



NYSMSA Mission:

The **New York State Middle School Association** (NYSMSA) represents those who serve the educational needs of all young adolescents in New York State. We are committed to creating, promoting, and supporting effective middle-level programs that are academically rigorous and developmentally-appropriate.

NYSMSA Vision:

NYSMSA acts on our belief that all young adolescents are entitled to academically-rich and developmentally-appropriate programs. Toward this end, we work collaboratively within the educational community to make high-performing middle-level programs the norm in New York State through **full implementation of the Essential Elements** and application of cutting-edge research.

Did you know?

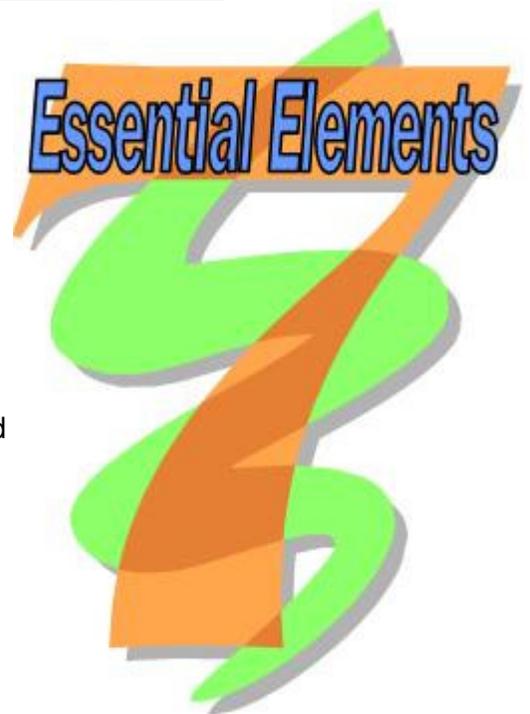
In July of 2003 the **New York State Board of Regents** issued its policy statement on middle level education. The statement declared that the **New York State Education Department's** seven **Essential Elements** **must be in place** in standards-focused schools with middle-level grades in New York State.

Additionally, the **Regulations of the Commissioner of Education** (part 100.4) (<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/part100/pages/pt100index.html>) now require school districts in New York State to ensure that their middle-level program is aligned with the Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education and the State Education Department's **Essential Elements** of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs.

Does your school meet the State's expectation declared in its policy and regulations?

What are the seven Essential Elements?

1. A **philosophy and mission** that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents.
2. An **educational program** that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based.
3. An **organization and structure** that support both academic excellence and personal development.
4. **Classroom instruction** appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers.
5. Strong **educational leadership** and a building administration that encourage, facilitate, and sustain involvement, participation, and students.
6. A **network of academic and personal support** available for all students.
7. **Professional learning and staff development** for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed.



How do I measure the required implementation of the New York State Education Department's seven **Essential Elements** in my school?

Visit the NYSMSA web page at <http://www.nysmsa.org/> . Once on the NYSMSA site click on the **Middle Level Essentials** button. Here you will find a great deal of valuable information you can use on the **New York State Education Department's** seven **Essential Elements** including the **Essential Element** protocols, rubrics, and rating sheets. It may also be helpful to reach out to your NYSMSA regional director for assistance and guidance in measuring your degree of implementation.

What is the **Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch** Program?

Visit the NYSMSA web page at <http://www.nysmsa.org/> . Once on the NYSMSA site click on the **Schools to Watch** button. Here you will find information not only on New York State's **Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch** Recognition Program but also on the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform (<http://www.mgforum.org/>) and its national Schools-to-Watch program.

The **Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch (EE: STW)** recognition program is:

- A program that guides schools in formulating **targeted school improvement plans** that result in full implementation of the **Essential Elements** and in State and Local recognition.
- a program to **identify and publicize effective middle-level schools** that are committed to continuous improvement
- a campaign to **educate professionals and the public** about criteria and indicators for high-performing middle-level schools
- an opportunity for **mentoring**
- an opportunity for **self-study**
- an opportunity for **networking about good practices**



Is your middle-level school committed to a direction that will lead to measurable excellence?

Through the use of research-based methods that are required by the **NYSED** and espoused by its partnership organizations your school can utilize the **Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch** program as a tool that will result in measurable excellence.

- Schools that believe they meet the characteristics of an **Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch (EE: STW)** school are encouraged to apply for recognition.
- Schools that are approaching, but have not yet achieved excellence, may be designated **Rising Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch** while they seek continuous improvement.
- All other middle-level schools are encouraged to use this program over time as a guide to the full implementation of the **Essential Elements**.

Are you a member yet of the NYSMSA yet?

If not sign up and receive **guidance and support in implementing** the required **Essential Elements** today by visiting our web site at <http://www.nysmsa.org/>.