

Goals to Build and Support Community

The following goals build and support the Newburyport School Community and its interaction with the larger Newburyport Community.

Improved Student Connection to Schools

Students report a more positive connection to the school community.

Vision Statement

The Newburyport Public Schools provide a community that enjoys and promotes strong connection with every student. Students enjoy a sense of belonging to the school community. They feel that they're valued and appreciated by the each person in their school and by the schools in general. The schools have an active "early warning system" that detects and responds to every student's needs – academic, physical or social... The schools provide an environment in which all students feel they can voice their opinions and concerns without fear of being chastised or denigrated. Students are proud to be a stakeholder in the Newburyport Public School community, seek ways to contribute to the Community, and look forward to participating in school life each day. NPS celebrates each student's contribution to the community, no matter how small.

Opportunity for Improvement

Results of the *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* and the *Assets Survey* suggest the need to strengthen the relationship between student and and each community stakeholder. However, we do not have good data indicating specific problem areas or mechanisms to impact the student-school connection. Common sense tells us that strengthening this relationship, especially for those students who feel least connected, will reduce youth risk behaviors, improve learning for individuals, reduce the number of school drop-outs, strengthen the community and enrich the school experience for all. Some students feel "left-out."

Root Cause: Insufficient baseline data from which to Measure progress

Newburyport Public Schools suffers from a lack of data on which to base strategy and action for improving student connection.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
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<p>Hold student focus groups and gather data on school climate and student relationships to school.</p> <p>Hold teacher focus groups to supplement student generated data.</p> <p>Name student identity groups, e.g. gamers, jocks, etc.</p>	<p>Challenge school councils to make a recommendation in their FY10 School Improvement Plans (SIPs) to measure amount of and characterize types of connections between their students and each school.</p>
<p>Utilize validated surveys to ascertain level of student connections to school and to assess school climate and obstacles to students forming a positive relationship to school and the school community.</p>	<p>Use data from Asset survey to communicate a broad picture of the problems with youth connectivity with schools. School Committee to communicate this issue to the Newburyport community.</p> <p>Study and recommend a survey mechanism for measuring student connection to schools. Study should include the Aspirations Survey from the Quaglia Institute. Survey should include a mechanism to gather data on students' ability to voice concerns and to generally have a voice in their school.</p> <p>Extract data form <u>ASSETS Survey on Caring School Climate</u> and chart it.</p>

Root Cause: Fragmented efforts to build community

Efforts to build strong school communities and include all students are numerous but not cataloged or evaluated as a combined and coordinated effort.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
<p>Catalog all current school community building programs and activities and evaluate strengths and areas for improvement.</p>	

Root Cause: Not all students feel connected to the school community

Too many students feel disconnected from school, feel left out, or do not have strong relationships with either an adult or with other students.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Develop a comprehensive plan for grades PK-12 to sustain and strengthen current efforts to include all students in the NPS community and add programs and activities where they are needed. Include this as part of the NPS strategic plan.	
Establish a connection between each student and at least one adult in Newburyport Public Schools.	Challenge each school council to include in its School Improvement Plan (SIP) a goal that each student have a connection with one adult at their school with whom they would feel comfortable sharing a problem. Beyond FY09: Challenge school councils to extend the program matching students to adults by matching high-risk students in advance of their transition to a new school.