Board of Education Regular Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2026 7:00 PM
BOE Meeting Access: BOE (5/21/26 at 7 p.m.) Web: https://zoom.us/j/92474648575 Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 924 7464 8575, 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

III. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

III.A. May 7, 2026 - Regular

IV. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -** ***The Board welcomes public participation. Pursuant to our Board Policy, public participation is limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker and a total of no more than thirty (30) minutes total for the entire meeting. Individuals who wish to speak longer are encouraged to attend any and all related subcommittee meetings where most of the board's groundwork is done. We value your input, but due to these time limitations, we ask you to be concise and to observe the rules of common courtesy. [9320(a) of Board Bylaws]***

VI. **BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

VI.A. Chairman's Report

VI.B. Superintendent's Report

VI.C. Student Representatives' Report

VI.D. Committee Reports

VI.D.1. Business Operations/Resource Management *(Greg Flanagan)*

VI.E. Liaison Reports

VI.E.1. Board of Finance *(Ed Sbordone)*

VI.E.2. Parks and Recreation Committee *(K. LaTourette, G. Flanagan)*

VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

VII.A. Strategic Plan EOY Update

VII.B. Central Office Project Update

VII.C. FY27 Budget Update

VIII. **ACTION ITEMS**

VIII.A. Personnel Report

VIII.B. FY26 Supplemental Appropriation for Special Education Unanticipated Costs

VIII.C. Non-Union Salaries and Benefits and Contracts *(To be voted on after Executive Session.)*

IX. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -** ***The Board welcomes public participation. Pursuant to our Board Policy, public participation is limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker and a total of no more than thirty (30) minutes total for the entire meeting. Individuals who wish to speak longer are encouraged to attend any and all related subcommittee meetings where most of the board's groundwork is done. We value your input, but due to these time limitations, we ask you to be concise and to observe the rules of common courtesy. [9320(a) of Board Bylaws]***

X. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

XI. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

XII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING NON-UNION CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

XIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – May 7, 2026

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

ABSENT: Greg Flanagan and Samantha Mannion

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Middle School Social Studies Teacher Sarah Sheaffer, Middle School Science Teacher Rachel Wilson, and Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 6, 2026 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.
B. April 23, 2026 - Special meeting - Approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Approved by consensus

V. RECOGNITION ~ CABE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Middle School Social Studies Teacher Sarah Sheaffer awarded 8th Grade student Shannon Ottush with the 2026 CABE Student Leadership Award for the Middle School.

Middle School Science Teacher Rachel Wilson awarded 8th Grade student Alex Mattiace with the 2026 CABE Student Leadership Award for the Middle School.

High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau awarded high school students Caylin Petzold and Daniel Sanchez with the 2026 CABE Student Leadership Award for the High School.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report

Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:

- Noted that this week is Teacher Appreciation Week and Nurse Appreciation Week. He thanked all the teachers, staff, and nurses throughout the district.
- Spoke of the great news regarding funding for the bus lot.
- Wished students good luck with their exams.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw spoke of the following:

- Thanked teachers, nurses and staff throughout the district for all their hard work, especially during Teacher Appreciation Week and Nurses Appreciation Week.
- Encouraged all taxpayers to vote at the budget referendum this Saturday, May 9th from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- There was a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC on April 7th.
- A total of 79 students participated in the Music Department trip to Disney last month.
- The Spring Chorus was held on April 29th.
- The Senior Prom will be held on May 16th.
- The Senior Trip to Six Flags will be on May 28th.
- The Seniors will participate in "Grad Walk" on June 10th.
- High School Graduation will be held on Friday, June 12th.

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- Two students represented New Fairfield at the DECA Nationals in Atlanta.
- The Junior Prom was held on May 2nd.
- Junior Jump Start will be held on May 27th.
- The High School/Middle School Art Show will be held from May 19-21st.
- The Unified Theater Production will be held on May 15th.
- New Fairfield Unified Sports will host a Mobile Penguin pledge to support Special Olympics.
- The Music Department Banquet will be held on May 20th.
- The last day of school will be June 22nd.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this subcommittee met and reviewed the budget as of March 31st. There is a deficit of $1,112,214. Once payments from the Excess Cost Grant is subtracted, the BOE will need to ask the Town for an Additional Appropriation of $455,678. The primary reason for this deficit is necessary outplacement needs for Special Education students. Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Food Service fund at the Middle School had a surplus which was used to update the kitchen. It was noted that this surplus can only be used for this fund.

2. Curriculum - Amy Johnson noted that this subcommittee met on April 27th and discussed a potential international trip to Budapest, Krakow, and Prague for July 2027. The subcommittee also reviewed grading redos and assessments.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on April 8th and voted on the final mark up for the 2026-2027 budget. The BOS budget was cut by $80,000 and the BOE budget was cut by $150,000. First Selectman Pat Del Monaco noted that this cut can come from Police Salaries. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Craw spoke of factors that contribute to how decisions are made regarding cuts. The BOF also voted to include advisory questions on the ballot and it was noted that the text of the questions is regulated by State Statute. The budget referendum will be held on Saturday, May 9th from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

Carrie DePuy noted that:

- The propane vendor was on site to give a quote. This quote has not been received yet.
- The NEASC accreditation visit will be in two years.

- Additional funding has been secured on a State level for the bus lot. It is hopeful that the project will begin this summer. Carrie DePuy thanked the bus drivers for their hard work and patience with the temporary bus lot. Dr. Craw spoke of the enhanced safety that will be realized with the new bus lot.

B. New Fairfield Middle School Facilities Survey of Conditions

Carrie DePuy noted that a survey of facilities for the Middle School will be sent out soon. This will enable the district to figure out what exactly is needed. Responses should be back by mid-June.

C. Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Dr. Craw noted that the budget referendum will be held on Saturday, May 9th from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Absentee ballots will be available at Town Hall on Friday, May 8th from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for April 30, 2026, as recommended by the administration. Amy Johnson seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

B. Board of Education Policy

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Policy 5141.21-Administering Medication as presented**.** Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

C. Global Leadership Summit Student International Trip Proposal

There was a brief discussion of a proposed trip to Budapest, Krakow, and Prague for July 2027, specifically reviews of the company and the keynote speaker.

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Global Leadership Summit Student International Trip as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone **OPPOSED**: Sue Huwer

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores spoke of a proposed contest for high school students to design the "I Voted" stickers for the next election in honor of the 250th anniversary of the United States.

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Kathy Baker asked what the schools have planned to celebrate United States 250th.

Kathy Baker asked why eye screening is no longer being given to 2nd Graders.

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kimberly LaTourette thanked teachers and nurses on behalf of Teachers Week and Nurses Week. She reminded residents to vote at the budget referendum this Saturday, May 9th.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Kloos

New Fairfield Public Schools Strategic Plan Update

NFPS Board of Education
May 21, 2026

Our Vision

The five pillars of our **Vision of a 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
				

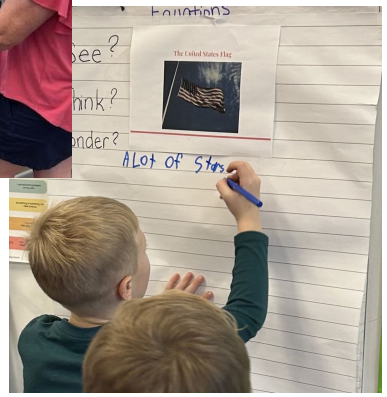
Curriculum, Instruction, Wellness















Curriculum

HOW STUDENTS LEARN

- Professional Learning Sessions
- Student Voice / Focus Groups

SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

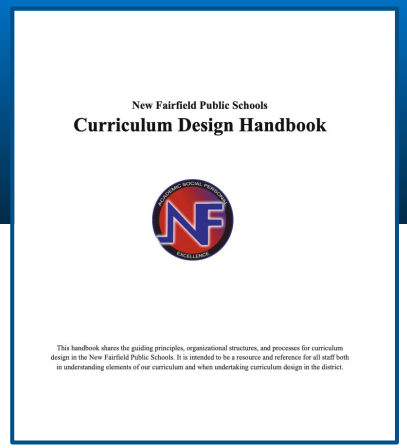
- Curriculum Framework / Criteria / Guidebook
- Curriculum Design Cycle (5-Year Map)
- Electronic Curriculum Platform

IMPLEMENTATION

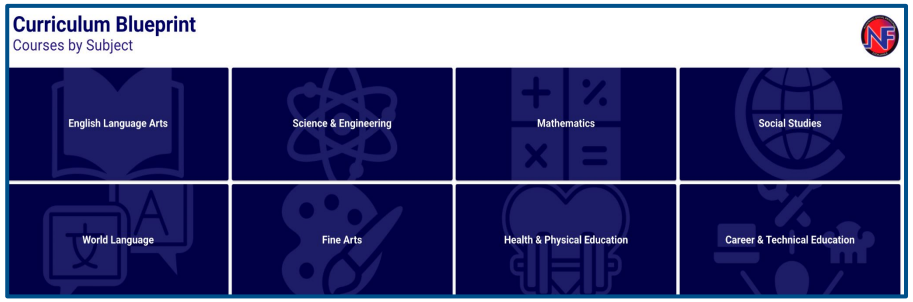
- Stage 1 / Transfer Goals - All Disciplines
- Full Curriculum Model - PreK-12 Science
- Standards Review / Research - Social Studies

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

Curriculum, 2025-2026



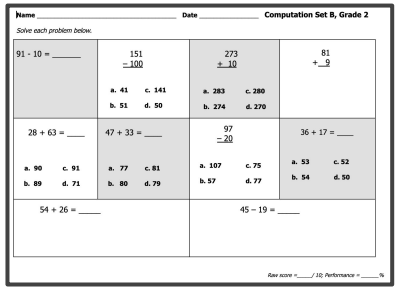
➔ Full version of the NFPS Curriculum Design Handbook



➔ Launch of NFPS Curriculum Blueprint as a public-facing platform for curriculum

➔ Implementation of K-12 Science Curriculum (with STEAM integration)

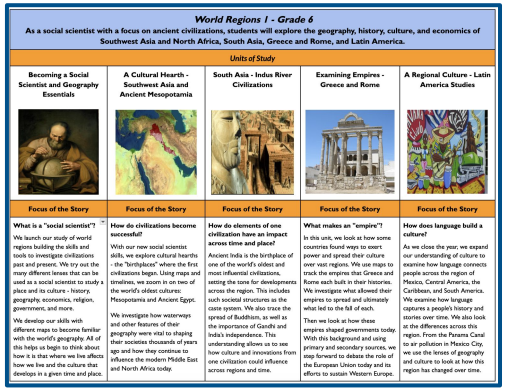



Name _____ Date _____ Computation Set B, Grade 2

Solve each problem below.

91 - 10 = _____	151 – 100 a. 41 c. 141 b. 51 d. 50	273 + 10 a. 283 c. 280 b. 274 d. 270	81 + 9
28 + 63 = _____ a. 90 c. 91 b. 89 d. 71	47 + 33 = _____ a. 77 c. 81 b. 80 d. 79	97 – 20 a. 107 c. 75 b. 57 d. 77	36 + 17 = _____ a. 53 c. 52 b. 54 d. 50
54 + 26 = _____		45 – 19 = _____	

Raw score = _____ / 10; Performance = _____ %



➔ Design of K-12 Social Studies Curriculum, 6-8 World Language Curriculum, 6-12 ELA / English Curriculum draft, K-5 Mathematics fluency probes, and K-12 Digital Literacy Skills Progression

Evidence of Impact

In recent years, science classes have become more engaging and hands-on compared to before. There's been a bigger focus on doing experiments, group work, and activities instead of just listening to lectures or taking notes. That makes it easier to actually understand the concepts instead of just memorizing them.

My experiences in science class have changed over the years by becoming more challenging. The biggest change is the shift to labs and projects with lab equipment. Having the opportunity to engage in labs has made science class more interesting and I tend to look forward to the class more!

Science classes have become more hands on and interactive. Labs, group work, and technology like simulations help make learning more interesting. These changes make science easier to understand and more engaging.

Instruction

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

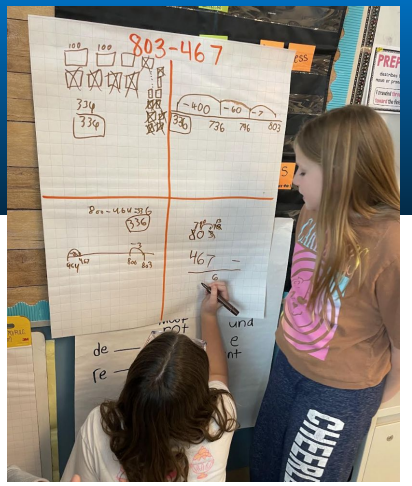
- Professional Learning Sessions
- Professional Resource E-Warehouse
- AI Work Group

VISION OF THE LEARNER

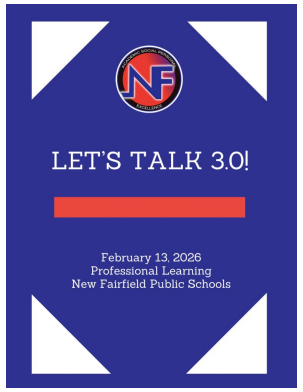
- VoL Competency Continuum
- Assured Experiences w/Student Work
- Student Self-Assessment & Feedback

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

Instruction, 2025-2026



- Implementation of data protocols and Tier 1 action plans (K-5) to monitor student progress and inform differentiated instruction



- Expanded instructional practices to examine and trial strategies in support of student engagement



- Professional learning experiences to build AI understanding, skills, and effective, ethical use.



- Initiated greater communication and integration of NFPS Vision of a Learner indicators in design of curriculum and assessment, with links to student engagement and instructional practices.

Evidence of Impact

First grade map skills & global communities …

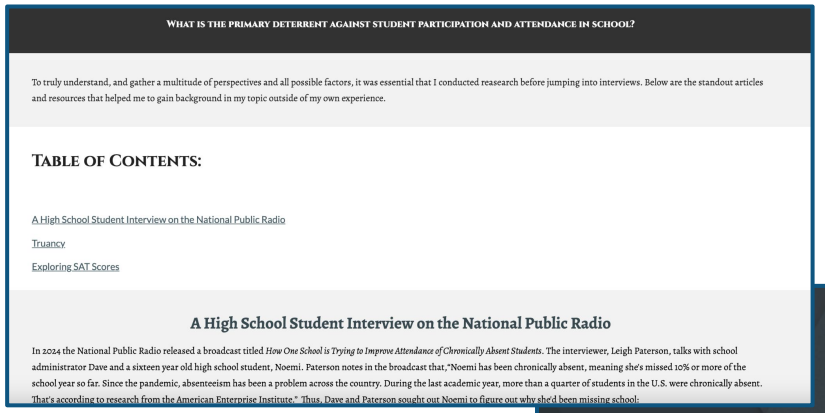
Knowledgeable Scholars





Iterative design-thinking in STEAM …

Critical and Creative Thinkers



WHAT IS THE PRIMARY DETERRENT AGAINST STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL?

To truly understand, and gather a multitude of perspectives and all possible factors, it was essential that I conducted reasearch before jumping into interviews. Below are the standout articles and resources that helped me to gain background in my topic outside of my own experience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

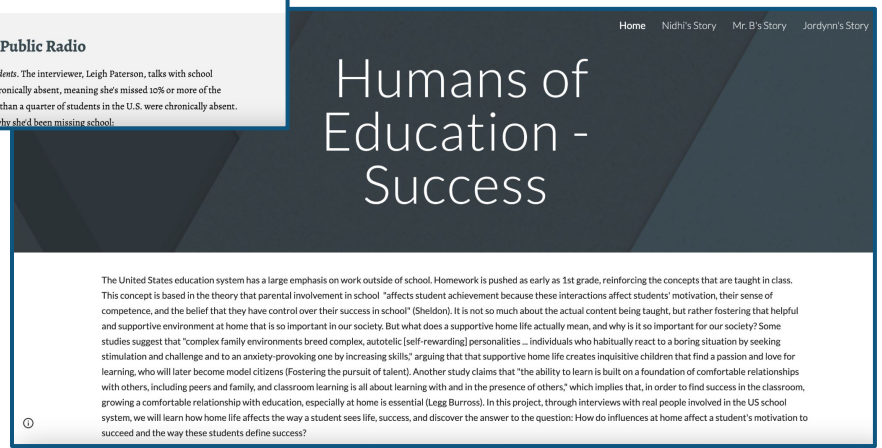
A High School Student Interview on the National Public Radio

Truancy

Exploring SAT Scores

A High School Student Interview on the National Public Radio

In 2024 the National Public Radio released a broadcast titled *How One School is Trying to Improve Attendance of Chronically Absent Students*. The interviewer, Leigh Paterson, talks with school administrator Dave and a sixteen year old high school student, Noemi. Paterson notes in the broadcast that,"Noemi has been chronically absent, meaning she's missed 10% or more of the school year so far. Since the pandemic, absenteeism has been a problem across the country. During the last academic year, more than a quarter of students in the U.S. were chronically absent. That's according to research from the American Enterprise Institute." Thus, Dave and Paterson sought out Noemi to figure out why she'd been missing school:



Home Nidhi's Story Mr. B's Story Jordynn's Story

Humans of Education - Success

The United States education system has a large emphasis on work outside of school. Homework is pushed as early as 1st grade, reinforcing the concepts that are taught in class. This concept is based in the theory that parental involvement in school "affects student achievement because these interactions affect students' motivation, their sense of competence, and the belief that they have control over their success in school" (Sheldon). It is not so much about the actual content being taught, but rather fostering that helpful and supportive environment at home that is so important in our society. But what does a supportive home life actually mean, and why is it so important for our society? Some studies suggest that "complex family environments breed complex, autotelic [self-rewarding] personalities … individuals who habitually react to a boring situation by seeking stimulation and challenge and to an anxiety-provoking one by increasing skills," arguing that that supportive home life creates inquisitive children that find a passion and love for learning, who will later become model citizens (Fostering the pursuit of talent). Another study claims that "the ability to learn is built on a foundation of comfortable relationships with others, including peers and family, and classroom learning is all about learning with and in the presence of others," which implies that, in order to find success in the classroom, growing a comfortable relationship with education, especially at home is essential (Legg Burross). In this project, through interviews with real people involved in the US school system, we will learn how home life affects the way a student sees life, success, and discover the answer to the question: How do influences at home affect a student's motivation to succeed and the way these students define success?

Humanities inquiry research projects … *Critical and Creative Thinkers*

Communication skills and ethical use of AI

… *Talented Communicators and Engaged Global Citizens*



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

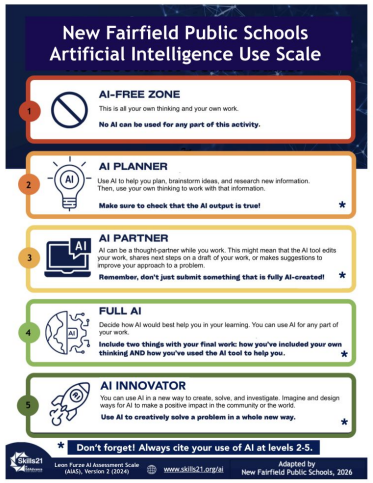
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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

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

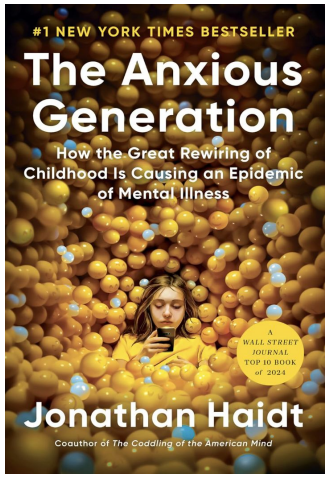
Wellness, 2025-2026

➔ Articulated a vertically-aligned PK-12 Social Emotional Skills Progression



➔ Mapped K-12 Digital Literacy skills and AI competencies and corresponding learning experiences to be piloted in 26-27, with attention to digital wellness and digital safety.

➔ Partnered with families and community through Community Read of *The Anxious Generation*, leading to action steps in support of student wellness and the balanced use of technology (HS devices).



Evidence of Impact



NFMS Recess

<u>NFMS Library Circulation Data</u>

- **2025-2026 (to date):** 3,479 checkouts
- **2024-2025 (full year):** 1,532 checkouts
- **2023-2024 (no librarian):** 359 checkouts

New Fairfield Public Schools
District Priorities
2025-2026

Completed	In Process	Early Development	Anticipated / Not Yet Begun

1. Curriculum Goal		
	1.1 Continue a comprehensive curriculum review and design process, to include K-12 social studies, K-12 digital literacy, and 6-12 world language design, as well as 6-12 English Language Arts curriculum research.	
	1.2 Launch Eduplanet curriculum platform internally and externally to ensure consistency, fidelity, and sustainability of NFPS curriculum as well as communication to families and the community.	
2. Instruction Goal		
	2.1 Expand development of internal assessments and use of data protocols with internal and external assessment data to monitor student learning progress and inform differentiated instruction in the classroom.	
	2.2 Expand instructional practices that foster students' engagement, critical thinking, and inquiry, evidenced through learning walks undertaken in all schools.	
	2.3 Expand professional learning experiences that foster staff understanding of AI tools and enhance instructional opportunities with AI that deepen student critical thinking skills.	
	2.4 Build models of instructional and assessment experiences that are aligned to specific NFPS Vision of the Learner indicators to promote student goal-setting, reflection, and feedback.	
4. Wellness Goal		
	4.1 Articulate a PreK-12 skills map to support students' social-emotional growth, as well as a vertically-aligned K-12 digital literacy skills progression that supports student wellness in a digital world.	
	4.2 Continue to enhance community and family partnerships in support of student wellness and balanced use of technology, through the NFPS Community Read, *The Anxious Generation*.	

And Beyond …

Ambitious, Aspirational, and with Appreciation