

Appendix # 3

The Maine Commission on Middle Level Education endorses *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents* and its core principles.

Successful schools for young adolescents are characterized by a culture that includes

- Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so
- Courageous, collaborative leadership
- A shared vision that guides decisions
- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment
- High expectations for every member of the learning community
- Students and teachers engaged in active learning
- An adult advocate for every student
- School-initiated family and community partnerships

Therefore successful schools for young adolescents provide

- Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory
- Multiple teaching and learning approaches that respond to their diversity
- Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning.
- Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning
- School-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety
- Multifaceted guidance and support services

National Middle School Association. (2003). *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*. Westerville, OH.

These principles align with those established by the Commission on Secondary Education as the basis for *Promising Futures*. The alignment of the Core Principles/Practices from both documents provides a basis for a natural transition for students as they move from middle school to high school. The complementary foundational beliefs of the different levels ensure that common goals and expectations for all students will exist in grades 6-12. Each level should address these goals and expectations in ways that are appropriate for their population's developmental needs.

Core Principles

This We Believe

- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment
- An adult advocate for every student
- Multifaceted guidance and support services



Promising Futures

- A safe, respectful, and caring environment

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- High expectations for every member of the learning community
 - Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning
 - Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory



- High universal expectations with a variety of learning opportunities

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- Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning



- Understanding and actions based on assessment data

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- Students and teachers engaged in active learning
 - Multiple teaching and learning approaches that respond to their diversity
 - Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so



- Teacher practice that values and builds upon the contributions and needs of each learner

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- Courageous, collaborative leadership
 - A shared vision that guides decisions



- Equitable and democratic practices
- Coherence among mission, goals, actions, and outcomes

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- School-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety
 - School-initiated family and community partnerships