



Essential Element 2: Educational Program

An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based.

Every young adolescent needs a challenging, standards-based course of study that is comprehensive, integrated, and relevant.

A standards-focused middle-level educational program:

- 2.1** Emphasizes not only intellectual development but also personal, social, physical, and ethical development.
- 2.2** Is challenging, rigorous, and purposeful.
- 2.3** Is comprehensive and inclusive, embracing and encompassing all of the State's 28 learning standards.
- 2.4** Reflects interdependence, emphasizes cross-program connections, and promotes shared responsibility.
- 2.5** Is articulated vertically and horizontally, within and across the various curricular areas, learning standards, and grade levels.
- 2.6** Has a set of learning skills (e.g., how to study, how to conduct research, how to read for understanding, how to take notes, etc.) that are common across all grades and subject areas and taught and reinforced in each grade and subject area.
- 2.7** Emphasizes reading, writing, and mathematics (literacy and numeracy) across the subject areas with expectations for performance that are consistent across and within the disciplines and commonly understood by teachers, students, and parents.
- 2.8** Has performance expectations that are common across all grades and subject areas (e.g., students must write in complete sentences).
- 2.9** Is articulated with the elementary feeder schools and with the secondary receiving schools, building on the foundational knowledge and skills of the elementary grades and, in doing so, preparing students for success in high school.
- 2.10** Has up-to-date written curricula (that are based on and aligned with the State's learning standards), instructional support, and learning aids for all subject areas.
- 2.11** Includes diagnostic assessments (similar in design to the State's assessments) that regularly and routinely monitor the learning of each student relative to the State's standards and community expectations.
- 2.12** Offers opportunities for the development of personal responsibility and self direction.
- 2.13** Encourages students to pursue personal interests, engage in school and community activities (e.g., sports, clubs, etc.), explore potential futures and careers, develop useful social, interpersonal, and life skills needed to live a full and productive life, and nurture a "love of learning."
- 2.14** Provides targeted and timely academic intervention services that are based upon a careful assessment of the academic, social, and emotional needs of students at risk of not meeting the State's learning standards.
- 2.15** Engages and involves the family, local community, and the world outside school in the education and personal development of young adolescents.

2. An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, relevant, integrated, and standards-based.

Criteria	1	2	3	4
<p><i>2a. The degree to which the middle-level educational program emphasizes the intellectual, social, personal, physical, and ethical development of young adolescents</i></p>	<p>i. The school program does not meet the intellectual, social, personal, physical, or ethical needs of the students.</p> <p>ii. Teachers' lessons do not meet the intellectual or the social/personal/physical/ethical needs of students.</p>	<p>i. The school program emphasizes only one of the needs: intellectual, social, personal, physical or ethical.</p> <p>ii. Teachers' lessons emphasize only one of the needs: intellectual or the social/personal/physical/ethical needs of the students.</p>	<p>i. The school program addresses both intellectual and social/personal/physical/ethical needs of the students. One of these two areas is consistently emphasized over the other.</p> <p>ii. Most teachers' lessons address intellectual and social, personal, physical, and ethical needs of students.</p>	<p>i. A balanced comprehensive program that is intentionally designed to meet each student's intellectual and social/personal/physical/ethical needs in the context of supporting his or her academic success.</p> <p>ii. Teachers regularly and intentionally design lessons that take into account each student's intellectual, social, personal, physical and ethical needs.</p>
<p><i>2.b The degree to which the middle-level educational program is challenging, rigorous, and meaningful and reflective of the 28 Learning Standards</i></p>	<p>i. Teachers design or plan lessons that lack rigor, engagement and meaningfulness and do not reflect the Standards.</p> <p>ii. Students perceive much of their learning in school as irrelevant, boring and meaningless.</p>	<p>i. Teachers design or plan lessons that are either rigorous and meaningful or are connected to the Learning Standards, but not both.</p> <p>ii. Students perceive their learning in school to be too difficult, too easy, insufficiently connected to their lives or unchallenging to their intellect.</p>	<p>i. Teachers design or plan lessons for their classes that are rigorous and meaningful and address their own content Learning Standards.</p> <p>ii. Most students perceive their learning to be relevant and meaningful to their lives and challenging to their intellect.</p>	<p>i. Teachers design or plan differentiated lessons to provide challenging, rigorous, and meaningful learning for all students and integrate all Learning Standards.</p> <p>ii. All students perceive their learning as both relevant and meaningful to their lives and challenging to their intellect.</p>
<p><i>2.c The degree to which the middle-level educational program includes common learning skills to increase student achievement across all grades and subjects (e.g. how to plan, study, conduct research and read for understanding)</i></p>	<p>i. Teachers' practices are isolated and individualistic. No set of common learning skills has been adopted.</p> <p>ii. Teachers do not instruct students in the use of common learning skills.</p> <p>iii. Students' work reflects teachers' isolated and individualistic behaviors.</p>	<p>i. Teams or other sets of teachers have adopted a set of common learning skills intended to increase students learning.</p> <p>ii. Teachers occasionally instruct students in the use of these common learning skills or emphasize them inconsistently in their assignments.</p> <p>iii. Students' work occasionally reflects the use of these common learning skills.</p>	<p>i. The faculty as a whole has adopted a set of common learning skills intended to increase students' learning.</p> <p>ii. Teachers instruct students in the use of common learning skills across assignments.</p> <p>iii. Students' work reflects their common learning skills.</p>	<p>i. The faculty as a whole routinely examines and refines the common learning skills in light of students' learning.</p> <p>ii. Teachers consistently instruct students in the use of common learning skills and reinforce their application.</p> <p>iii. Students independently apply these common learning skills on a consistent basis.</p>

2. An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, relevant, integrated, and standards-based (con't).				
Criteria	1	2	3	4
<p><i>2.d The degree to which the middle-level educational program has common performance expectations across all grades and subject area (e.g. using complete sentences; using standard English in school; following directions without multiple prompts, note-taking, graphic organizers, reading for understanding, writing in the content areas, using agendas, etc.)</i></p>	<p>i. A set of common performance expectations has not been identified nor agreed upon by teachers.</p> <p>ii. Teachers instruct their students to meet what appears to be a wide range of performance expectations, some of which seem arbitrary.</p> <p>iii. Students depend exclusively on their teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their own work.</p>	<p>i. Teams or other groups of teachers have adopted a limited set of common performance expectations for students.</p> <p>ii. Teachers emphasize these common expectations occasionally or inconsistently in their assignments.</p> <p>iii. Students analyze their own work in a cursory manner and depend primarily on their teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>i. The faculty as a whole has adopted a set of common performance expectations for students.</p> <p>ii. Teachers instruct students in the use of these common expectations across assignments.</p> <p>iii. Students analyze their own work, reflect on their progress, and identify their strengths and weaknesses in a very limited context (i.e. math, PE)</p>	<p>i. The faculty as a whole routinely examines and refines a set of common performance expectations for students with student input.</p> <p>ii. Teachers consistently instruct students in the use of these expectations and reinforce their application through assignments.</p> <p>iii. Students routinely and independently analyze their own work in various subjects against the criteria, reflect on their progress and identify their own strengths and weaknesses.</p>

Comments:

2. An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, relevant, integrated, and standards-based (con't).				
Criteria	1	2	3	4
<i>2.e The degree to which the middle-level educational program emphasizes reading, writing and mathematics (literacy and numeracy) across all subject areas</i>	<p>i. Literacy and numeracy are considered to be the sole responsibility of the content specialists.</p> <p>ii. Content area teachers do not understand literacy as it relates to their content areas.</p> <p>iii. Reading and writing instruction occurs only in ELA/reading classes.</p> <p>iv. Content area teachers do not understand numeracy as it relates to their content areas.</p> <p>v. Numeracy instruction occurs only in mathematics classes.</p>	<p>i. Teachers across content areas minimize their responsibility for the development of literacy and numeracy skills in their students.</p> <p>ii. Content area teachers' understanding of literacy is limited to a narrow band of skills (e.g. mechanics).</p> <p>iii. Literacy instruction by content area teachers is limited to a narrow band of skills (e.g. sounding out words, writing in complete sentences).</p> <p>iv. Content area teachers have limited understanding of numeracy as it related to their content areas.</p> <p>v. Application of numeracy skills is isolated and individualistic in content areas other than math.</p>	<p>i. Teachers across all content areas understand their responsibility for the development of literacy and numeracy skills in their students.</p> <p>ii. Content area teachers understand the nature of literacy in their content areas.</p> <p>iii. Content area teachers instruct students in literacy skills for their content area (e.g. strategies for reading science text; strategies for writing word problems in mathematics).</p> <p>iv. Content area teachers understand numeracy skills as they relate to their content areas (mathematical reasoning, problem solving, ordering, patterns, etc.).</p> <p>v. Content area teachers apply numeracy skills and connect them to their lessons (e.g. applying the numeracy skill of ordering to the creation of a time line in social studies).</p>	<p>i. Teachers across all content areas share responsibility for the development of literacy and numeracy skills in their students.</p> <p>ii. Content area teachers understand the nature of literacy in their content areas, as defined by best practice.</p> <p>iii. Content area teachers explicitly instruct students in literacy skills for their content area and routinely embed these skills in their lessons.</p> <p>iv. Content area teachers understand numeracy skills and concepts to be an integral part of their content area.</p> <p>v. Content area teachers apply numeracy skills and concepts and explicitly connect them and meaningful real world experiences.</p>

Comments:

2. An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, relevant, integrated, and standards-based (con't).				
Criteria	1	2	3	4
2.f The degree to which the middle-level educational program includes ongoing Standards-based assessments	<p>i. Program includes assessments that are not based on the State Learning Standards.</p> <p>ii. School/classroom assessments are based on teachers' own individual criteria or standards and are not based on the demands of the NYS assessments.</p> <p>iii. Teachers rely heavily on traditional summative testing.</p> <p>iv. Assessment data are not utilized to inform program or instructional decisions.</p>	<p>i. Program includes limited summative assessments in one or more disciplines that address the State Learning Standards.</p> <p>ii. Few school/classroom assessments are based on the demands of the NYS assessments.</p> <p>iii. Teachers rely on traditional testing for their summative measures but may include isolated performances, products and processes as well.</p> <p>iv. Teachers rely on one form of assessment data to make program and instructional decisions.</p>	<p>i. Program includes summative assessments in all core disciplines that address the State Learning Standards.</p> <p>ii. Some school/classroom assessments reflect selected NYS assessment demands, through the use of parallel forms of the test and test simulations.</p> <p>iii. Teachers use a variety of assessment measures, including processes, performances and products, although some emphasize testing more than other measures.</p> <p>iv. Teachers use diagnostic measures selectively to improve program and instruction.</p>	<p>i. The middle-level program includes assessments in all disciplines that address the State Learning Standards.</p> <p>ii. School/classroom assessments have been designed to reflect the demands and support students' attainment of the NYS assessments.</p> <p>iii. Teachers use a variety of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment measures that address varied students' learning styles and needs.</p> <p>iv. Standards-based assessment data are used routinely to make program and instructional decisions</p>

Comments:

2. An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, relevant, integrated, and standards-based (con't).				
Criteria	1	2	3	4
<i>2.g The degree to which content areas are integrated and articulated vertically and horizontally within and across various curricular areas, Learning Standards and grade levels</i>	Each discipline or content area is viewed completely independent from other disciplines and content areas and grade levels.	Occasionally, deliberate connections are made between disciplines, subject areas and grade levels.	Teachers regularly design and implement interdisciplinary assignments or they use approaches that allow students to see content connections across subject areas and grade levels.	Content areas and Learning Standards are consistently integrated vertically and horizontally so that knowledge and the acquisition of skills and knowledge are the natural focus of instruction or program rather than specific subjects or disciplines.

Comments:

2. An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, relevant, integrated, and standards-based (con't).				
Criteria	1	2	3	4
<p><i>2.h The degree to which the middle-level educational program involves family, community, and the world outside the school in the development of young adolescents</i></p>	<p>i. Parents and community are uninformed about the middle-level program.</p> <p>ii. Parents and community feel alienated or threatened when contacted by school.</p> <p>iii. Parents and community feel detached from their young adolescents.</p> <p>iv. All student learning occurs within the school building.</p>	<p>i. Parents and community have little involvement in the school program, limited to one or more isolated events.</p> <p>ii. Parents and community feel disconnected from the school “community”.</p> <p>iii. Parents and community have little investment in understanding and meeting the developmental needs of their young adolescents within their school.</p> <p>iv. Student formal learning outside the school building is limited to isolated assignments.</p>	<p>i. Parents and community are involved in the school program, but not necessarily in their students’ learning.</p> <p>ii. Parents and community are welcomed into the school when they are willing to assume selected roles or functions.</p> <p>iii. Parents and community seek assistance in understanding and meeting the developmental needs of their young adolescents.</p> <p>iv. Student formal learning takes place outside the school building through selected assignments and joint endeavors with the community.</p>	<p>i. Parents and community are integrally involved in students’ learning.</p> <p>ii. Parents and community are sought by the school as critical players and partners in the development of the whole child.</p> <p>iii. The school invests time and energy in involving parents and community members in formal and informal experiences that will help parents understand and meet the developmental needs of their young adolescents.</p> <p>iv. Student learning in school is consistently extended to the community.</p>

Comments:

