

Expand Variety and Breadth of Learning Opportunities

Students have more access to a wide variety of organized learning activities. We strive to expose our students to a wide variety of organized learning activities.

Vision Statement

We envision our students to be highly engaged in a rich curriculum and diverse co-curricular and extra-curricular organized activities. Opportunities are roughly equal to student interests and demand for courses and after-school learning experiences. The Newburyport Public Schools allocates available resources to support diverse offerings and partners with others in the community to provide, support, and expand healthy activities that engage our students outside of school.

Opportunity for Improvement

Budget reductions over the past six years have diminished curricular opportunities including High School electives, and Middle School foreign language and theater arts programs. Community members have, for years, recognized that too few programs are available to meet the interests of students after school, especially for middle school students. As a result, students do not have opportunity to challenge themselves in as rich an environment as existed several years ago. Too many students in grades 6-12 are not engaged in organized or structured learning experiences after school. Many students do participate in High School athletics and co-curricular activities and many High School and Middle School students participate in a variety of community sponsored activities in Newburyport and surrounding towns. Many students do not. Results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Assets Survey given to Newburyport students suggest the strong need for programmatic interventions to reduce risk behaviors and build developmental assets. The findings clearly point to the need for more programs after school to build developmental assets and to reduce idle time that contributes to risk behaviors.

Root Cause: Offerings limited by years of budget reductions

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Investigate the best high school and middle school schedule design to maximize the number of courses offered.	Complete a study and recommend a High School schedule that best supports the mission of the NHS. Build results of NHS scheduling study into the FY10 budget.
Increase the number of educational opportunities in creative realms including art, theater and music.	

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Increase the number of high school faculty in a manner that will result in the most courses possible being offered.	
Develop on-line learning opportunities like Virtual High School® and Moodle or BlackBoard®	<p>Begin offering Virtual High School at the level of 25 seats per semester. Plan expansion of program into the FY11 budget.</p> <p>Assess online and alternative learning programs and how they best serve students at NHS. Place specific goals in NHS's FY10 School Improvement Plan (SIP).</p>
Investigate cooperative programs with others that may increase learning opportunities.	Work with Newburyport Youth Services to investigate and possibly offer an after-school foreign language program. Programs should not compete with offerings in Newburyport schools. Programs should have as small an impact on school operations as possible.
Determine student interests through informal and formal assessment in regard to career interests and course offerings, especially for students who are at risk for dropping out of school or students losing interest in school.	
Recruit high school faculty for open positions who can teach “out of the box” courses to meet needs and interests of students.	
Investigate extended learning day grant opportunities to provide an after school enrichment curriculum of academics, arts, athletics, special interests.	<p>Investigate Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative by attending the Massachusetts state summit in December 2008.</p> <p>Participate with Mass 2020 to assess Newburyport community readiness for an expanded school day.</p>

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Investigate ways to expand our foreign Language offerings.	Brainstorm, assess and choose cost-effective ways to offer more foreign language. Consider which foreign languages are most appropriate, what topics of most interest and value. Include consideration of long-term plan for foreign language.
Use focus groups/surveys of parents, teachers, staff, community members, and students to develop plans and priorities.	
Better utilize community resources such as NECC, UMASS Lowell, Salem State, Whittier Vo-Tech, MA Audubon, and the Greater Lawrence Collaborative.	