

MIDVALE SCHOOL DISTRICT #433 - Policy Manual

SECTION 100

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101 - Statement of Guiding Principles

What is an Educational Philosophy? An educational philosophy is a statement which in general terms describes the aims, purposes, and objectives which the School Board hopes to achieve. An educational philosophy helps create a framework which assists the School Board and professional staff to make decisions on specific situations and assess programs. It also allows the members of the school system to perform their duties with positive direction.

In turn, goals can be developed from the framework of the educational philosophy.

Last Updated: 12 December 1995

102 - Educational Philosophy

Vision Statement

Preparing our students for tomorrow's successes.

Mission Statement

The shared mission of the Midvale Schools is excellence for all. The school affirms, as its central mission, that every child has a right to a quality education, that high academic standards must be set, and that every child can and will succeed.

STATEMENT OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The School As Community

A Shared Vision: The Midvale School is a place where everyone comes together to promote learning. In the Midvale School, the separate classrooms are connected by a clear and vital mission.

Parents as Partners: In the Midvale School, the circle of community extends to embrace parents, who are viewed as the student's first and most important teachers. The Midvale School is concerned with the ethical and moral dimensions of a child's life. Seven core virtues — honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, perseverance, and giving — are emphasized to guide the Midvale School as it promotes excellence in living, as well as in learning.

A Curriculum With Coherence

The Cruciality of Language: In the Midvale School, literacy is the first and most essential goal. All children are expected to become proficient in the written and spoken word, as well as in mathematics and the arts.

The Core Commodities: In the Midvale School, all students study the various fields of knowledge--Language Arts (Listening, Speaking, Developmental Reading, Handwriting, Spelling, Composition, Literature), Social Studies (Geography, History, Current Affairs, Government, Citizenship), Mathematics (Elementary Mathematics), Science (Natural Science, Environmental Science), Health (Health Instruction, Safety, Physical Fitness), Fine Arts (Music, Art), Career Education and Special Programs to meet the educational needs of children at all grade levels, — which are organized thematically within a framework.

Measuring Results: The Midvale School is accountable to parents, to students, and to the community at large. High academic standards are established in both language achievement and general knowledge. Student progress is periodically evaluated, with assessment always in the service of learning.

A Climate For Learning

Patterns to Fit Purpose: In the Midvale School, every student is encouraged to become a disciplined, creative, self-motivated learner. Class size is kept small.

Resource to Enrich: The Midvale School makes available to all students rich resources for learning — from building blocks to books. And the school also gives students access to the new electronic tools that connect each classroom to vast networks of knowledge.

A Commitment to Character

Living with Purpose: The core virtues of the Midvale School are taught both by word and deed. Through curriculum, school climate, and service, students are encouraged to apply the lessons of the classroom to the world around them.

Basic Curriculum Themes

Basic Skill Development

- Learn to read, spell, write, penmanship, and handle mathematical operations.
- Learn to acquire knowledge through reading and listening.
- Learn to communicate ideas through writing and speaking.
- Learn to utilize mathematical concepts.
- Develop the ability to utilize available sources of information.
- Focus on literature.
- Study U.S. and World Geography.

Personal Responsibilities

- Develop a commitment to truth and values.
- Develop an understanding of the necessity for moral conduct.
- Develop and apply personal values of honesty, integrity, courage, responsibility, respect, compassion, giving, etc.
- Demonstrate responsibility to others through the care and management of the surrounding environment.
- Focus on community and family and the health and well-being of oneself.

American Culture

- Develop a commitment to the values of liberty, government by consent of the governed, representational government, and one's responsibility for the welfare of all.
- Exercise the democratic right to dissent in accordance with personal conscience.
- Develop historical understanding of the U.S. basic roots.
- Develop a knowledge of the basic workings of the U.S. government.

Assessment

Assessment is a critically important part of the Midvale School. Language skills will be continuously monitored, since proficiency in instruction is a key objective. In teaching the curriculum, evaluation is embedded in instruction, so students, teachers, and parents can follow the progress being made. Further, any required state or district tests are administered at the Midvale School with the confidence that all students will succeed. Students will have learned a core of essential knowledge in context.

Aim

Ultimately, the aim of the Midvale School is not just to build a better school, but, above all, to build a better world for children. It is our deepest hope that not a single child, let alone a whole generation of children, should pass through the schoolhouse door unprepared to make a difference in the world. — There is an urgency to this effort.

Last Updated: 9 July 1996

131 - Educational Goals

Policy 131 — EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Frame of Reference: It is believed that in establishing and supporting a school the people want the school to provide:

1. Well-qualified and efficient staff with good character, capable of setting a good example.
2. Experiences for effective learning with a balanced approach to intellectual, social, vocational, and personal development.
3. Physical plant and equipment to meet the needs of every learner.
4. Leadership by the staff and board to continually plan for and carry out needed school improvements.

A. Academic Goals

1. Mastery of basic skills and fundamental processes:
 - 1.1 Learn to read, write, and handle basic arithmetical operations.
 - 1.2 Learn to acquire ideas through reading and listening.
 - 1.3 Learn to communicate ideas through writing and speaking.
 - 1.4 Learn to utilize mathematical concepts.
 - 1.5 Develop the ability to utilize available sources of information.

In our technological civilization, an individual's ability to participate in the activities of society depends on mastery of these skills and processes and ability to utilize them in the varied functions of life. With few exceptions, those who are deficient in them will be severely limited in their ability to function effectively in our society.

2. Intellectual development:
 - 2.1 Develop the ability to think rationally, including problem-solving skills, application of principles of logic, and skill in using different modes of inquiry.
 - 2.2 Develop the ability to use and evaluate knowledge, i.e., critical and independent thinking that enables one to make judgments and decisions in a wide variety of life roles -- citizen, consumer, worker, etc., -- as well as in

- intellectual activities.
- 2.3 Accumulate a general fund of knowledge, including information and concepts in mathematics, literature, natural science, and social science.
- 2.4 Develop positive attitudes toward intellectual activity, including curiosity and a desire for further learning.
- 2.5 Develop an understanding of change in society.

As civilization has become increasingly complex, people have had to rely more heavily on their rational abilities. Also, today's society needs the full intellectual development of each member. This process includes not only the acquisition of a fund of basic knowledge but also the development of basic thinking skills.

B. Vocational Goals

1. Career education -- vocational education:
 - 1.1 Learn how to select an occupation that will be personally satisfying and suitable to one's skills and interests.
 - 1.2 Learn to make decisions based on an awareness and knowledge of career options.
 - 1.3 Develop salable skills and specialized knowledge that will prepare one to become economically independent.
 - 1.4 Develop habits and attitudes, such as pride in good workmanship, that will make one a productive participant in economic life.
 - 1.5 Develop positive attitudes toward work, including acceptance of the necessity of making a living and an appreciation of the social value and dignity of work.

In our society, people spend a large amount of their time working. Therefore, an individual's personal satisfaction will be significantly related to satisfaction with his or her job. In order to make an intelligent career decision, one needs to know one's own aptitudes and interests as they relate to career possibilities. Next, one must be able to obtain whatever specialized training is necessary to pursue the vocation selected and to develop attitudes that will help one succeed in a field. This goal is important also for the continued growth and development of society.

C. Social, Civic, and Cultural Goals

1. Interpersonal understandings:
 - 1.1 Develop a knowledge of opposing value systems and their influence on the individual and society.
 - 1.2 Develop an understanding of how members of a family function under different family patterns as well as within one's own family.
 - 1.3 Develop skill in communicating effectively in groups.
 - 1.4 Develop the ability to identify with and advance the goals and concerns of others.
 - 1.5 Learn to form productive and satisfying relations with others based on

- respect, trust, cooperation, consideration, and caring.
- 1.6 Develop a concern for humanity and an understanding of international relations.
- 1.7 Develop an understanding and appreciation of cultures different from one's own.

In our complex, interdependent world, mental health is closely related to the larger social structure -- to one's interpersonal relations. No one goes unaffected by the actions of other people. Whoever pursues a mindless, self-indulgent course offends the sensibilities, endangers the health, or even threatens the lives, of others. Understanding oneself is not enough -- one must transcend self to become aware of and understand other people and their institutions, other nations and their relations, other cultures and civilizations past and present. Schools should help children to understand, appreciate, and value persons belonging to social, cultural, and ethnic groups different from their own and thus to increase affiliation and decrease alienation.

- 2. Citizenship participation:
 - 2.1 Develop historical perspective.
 - 2.2 Develop knowledge of the basic workings of the government.
 - 2.3 Develop a willingness to participate in the political life of the nation and the community.
 - 2.4 Develop a commitment to the values of liberty, government by consent of the governed, representational government, and one's responsibility for the welfare of all.
 - 2.5 Develop an understanding of the interrelationships among complex organizations and agencies in a modern society, and learn to act in accordance with it.
 - 2.6 Exercise the democratic right to dissent in accordance with personal conscience.
 - 2.7 Develop economic and consumer skills necessary for making informed choices that enhance one's quality of life.
 - 2.8 Develop an understanding of the basic interdependence of the biological and physical resources of the environment.
 - 2.9 Develop the ability to act in light of this understanding of interdependence.

More than ever before, humankind is confronted with confusion regarding the nature of man, conflicting value systems, ambiguous ethical, moral, and spiritual beliefs, and questions about his own role in society. There is a major struggle over the issue of whether man is for government or government is for man. The question is not whether there should be some form of government, but what should be its roles, functions, and structure, and what are its controls? Young people now are becoming involved earlier in politics and national life, and minorities are demanding greater access to power in our country. A democracy can survive only by the participation of its members. Schools are expected to generate such participation.

- 3. Enculturation:
 - 3.1 Develop insight into the values and characteristics, including language, of

- the civilization of which one is a member.
- 3.2 Develop an awareness and understanding of one's cultural heritage and become familiar with the achievements of the past that have inspired and influenced humanity.
 - 3.3 Develop understanding of the manner in which traditions from the past are operative today and influence the direction and values of society.
 - 3.4 Understand and adopt the norms, values, and traditions of the groups of which one is a member.
 - 3.5 Learn how to apply the basic principles and concepts of the fine arts and humanities to the appreciation of the aesthetic contributions of other cultures.

A study of traditions that illuminate our relationship with the past can yield insight into our present society and its values. Moreover, one's sense of belonging to a society is strengthened through an understanding of one's place in its tradition, and its record of human aspiration may suggest direction for one's own life. All these perceptions will contribute to the development of a person's sense of identity.

4. Moral and ethical character:
 - 4.1 Develop the judgment to evaluate events and phenomena as good or evil.
 - 4.2 Develop a commitment to truth and values.
 - 4.3 Learn to utilize values in making choices.
 - 4.4 Develop moral integrity.
 - 4.5 Develop an understanding of the necessity for moral conduct.

Society, religion, and philosophy provide guideposts for moral conduct. The individual is expected to control personal behavior according to one or several systems of values. Models for some of these values are implicitly in other person's behavior (parents, teachers, state leaders), and other values are manifested in the form of a moral code. Schools are expected to teach the young how to discern the values inherent in human behavior.

D. Personal Goals

1. Emotional and physical well-being:
 - 1.1 Develop the willingness to receive emotional impressions and to expand one's affective sensitivity.
 - 1.2 Develop the competence and skills for continuous adjustment and emotional stability, including coping with social change.
 - 1.3 Develop a knowledge of one's own body and adopt health practices that support and sustain it, including avoiding the consumption of harmful or addictive substances.
 - 1.4 Learn to use leisure time effectively.
 - 1.5 Develop physical fitness and recreational skills.
 - 1.6 Develop the ability to engage in constructive self-criticism.

The emotional stability and the physical fitness of the student are perceived in state goals as necessary conditions for attaining the other objectives. But physical well-being, emotional sensitivity, and realistic acceptance of self and others also are ends in themselves.

2. Creativity and aesthetic expression:
 - 2.1 Develop the ability to deal with problems in original ways.
 - 2.2 Develop the ability to be tolerant of new ideas.
 - 2.3 Develop the ability to be flexible and to consider different points of view.
 - 2.4 Develop the ability to experience and enjoy different forms of creative expression.
 - 2.5 Develop the ability to evaluate various forms of aesthetic expression.
 - 2.6 Develop the willingness and ability to communicate through creative work in an active way.
 - 2.7 Seek to contribute to cultural and social life through one's artistic, vocational, and avocational interests.

The ability to create new and meaningful things and the ability to appreciate the creations of other human beings helps one toward personal self-realization and benefit human society. Schools have a role to play in cultivating such appreciation and creativity.

3. Self-realization:
 - 3.1 Learn to search for meaning in one's activities, and develop a philosophy of life.
 - 3.2 Develop the self-confidence necessary for knowing and confronting one's self.
 - 3.3 Learn to assess realistically and live with one's limitations and strengths.
 - 3.4 Recognize that one's self-concept is developed in interaction with other people.
 - 3.5 Develop skill in making decisions with purpose.
 - 3.6 Learn to plan and organize the environment in order to realize one's goals.
 - 3.7 Develop willingness to accept responsibility for one's own decisions and their consequences.
 - 3.8 Develop skill in selecting some personal, lifelong learning goals and the means to attain them.

The ideal of self-realization is based on the idea that there is more than one way of being a human being and that efforts to develop a better self contribute to the development of a better society. Schools which do not produce self-directed citizens have failed both society and the individual. Adults unable to regulate and guide their own conduct are a liability to society and themselves. As a society becomes more complex, more relative, more ambiguous, and less structured, demands upon the individual multiply. We have created a world in which there no longer is a common body of information that everyone must or can learn. The only hope for meeting the demands of the future is the development of people who are capable of assuming responsibility for their own needs. Schools should help every child to prepare for a world of rapid changes and unforeseeable demands in which continuing education throughout adult life should be a normal

expectation.

SUMMATION: The Midvale School District is regarded as a changing community where young people live and develop, where they are provided an opportunity to determine their goals and to work toward those goals. They are given experiences which are designed to develop their talents and personalities essential to a wholesome life. Subject matter is regarded in terms of units of learning and living. It is believed that in every experience, the whole child must be considered; the mental, intellectual, physical, moral, spiritual, emotional and social. Teaching must begin at the student's level of accomplishment and ability and must provide challenges according to his/her ability.

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