

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Gather data to determine specific groups suffering from a lack of appreciation. Explore root causes for this lack of respect and identify possible solutions.	Collaborate with NYS to identify any specific groups that are non-appreciated in the school community, perhaps through focus groups. For identified groups, explore possible root causes for the lack of respect.

Newburyport Values Schools

An increased number of citizens report feeling positive value for the Newburyport Public Schools.

Vision Statement

Newburyport is a community that values schools. Its citizens see education as a foundational element of a quality society. Newburyport citizens strive to provide excellent educational opportunities for the City's youth, and actively encourage and support them in all educational endeavors. Newburyport does its best – within its citizens' means – to provide the financial support needed to provide educational facilities, programs and staffing.

Opportunity for Improvement

Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that the community, as a whole, does not positively value Newburyport Public Schools. Much of the anecdotal information is based on the perceptions formed in the past. Myths of a negative nature persist, particularly among community members who do not have a direct and current connection to the schools. Stories persist of schools that aren't fair to everyone, that don't challenge their students, that provide only a fair to average education. A school funding override was defeated 60%-40% in the spring of 2007, despite the well-advertised fact that a failed override would mean significant reductions to important programs and loss of important opportunities for our students. Many citizens communicated their distrust of the Schools' ability to conduct its business effectively.

Impacting how citizens value our public schools is a challenge that requires creative thinking and a dramatic increase in current public education efforts. Trust, or lack thereof, in the schools and in City government in general, is a common perception of what is lacking for public support of the schools.

Root Cause: Citizens have incorrect perception of schools

Some citizens rely on distant past perceptions in their current perception of the schools (secret budget, hide money, too many administrators, teachers overpaid, School Committee that doesn't listen)

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School Committee Communications Committee develops master communications plan	See goals listed under the “Improve Communications” goal.
Engage the public in activities that increase citizens' awareness of the schools’ successes and challenges	
Develop marketing plan and secure the resources and capacity to implement the plan. Private funding can be sought to support part-time marketing director function or alternatives.	
<p>Develop more programs that bring citizens into the schools. Develop more programs that bring students and student work into the community. Possible examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver student artwork to seniors • Deliver student artwork to veterans • Have a Senior Citizen's Day. (Breakfast, music, art, 2008 classroom experience vs. 1950, etc.) • Participate in veterans/memorial day activities • Reading/talking/interfaces with seniors • Participation in Special Olympics • Participation in Meals on Wheels • Other internship examples, coordinated through NHS/NEBC internship program 	
Increase and expand Adult Education program through partnership with the Newburyport Adult Education group. Involve current students as much as possible in the implementation of this	

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program. Use students to help teach these classes.	
Find ways to get more topic experts from our community into classrooms.	
Evaluate ways to connect community expertise with classroom educational topics. Include VOICES program, and possibility of using web-based tools to advertise teacher's topic plan and have community members "sign-up."	
Develop programs that put more students into the community doing community service	
Have a "professional" day for students. Examples: Student day with the Mayor. Student day with a doctor. Student day with a carpenter.	
Students are rewarded for civic engagement in school recognition or credit where appropriate	

Root Cause: Negative stereotypes of students

Some citizens have a negative stereotype of students, especially teens.

Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Establish mechanisms for students and citizens to interact on this issue and discuss their views and feelings, in an effort to understand each other.	Collaborate with NYS to establish discussions between teens and older adults.

Root Cause: School Committee "Not Hearing"

Citizens don't feel "heard" by the School Committee. 30% of respondents to the School Committee's

FY08 survey felt that the School Committee did not respond to citizen concerns.

Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Develop a plan to hear and acknowledge these concerns and increase the School Committee's opportunities to "listen."	School Committee to brainstorm on issue of "not hearing" the public, identify strategies, and undertake a few specific actions in FY09 to help improve this perception.

Root Cause: Some public perception that schools do not use resources effectively

A number of citizens do not feel that Newburyport Schools spend money effectively. 40% of respondents on the FY08 School Committee community survey feel that NPS does not "use its available resources effectively."

Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Work to understand the community's response in this area and determine what's real and what's perception. Make and implement a plan accordingly.	School Committee to brainstorm on realities and perception of ineffective use of resources, identify strategies, and undertake a few specific actions in FY09 to help improve this perception.

Root Cause: Lack of non-parent participation

Citizens without children in the Newburyport Public Schools do not participate in school activities and generally do not "think" much about schools. 88% of respondents on the FY08 School Committee survey have a child in Newburyport schools. The survey did not gain significant response from citizens without kids in school.

Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Understand the reasons behind this lack of non-parent participation and plan accordingly.	School Committee to brainstorm on the issue of increasing non-parent participation in schools, identify strategies, and undertake a few specific actions in FY09 to help improve participation among citizens without kids in school.