



Students are the Explorers of Learning

A Position Paper

of the

New England League of Middle Schools

Learning is the central work of the school. We firmly believe that each student wants to learn. Because young adolescents are naturally curious explorers, we believe students can be empowered and be responsible for their learning. With the help of caring adults, students will realize that school work translates itself into lifelong learning. Teachers can become guides assisting, supporting, encouraging and nurturing students as they go about the task of effective relevant learning. They clarify and emphasize the importance of continued growth and lifelong learning.

Underlying these beliefs are the following assumptions:

- Students can ask meaningful questions about themselves and society. They can also search for answers to these questions.
- Students are capable of working cooperatively and effectively with others to enhance the learning process.
- Students need to understand their intellectual profile and learning modalities. They should demonstrate their learning through these areas while working to refine and develop others. The knowledge base becomes the world surrounding the students. Students can identify when they need assistance and are able to ask for and obtain resources other than from the teacher. Students can choose among and use options that are relevant and useful to the learning experience.
- If essential learning is to be real for the students, activities, materials and information should be available to be utilized when needed.
- A variety of resources are utilized by teachers as they become both facilitators and collaborators of student learning. Textbooks become only one of many resources.
- Students will collaborate in a process of determining how their work will be assessed to best demonstrate concepts learned.
- Each adolescent is a unique learner; therefore time should be used flexibly.
- Teachers, students, parents and society determine what students should learn. Students work to accomplish these essential learning standards.
- Teachers as facilitators work collaboratively in the learning process with the students rather than being experts set apart from students. Teachers become skilled at helping students direct individual learning.

Advocating through conferences, seminars, publications, fieldwork and networking, The New England League of Middle Schools will serve as a catalyst for action so that these beliefs become a driving force in middle level education.

