform the same functions.
- Plants and animals do not share similar cellular structures or processes.
- Energy production in cells (like photosynthesis) occurs in all cell types, not just specific organelles like chloroplasts.

Curriculum Storyboards

Units

UNIT 1

Unit 1: Uncovering the Role of Cells in Life

FOCUS OF THE STORY

Is a corn kernel alive? How do you know?

We begin our year exploring these questions to understand the characteristics of life. By planting corn kernels, using microscopes, and conducting experiments, we gather evidence to answer whether corn kernels are alive to understand the hidden processes inside their cells.

UNIT 2

Unit 2: Understanding Genetic Inheritance

FOCUS OF THE STORY

Why do siblings, even twins, look a little different?

We examine cells more closely to learn about DNA and how traits are passed down and shaped by the environment. Through activities like using Punnett squares to predict traits and growing different plants, we uncover how genetics applies to real-world challenges in farming, medicine, and beyond.

UNIT 3

Unit 3: How Adaptations Drive

FOCUS OF THE STORY

How does what you do impact if a species thrives or becomes extinct?

Building on what we learned about genetics, we investigate how traits, the environment, and human actions determine whether animals survive or go extinct. Peppered moths and woolly mammoths help us examine how species change over time and what we can do to protect them.

UNIT 4

Unit 4: Human Choices and Their Impact on

FOCUS OF THE STORY

How might our snack choices affect the rainforest and animals that live there?

Continuing our study of adaptation and ecosystems, we connect how the ingredients in everyday snacks, like candy bars, are sourced and how those choices impact plants, animals, and their habitats. We investigate the effects of farming practices on ecosystems to uncover how humans shape life on Earth. This can help us make informed, sustainable decisions for the future.

UNIT 5

Unit 5: Earth's History Through Fossils and

FOCUS OF THE STORY

How could fossils from the same animal be found on continents separated by oceans?

Combining what we have learned about ecosystems, extinction, and adaptation, we see how Earth's shifting surface affects the survival of plants, animals, and their habitats. Using fossils, rocks, and maps, we investigate how Earth's changes connect to a species' evolution and extinction and predict how Earth's puzzle pieces continue to shift and reshape the world.

DRAFT March, 2025

New Fairfield Public Schools

Curriculum Design Handbook

This handbook shares the guiding principles, organizational structures, and processes for curriculum design in the New Fairfield Public Schools. It is intended to be a resource and reference for all staff both in understanding elements of our curriculum and when undertaking curriculum design in the district.

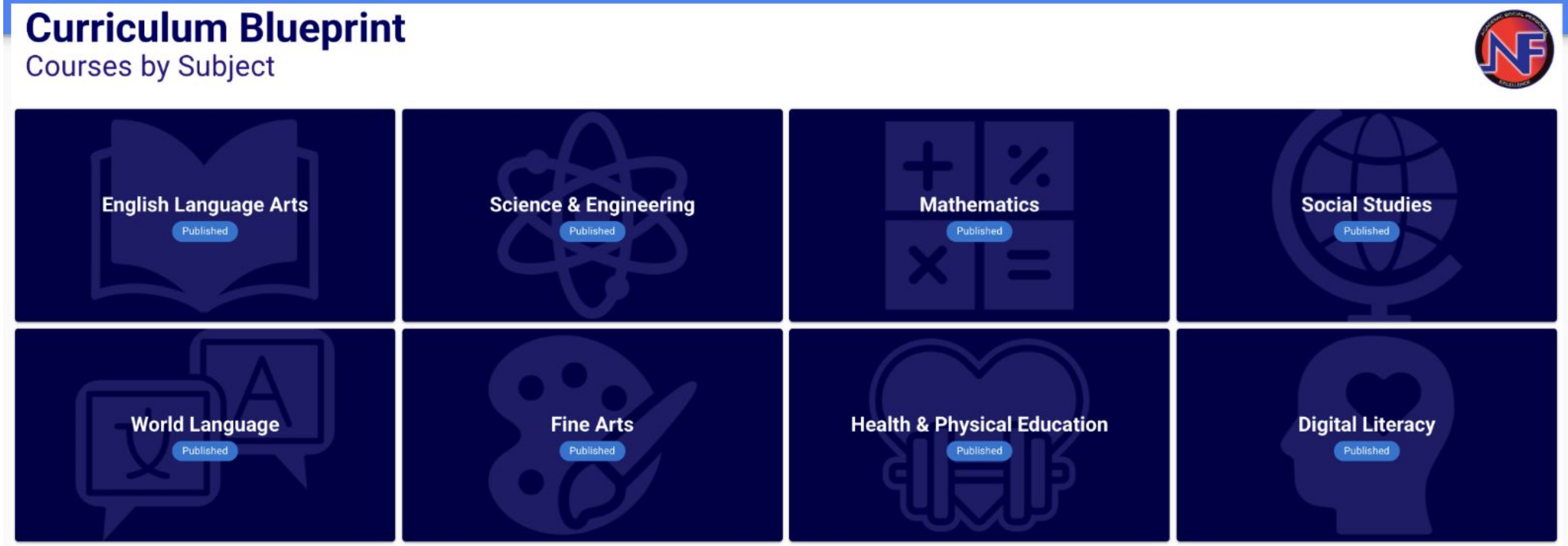
New Fairfield Public Schools Curriculum Unit Design Criteria - REVIEW Tool

Curriculum Area / Course Title: Grade Level:

Unit Title: Date of Review:

Unit Overview	Feedback	Y
The *unit overview / storyline* concisely tells the "story" of the unit in terms of content and concepts.		
"About the student" provides unit-relevant insights re: how students learn, prior knowledge, and/or misconceptions.		
The unit makes connections to competencies of the NFPS *Vision of the Learner.*		
Stage 1 - Desired Results	**Feedback**	**Y**
Standards *Standards* from current national or state curriculum standards are prioritized and aligned to the core concepts and learning (e.g., the essence) of the unit.		
Standards balance "content" and "practice" standards (if applicable).		
Transfer *Transfer goals* are stated as long-term outcomes that are generalizable and require application of learning with flexibility and fluency.		
Meaning *Enduring understandings* (stated as full sentences) articulate deep conceptual understanding and can be measured by performance or product.		
Essential questions are open-ended and prompt inquiry and discussion about the unit's ideas and the discipline. They can be used by learners for reflection & self-assessment throughout the unit. (Some will be revisited in future units/ grades.)		
Acquisition *Knowledge* is relevant, valid, and stated as key factual information and vocabulary. ("Student will know …")		
Skills are relevant and able to be demonstrated. ("Students will be able to …")		

NFPS Curriculum Blueprint (www.newfairfieldschools.org)



Evidence of Impact: Student Voice

I have noticed changes in my science class as the year has gone on. We have done more interactive assignments that require more critical thinking.

I think that the way recent units have been designed incorporate a healthy connection between real world experiences and events and the science behind it.

I really like how each unit that we work on smoothly transitions into the next one. Like proteins into enzymes, enzymes into cells, cells into the cell membrane, and so on and so forth.

Evidence of Impact: Student Voice

I would like to have more units with driving phenomena. Whenever there is a clear question we are trying to answer during a unit, I tend to remember more of the information I learned.

If I could redesign a part of a unit … I would be sure to include a project that puts everything we learned in a unit together for an overall conclusion of what the unit was about.

Instruction

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

- Professional Learning Sessions
- Professional Resource E-Warehouse
- AI Work Group

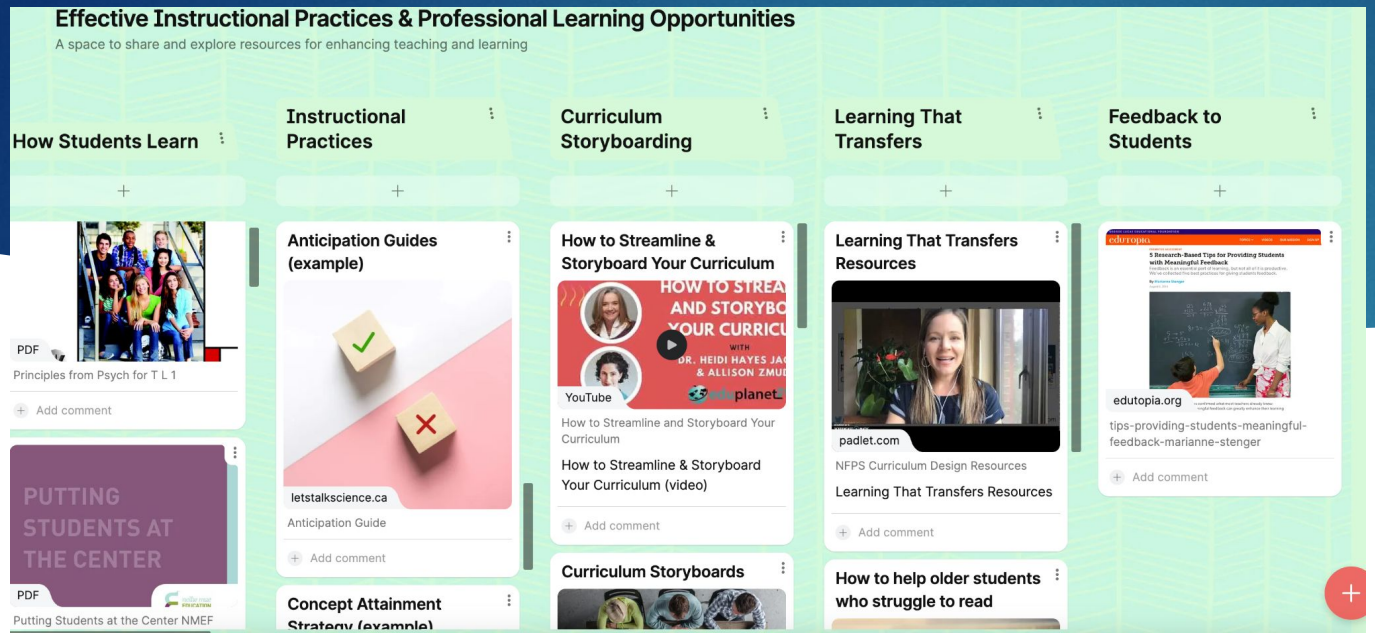
VISION OF THE LEARNER

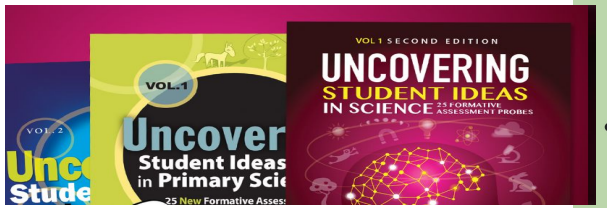
- VoL Competency Continuum
- Assured Experiences w/Student Work
- Student Self-Assessment & Feedback

Knowledgeable Scholars	Talented Communicators	Critical & Creative Thinkers	Engaged Global Citizens	Self-determined & Self-reliant Individuals
				

Using Data with Data Protocols

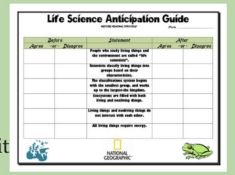
Professional Learning Resources

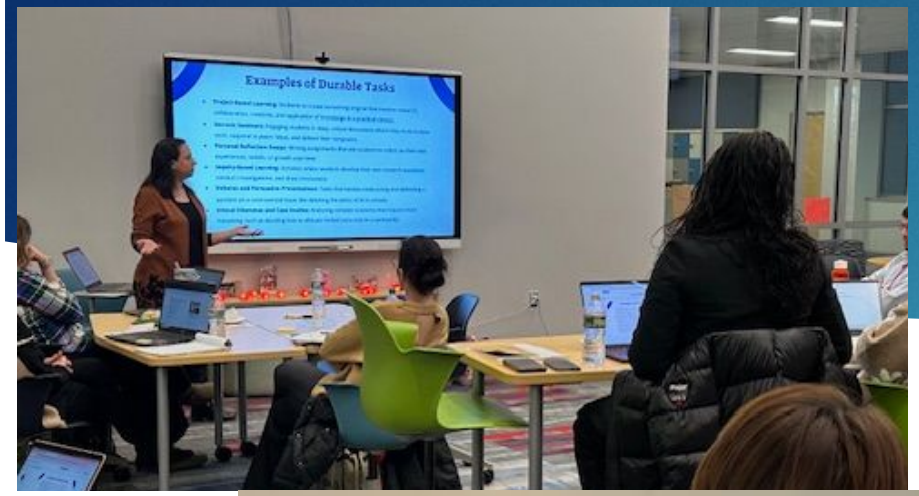


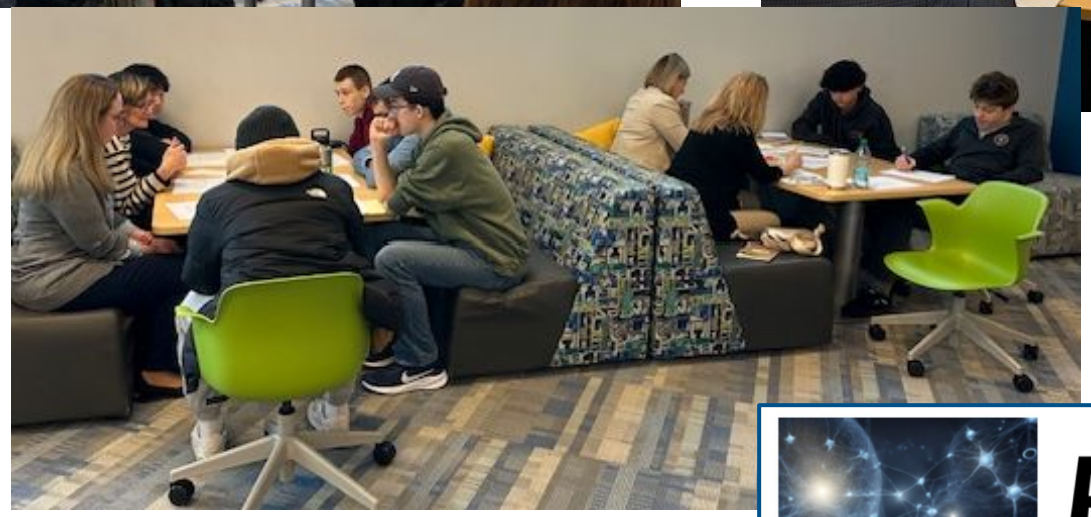


Science Misconceptions What's Next?

- Include more activities in which students reflect on their learning including
  - identifying their own misconceptions
  - tracking their progress in overcoming misconceptions
  - Warm up polls for student thinking
- Use anticipation guides as a pre and post assessment in a unit
  - Students can compare changes
  - Students find evidence from class activities to support new claims
- Create a class consensus summary table at the end of a unit including evidence from class activities Summary Table







AI Work Group

New Fairfield Public Schools

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF AI (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

The goal of digital literacy in New Fairfield Public Schools is to ensure students' digital safety and wellness, deepen their ability to evaluate and use digital tools and sources, and foster social responsibility in the digital world. Guided by the principles below, AI is one component of this broader digital literacy landscape.

About the Role of AI

We believe that ...

- AI can augment and enhance learning when utilized with human connection, intentionality, judgment, and interaction.

About Accessibility

We believe that ...

- All learners should have the opportunity to develop meaningful, age-appropriate skills with AI and understand its capabilities and limitations.

About the Learner

We believe that ...

- Critical thinking skills, including analysis, questioning, and reflection, support the appropriate use of AI and are to be balanced with strong foundational skills.

About Ethics & Safety

We believe that ...

- Academic integrity, acceptable use of AI, and social responsibility must be upheld, with ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders.

About Continuous Improvement

We believe that ...

- It is necessary to continually learn, reflect, and refine skills given the ongoing research and rapidly-changing development of AI technologies.

These **principles** guide our ongoing commitment to the integration of AI in alignment with the **NFPS Vision of the Learner** to prepare students for an increasingly global and digital world.

Knowledgeable Scholars	Talented Communicators	Critical & Creative Thinkers	Engaged Global Citizens	Self-determined & Self-reliant Individuals
				

NFPS Vision of the Learner

KNOWLEDGEABLE SCHOLARS	
Performance Dimension	**Indicators**
Curiosity	• Reads closely, widely, and deeply • Seeks new knowledge and skills • Interested in the way others behave, think, and feel • Asks original and thought-provoking questions
Resourcefulness	• Manages time efficiently • Strategically finds and leverages information and necessary resources to support learning • Looks for alternatives when faced with a problem rather than giving up or waiting for answers
Application and Transfer	• Uses prior knowledge to assist in current learning • Applies knowledge and skills to solve problems, including problems that may be unfamiliar or ill-defined • Transfers learning to new contexts or new situations

Wellness

MOVEMENT

- Professional Learning Sessions
- Flexible Use of Space
- Outdoor Learning Spaces
- School-Based Movement programs

THE WHOLE STUDENT

- Developmental Guidance Program (Grades 9-12)
- PreK-12 Social Emotional Resource Selection
- Multi-Tiered Supports (SEL / Behav) Framework

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Family Education / Outreach Series
- Student Leadership Groups / Unified Programs
- District Staff Wellness Committee

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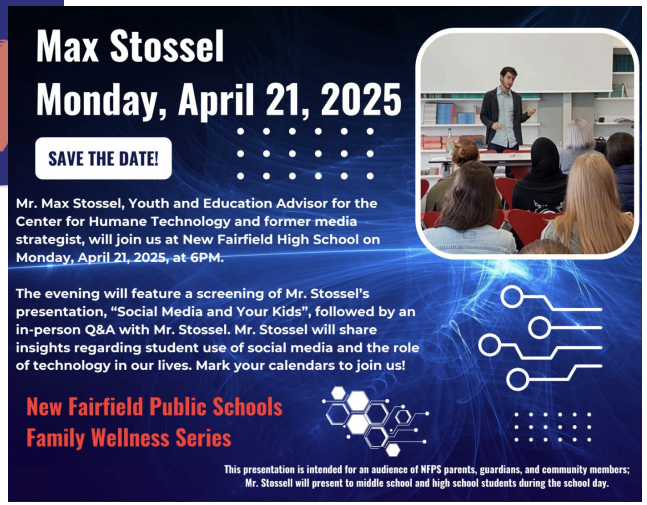
Unified Programs

Developmental Guidance Sessions

NFHS Alumni Panel



	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
ELA / English	Monitor / Revise (K-5 Implementation)	Research (6-12)	Design	Implement	Monitor / Revise
Mathematics	Monitor / Revise	Monitor / Revise	Research (K-5 Implementation)	Design (K-5 Implementation)	Implement (K-5 Implementation)
Social Studies	Research	Design	Implement	Monitor / Revise	Monitor / Revise
Science	Design	Implement	Monitor / Revise	Monitor / Revise	Research
World Language	Research	Design	Implement	Monitor / Revise	Monitor / Revise
PE / Health	Monitor / Revise	Research	Design	Implement	Monitor / Revise
Fine & Performing Arts	Monitor / Revise	Monitor / Revise	Research	Design	Implement
CTE (Career and Technical Education)	Design	Implement	Monitor / Revise	Monitor / Revise	Research
Digital Literacy	Research (Spring 2025)	Design	Implement	Monitor / Revise	Monitor / Revise

Looking Ahead: 2025-26

Curriculum Goal	**PK-12 Science Stage 2 & 3; Prepare for Implementation**
	PK-12 Social Studies Curriculum Design
	6-12 World Language Curriculum Design
	PK-12 Digital Literacy Curriculum Research and Mapping
	9-12 Mathematics Course Updates and Enhancement ***(Geometry, Precalculus, Statistics)***
	6-12 ELA / English Research; K-12 PE / Health Research
Instruction Goal	**AI Professional Learning Institute**
	K-5 Literacy Resource Feedback, Integration, and Enhancement
Wellness Goal	**School Climate Training** ***(in alignment with new School Climate legislation)***

Linking Curriculum to Instruction …

And Beyond …

Ambitious, Aspirational, and with Appreciation