



NEW HOPE-SOLEBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2019-2020

OUR MISSION

The New Hope-Solebury School District takes pride in its commitment to excellence. We strive to inspire and empower our students to become passionate, confident, life-long learners, with the skills and strength of character to contribute to a diverse and ever-changing world.

New Hope-Solebury School District Administration

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District At-A-Glance

www.nhsd.org

The New Hope-Solebury School District, formed in 1942, is composed of New Hope Borough and Solebury Township in the eastern part of Bucks County, along the scenic Delaware River.

The rural countryside in Solebury Township, with a population of about 8,692, is dotted with historic stone farm houses, small picturesque villages with clusters of vintage buildings and small developments of newer homes. The village of New Hope, which is a little more than one square mile in size with a population of about 2,528, is a pre-Revolutionary town perched on the banks of the Delaware. It boasts a commercial downtown area with a variety of small shops, boutiques, art galleries, restaurants and antique emporiums attractive to tourists.

The two communities have been well known for years as a center for the arts, with many painters, sculptors, writers, musicians, and other artists making New Hope and Solebury their homes. Numerous dramatic and art activities are held in the area throughout the year.

The area is primarily residential with a large portion of its residents commuting for work to Philadelphia, New York and the Princeton areas. Many area residents, however, are engaged in commercial and service trades or professions, with a large number self-employed in small shops, businesses and the arts.

The communities of New Hope and Solebury offer a number of cultural, religious and athletic opportunities for families and individuals. These include historical and art societies, soccer, basketball and baseball leagues, public tennis courts, a public library and a Community School, offering adult education evening courses, are available to residents.

Philadelphia, with its numerous museums, theaters and other cultural and entertainment opportunities, is about 30 miles away; Princeton, with other cultural opportunities, is closer; and New York City is a two-hour drive, making it a frequent destination for many area residents.

Philosophy of Education

The New Hope-Solebury School District views every student as unique, important and deserving of personalized instruction. This approach to education is possible because of the District's small size and the commitment of its Board of School Directors, administration, teachers and staff, parents and community to high-quality education.

The District offers a meaningful, purposeful and holistic approach to learning, which builds connections among subject areas and calls upon students to be active learners. Using the critical skills of computation, problem solving, reading, writing and discussion, students learn how to learn in a supportive setting where students and teachers come to know each other well.

Approximately 1325 students enrolled in grades Kindergarten through 12. Enrichment is important because many students are high achievers. However, the District's academic philosophy applies to all students. Teachers work toward raising academic expectations; they focus on the students, not on labels; and they encourage all students to challenge themselves. At New Hope-Solebury, a unique benefit is the individual and personal attention given to our students.

We are a community of learners--students, teachers, administrators, and other employees. The District's curriculum encourages developing understandings, asking essential questions and applying new learnings. Our teachers are enrolled in continuing education courses, consistently. Many have earned advanced degrees.

Additional, specific information about each building can be found on our website at www.nhsd.org.

District Curriculum Highlights

The New Hope-Solebury School District has a strong commitment to quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The three represent an integrated approach to learning. Teachers plan their lessons to reflect this strong alignment so that assessment represents not only an indicator of student learning, but acts as a mechanism for continuous feedback to the teacher. As a result, the re-evaluation of curriculum and instruction is an ever-evolving process. The Curriculum Advisory Committee model is a part of the culture of the school district; it acts as a process for research and renewal so that the administrators and teachers are continuous evaluators of the effectiveness of the current curriculum as viewed through the lens of specific indicators of student achievement. These indicators of student achievement are analyzed in order to improve the delivery of curriculum and instruction. Indicators are present on school district selected standardized tests, state standards-based standardized tests, student portfolios, authentic assessments, and other teacher developed observational classroom assessments. The net effect is a goal-oriented approach to curriculum, instruction, and assessment that focuses on improved student achievement.

In addition, all curriculum is standards-based with an emphasis on in-depth understanding. Also, there will be demarcations of specific grade levels for benchmarks of proficiency. As a result, students who do not meet these benchmarks of success will be provided with additional opportunities to succeed in a variety of research-based models. This will be evidenced in classroom instruction where differentiation and flexible grouping are the norm, not the exception.

There is, also, a strong commitment within the school district to the fundamental and advanced elements of literacy. This is evident in professional development and school goals that have focused on reading and writing across the curriculum (K-12). “Numeracy” is the third element of literacy and a common component of many curriculum areas, such as social studies and science, as well as its prime instructional place in mathematics.

Finally, in order to meet the needs of a new digital generation of students, there is a concerted effort to use technology as a tool for teaching and learning all aspects of the curriculum, K-12.

Language Arts

The Language Arts program in the New Hope-Solebury School District guides the students through a challenging diversified balanced literacy with literature-based reading as well as writing across the curriculum.

In the elementary level, language arts are emphasized through cross-curricular activities. Youngsters from Kindergarten through fifth grade are encouraged to write in journals, letters, reports, research papers and more, while reading is approached through literature. Reading skill development is spiraling with skills made secure at each succeeding grade level.

At the middle level, teachers move beyond basic skills to more intense reading skill development in non-fiction and the acquisition of effective reading strategies. As at the elementary level, a cross-curricular approach is used to integrate subject areas.

At the high school, English courses, in either the academic or honors sequences, are required at every grade level. Two Advanced Placement (AP) English courses are offered to juniors and seniors. They are AP Language and Composition and AP Literature. High school students explore the structure of language holistically and in the context of language use. Throughout the curriculum, students study a number of literacy genres, experiencing each as an art form with its own appropriate conventions and place in the world of literature.

Students at all levels are encouraged to critically and creatively question the themes and the subjects in their reading and to respond in a variety of ways, including oral reports, large and small group discussions, and cross-curricular presentations and projects. Computers are used with word processing, the teaching of writing, research, and presentations.

In learning about the relationship between reading and writing, students are actively involved in the writing process to create texts and learn content. Working individually and cooperatively, New Hope-Solebury students learn to apply their basic skills and knowledge of literature and language to become independent and proficient readers and writers.

Writing Across the Curriculum (K-12)

A strong writing program serves as a foundation for writing instruction throughout the New Hope-Solebury School District. This program serves to:

- Define the sequential development writing skills
- Delineate writing skills expected at each grade level
- Encourage the use of graphic organizers
- Establish consistency for evaluating student writing through the use of rubrics
- Develop student proficiency in the three modes of writing (narrative, expository, persuasive)
- Require students to write frequently and to make use of teacher conferences and peer editing for the improvement of their writing
- Provide portfolios as evidence of student growth in writing

Student writers in the New Hope-Solebury School District (K-12) are encouraged to write every day, keep portfolios, reflect on their writing, and publish their work.

Reading Across the Curriculum (K – 12)

A strong reading program is being developed to serve as a foundation for reading instruction throughout the New Hope-Solebury School District. This program will serve to:

- Define the sequential development of reading skills
- Balance reading instruction to include phonemic awareness and comprehension skills
- Delineate reading skills expected at each grade level
- Encourage independent reading through individual classroom libraries
- Instruct students in the use of before, during and after reading strategies to improve comprehension

- Evaluate student performance on reading skill development and proficiency levels
- Address reading instruction through a standards-based approach so that students are successful in learning to read independently, reading critically in all content areas, analyzing and interpreting literature and developing strong research skills
- Encourage students to read fiction and non-fiction
- Support summer reading through the publication of reading lists
- Support for at-risk readers through a strong Title 1 program in the elementary level

Student readers in the New Hope-Solebury School District (K –12) are encouraged to read every day, discuss their reading through literature circles, and to use their reading strategies on a daily basis to insure high levels of comprehension.

Mathematics

The New Hope-Solebury School District's mathematics program is designed to meet the pragmatic needs of all students, with challenges and enrichment opportunities for all children.

The District has high expectations for all students, not only with the demonstration of the acquisition of basic skills but also with special emphasis on teaching the process of problem solving. Thinking skills, such as application, analysis and synthesis are stressed. Other practices include individual and cooperative group work, discussion, questioning and writing about mathematics. Appropriate technology, including calculators and computers, is utilized in the mathematics curriculum, which helps students apply what they have learned to "real world" situations. Elementary school mathematics also stresses problem solving, often with an interdisciplinary approach. For example, while studying early explorers, fourth graders used their math skills to compute geographic distances in relation to political and economic concepts.

Children receive mathematical instruction to encourage higher levels of thinking, problem solving, application of mathematical skills, and integration with other disciplines.

At the middle level, most students take two years of Algebra with an added emphasis on aspects of Geometry, Probability, and Statistics. Students who have demonstrated that they are more advanced in their mathematical skills and concept acquisition take one year of Pre-Algebra, followed by Algebra and then Geometry. Most students enter ninth grade taking either Geometry or Algebra II.

High school mathematics courses include Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Calculus (AB) and many computer application courses. New courses such as AP Statistics, AP Computer Science, and Finite Mathematics have been added to the curriculum to meet the needs of the students.

Science

The National Geographic Science program at the elementary level focuses our students on acquiring basic knowledge and applying it in real world situations. The program is inquiry based in the context of laboratory experiments. Our students are encouraged to explore scientific concepts in creative ways. Hands-on experiments, data collection, careful observation, investigations and genuine research are important processes which are stressed. Cross-curricular, interdisciplinary units encourage reading and writing about science. Science strands include life sciences, earth science, physical science and technology.

At the secondary level, a balance is struck between basic concept acquisition and science process skills. With the rate of growth of scientific information in today's world, researchers require a solid understanding of how to retrieve information and data. In New Hope-Solebury science classes, students retrieve data and learn how to apply the data through inquiry and critical thinking in order to solve science-related problems. Science courses focus on biology, chemistry, and physics with Advanced Placement (AP) courses in these three areas as well as newly added AP Environmental Science.

Social Studies

The goal of the social studies curriculum is to provide each student with the opportunity to develop a body of knowledge, skills and values necessary to become a competent citizen. Students are expected to learn key concepts from history, geography, economics and political science. The social studies curriculum fosters multicultural understanding, civic responsibility, historical interpretation and critical thinking skills.

At the elementary level, students develop an understanding of the social sciences through looking at themselves, communities and community helpers and how and why communities change. Through cross-curricular units, students investigate Pennsylvania, United States history and geography. The five themes of geography--location, place, relationship with other places, movement and regions--are interwoven throughout curriculum. In addition, each grade level explores the elements of culture through the study of specific and differing countries and continents. As a result, students develop an appreciation for the uniqueness of all cultures from a global perspective.

The connections between language arts and social studies are made at the middle level where students read social studies related texts in reading class. Students have many opportunities to interact with a variety of texts and materials as they work in cooperative groups to investigate issues and do research. An example of this is the Middle Ages project through which teams of students investigate topics such as chivalry or the role of the church during the Middle Ages. Students are assessed on a demonstration of mastery which is presented to teachers, administrators, peers and parents.

At the secondary level, students are encouraged to utilize a variety of resources in their study of world cultures, American government, economics, sociology and psychology. The focus is on the student as learner and life-long learning skills are developed and enhanced. Emphasis at the secondary level is on research, analysis, interpretation and decision-making. Higher-level courses include Advanced Placement (AP) courses in United States History, European History, American Government, Economics and Psychology offered at both eleventh and twelfth grades.

World Languages

Middle and high school students have the opportunity to take Spanish and French through Level V. Foreign language instruction incorporates reading, writing, speaking and listening along with cultural explorations. AP French has been recently added to our World Language development.

Fine and Practical Arts

The New Hope-Solebury School District has a strong commitment to an inclusive arts program. Research has demonstrated a significant correlation between high student performance in the arts and in the academic areas. Therefore, the school district supports numerous arts activities (K-12). Our course selection guides provide evidence of this commitment. Budding artists, architects, video editors, ceramicists, sculptors, woodworking artisans, photographers, culinary artists, fashion designers, musicians, singers and band choreographers walk our halls and are proud of their accomplishments. Their exceptional student performances and exhibitions are testaments to their accomplishments and successes.

Instructional Technology

Technology initiatives in the New Hope-Solebury School District continue to address changing technologies and support student learning. Technology in classrooms and labs are available for students on a daily basis. Teachers use technology for instruction and management of student records.

While the district is rich in hardware and software resources, our highest value is placed on curriculum and instruction integration and how students use technology to produce learning outcomes. We use technology as a tool to learn. Teachers, K-12, integrate the technology curriculum into their classroom. Smart board technology is becoming ever present in our classrooms as a teaching and student learning tool. Access to digital information is embedded in the teaching practices in our classrooms.

Teachers are creating interactive content using web-based services that provide a media rich and meaningful experience for our students. We are encouraging collaboration through group based websites. Students are sharing documents, comments, presentations, and so much more, all with free applications like Google Docs. At all levels, Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Seesaw and Canvas expose our students to higher level learning environments that will prepare them for College and Career Readiness. We are giving children access to technology that they are going to use. It is not about the tool. It is about the opportunity to experience what currently exists while building the skills they are going to need for a lifetime.

Our curriculum teams are looking at the 21st Century Skills, new standards, best practice, and technology resources to help us transform our classrooms to meet students where they are...and where they need to be. Our students are preparing for their future. They will leave New Hope-Solebury with the technological skill to support them in the work force and their daily lives.

Student Services

The New Hope-Solebury School District Student Services staff is committed to supporting, facilitating and nurturing the growth of each student in our school district. The staff are highly skilled in their respective discipline to deliver direct services to our students and collaborate with teachers, parents, and administrators to enhance the learning and educational growth of our students.

Our professional pupil services and special education staff consists of:

- A Director of Student Services
- Two School Psychologists
- Five School Counselors
- Two Social Workers
- Two Certified School Nurses and two part-time Registered Nurses
- Special Education Teachers and Gifted Support Teachers

A full range of itinerant staff are also available through the Bucks County Intermediate Unit. These staff members include speech and language therapists, occupational and physical therapists, and vision and hearing support specialists.

School Psychologists

School psychologists work to find the best solution for each student and situation; they use different strategies to address student needs and to improve school and district-wide support systems. School psychologists work with students individually and in groups. They also develop programs to train teachers and parents about effective teaching and learning strategies, techniques to manage behavior in the classroom and beyond, working with students with disabilities or with special talents, addressing abuse of drugs and other substances, and preventing and managing crises.

School Counselors

The Mission of the New-Hope Solebury School District is to meet students where they are and guide them to the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and habits they will need to function in a productive and fulfilling manner in their increasingly complex world. The Counseling Program contributes to the implementation of this mission by addressing the academic, career, and personal/social development of each student through a comprehensive and developmental program of services. The counselor works in collaboration with administration, faculty, parents, and the community to build a scaffolding of knowledge and skills that will provide high academic performance, effective decision making, and positive self-esteem that will continue throughout the life span. To achieve these goals, the counselor:

- Works with students individually, in small groups, and in the classroom
- Is also a member of the Comprehensive Support Team
- Orients new families to our school and community
- Supports students with behavior concerns
- Develops and monitors 504 Service Agreements
- Participates in the identification process for gifted students

- Facilitates the transition of students
- Is an IEP team member for learning support and gifted students
- Provides support to parents regarding the developmental needs of students
- Supports student character education
- Assists students and families with personal and adjustment challenges
- High School Counselors play an important role in facilitating post-secondary planning

School Social Workers

School Social Workers help students resolve personal, emotional, and social problems that interfere with their adjustment to school and their capacity to enjoy the fullest benefits of the education offered them.

- Develops positive interpersonal relationships between members of the pupil services team and social agencies, community and neighborhood agencies, and the student home
- Performs casework service with individual students to correct those personal, social, or emotional maladjustments related to their educational and social progress
- Performs casework service with parents to increase parents' understanding, their constructive participation in resolving their child's problems, and their knowledge and use of appropriate resources
- Consults and collaborates with other school personnel in gathering and giving information on a case, and in establishing and planning for respective roles in the modification of the student's behavior
- Supervises the referral of students to and serves as liaison with outside agencies
- Serves as liaison between home and school for the purpose of gathering helpful information on a student's background
- Serves as attendance officer who is able to investigate reasons for absences and enrollment.
- Assists students directly toward adjustment toward school
- Keeps sufficient records of cases for use by school staff members and outside agencies

School Nurses

The School Nurses, under the supervision of the School Physician and the Principals, plan, coordinate, and implement state-mandated and district-directed services. The focus of School Health Services is to help to promote the health, safety and well-being of our students, and to support their academic success. Some of the health services provided by our School Nurses are:

- Assessments for vision, hearing, growth and development, scoliosis, and possible health related problems and behaviors
- Appropriate and timely referrals based on health needs assessments
- Care for illness and minor injuries and emergency first aid
- Development and implementation of Specialized Care Plans to support the safety and well-being for students who have chronic conditions that may need consideration while at school
- Collaboration with administrators to promote a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment
- Involvement in communicable disease control through the implementation of immunization laws and health screenings and an acting liaison for the Bucks County

Department of Health

- Health counseling, nutrition, disease prevention, and promotion of healthy lifestyle
- Resources for health related issues and health education for students, parents, and staff
- Advocate for student health-related needs in the school community

Special Education Teachers

Each school is staffed with a team of special education teachers who are trained and highly qualified to deliver a variety of instruction **and support** to meet the unique learning needs of the students they serve. These include but are not limited to: specially designed instruction in reading, language arts, math; specialized accommodations and modifications of academic work, learning environments, and learning materials necessary for identified students.

Gifted Education Teachers

New Hope-Solebury School District is committed to the belief that gifted students are individuals with potential who require guidance in discovering, developing, and realizing their potentials as individuals and as members of society. Under this philosophy, it becomes the responsibility of the entire staff to meet the needs of gifted students by identifying their gifts and talents and developing those areas. Mentally gifted is defined as outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.

- Provide a variety of appropriate types and levels of acceleration and enrichment
- Ensure that the instruction for gifted students is aligned with and extends the regular classroom curriculum
- Provide students with learning experiences at an appropriate level of challenge based on pre-assessment data
- Design, develop and implement high quality instruction that is supported by research based models appropriate for gifted students