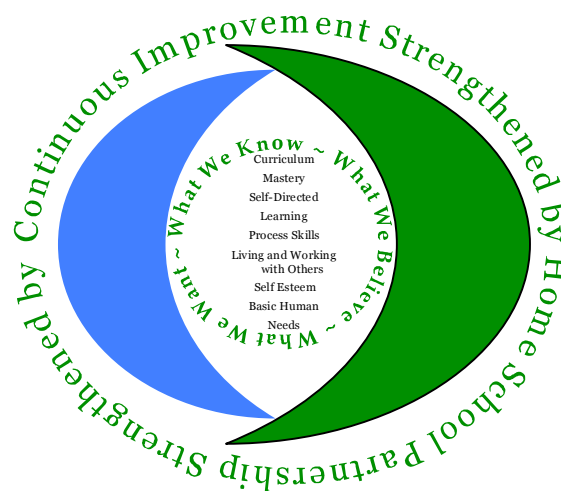


# NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# PARENT TOOLKIT

*A strong home-school partnership ensures that every child can succeed.*

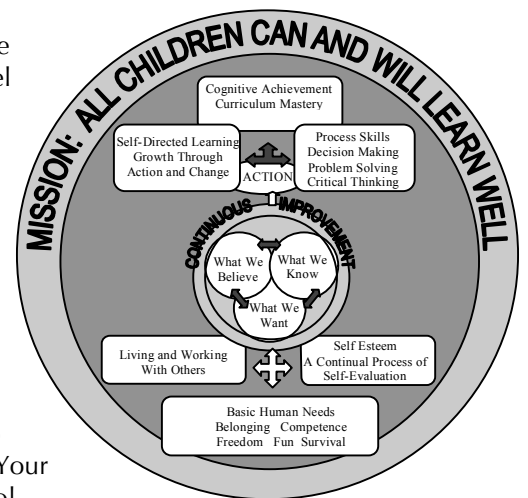
All  
Children  
Can and  
Will  
Learn  
Well



## Grades 5 and 6

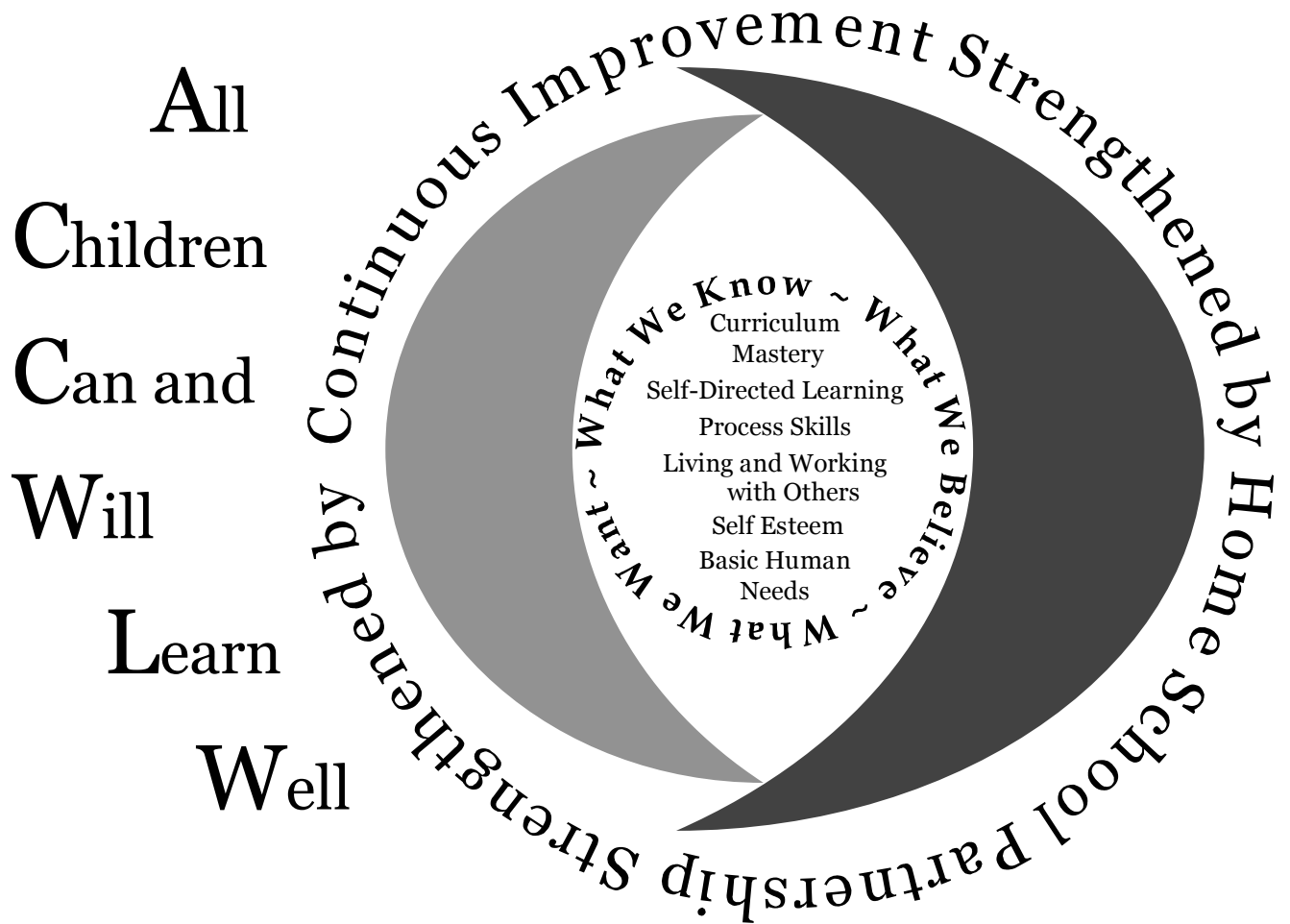
In 1995, the school district collaborated with parents and the community to develop the Newtown Success-Oriented School Model (shown to the right) to represent the core beliefs that are the foundation for nurturing successful learners. These core beliefs, which are based on Glasser's Model and the quality school movement, guide our decision-making in the school district as we work together to create a quality education for our students.

Parental involvement is key to our success in accomplishing this goal. Research has shown that when parents are involved in their child's education, there is greater likelihood of higher achievement. With this in mind, the model has been redesigned to be more "parent friendly" and emphasize our desire to collaborate with parents through a strong home-school partnership. Your involvement and support can make a difference in your child's school performance. This booklet was created to give you a greater understanding of the district's mission *All Children Can and Will Learn Well*. In it, you will find ideas and suggestions about things you can do at home to support your child's school experience.



Quality education is possible if we all work together towards the common goal of continuous improvement in the teaching and learning process. A strong home-school partnership insures that every child can succeed. Parents, teachers and administrators all share the same goal - wanting the best for our children.

## NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



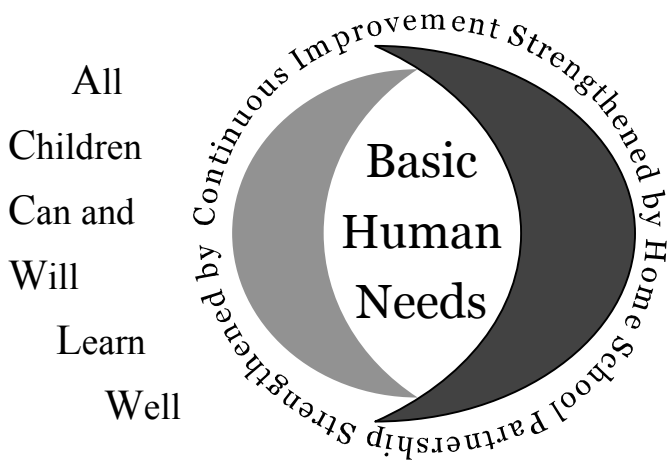
Our success depends on recognizing and understanding what we know, what we believe, and what we want. By meeting our children's basic needs in school and at home, while continuously working to improve the learning environment and curriculum, we will foster the development of students who are responsible, self-directed, and active participants in the educational process.

Together, we will make a difference for our children.

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## **Grades 5 and 6 The “Tween” Years**

*Preteens want a close relationship with others, to feel important and able to do what needs to be done, have freedom to make choices, have basic needs satisfied and have fun each and every day.*

Parents and teachers can work together to provide an environment that meets a preteen’s basic needs. The instructional program at Reed Intermediate School is specifically designed to provide the opportunities that support students in having their needs fulfilled in each of these areas. There are so many things we can do at home and at school to give our children a solid foundation. Here are some ways to do that...

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### **Preteens need to feel loved and have a sense of belonging.**

*At home,*

- Give hugs and kisses.
- Give a positive send-off to school.
- Have dinner or other meals together.
- Provide for individual time with parents.
- Ask your child about his/her life everyday.
- Reserve and preserve family time.
- Take time to pay attention.
- Seek to build problem solving skills and resilience by guiding students in how to approach problems, instead of rushing to solve for them.

*At school,*

- Work in small clusters with two caring teachers.
- Provide transition visits and activities to support belonging to the new school, as well as “getting-to-know-you” activities.
- Praise effort as well as achievement at all stages.
- Have celebrations, class routines or traditions.
- Provide a range of clubs and activities to appeal to many interests.
- Recognize and encourage service to others.

### **Preteens need to feel competent...I can do this!**

*At home,*

- Establish routines.
- Celebrate accomplishments.

# Basic Human Needs

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## Grades 5 and 6

### **Preteens need to feel competent...I can do this!**

*(continued)*

*At home,*

- Allow and promote appropriate choices.
- Tolerate error and ask what he/she learned from it.
- Give responsibility such as taking out the trash.
- Share community service/involvement.
- Hold your child responsible for day-to-day schoolwork by making certain that they complete homework. Consult with the teacher as soon as you perceive any difficulties in learning or with homework.
- Teach self-advocacy skills.

*At school,*

- Students link effort and strategies used to achievement.
- Identify learning styles.
- Use a variety of instructional methods such as use of manipulatives.
- Use rubrics and other tools to help them understand what they need to do to improve.

### **Preteens need the freedom to make choices that are developmentally appropriate...I am responsible for myself!**

*At home,*

- Encourage new and appropriate friendships.
- Allow for extracurricular choice.
- Encourage your child to become involved with school and age appropriate community activities on his/her own.
- Collaboratively plan timeline to complete homework and long-term projects.

*At school,*

- Students develop mission statements for their own lives to guide their personal choices.
- Students choose novels for literature discussion groups.
- Students have a locker to keep their belongings.
- Students walk to their "Specials" classes without a teacher, choose seats in the cafetorium, etc.
- Students use passes to go to the library and other places independently.
- Students begin to determine curriculum choices (e.g. music).

## **Basic Human Needs**

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### Grades 5 and 6

**Preteens need to have fun! This can include the fun of making new discoveries or of learning something new and interesting.**

*At home,*

- Learn to laugh!
- Read Learning to Kiss a Frog.
- Have play dates.
- Read together.
- Go for a walk together.

*At school,*

- Engage in learning activities that are fun!
- Have school-wide assemblies that are fun and interesting.
- Have curriculum-related field trips.
- Provide opportunities for students to work in collaborative groups.
- Spirit days, such as Pajama Day.
- Play curriculum and “just-for-fun” games.
- Have school-wide competitions for reading, collecting box tops, and charitable donations.
- Organize a range of developmentally appropriate evening events for “students only” such as several movie nights, bingo, etc.

**Preteens need warmth, sleep, and good nutrition**

*At home,*

- Set limit of approximately one hour of unsupervised time.
- Teach proper hygiene.
- Encourage good eating habits.
- Impose appropriate bedtime (9:00pm).
- Encourage regular exercise.
- Teach money management.
- Talk openly about sex and drugs.
- Teach stranger awareness and Internet safety.
- Develop family emergency response plans.
- Watch cell phone use.

*At school,*

- Teach health skills by a certified Health Teacher.
- Handle free/reduced lunch discreetly.
- Have water available and encourage drinking it regularly.
- The Nurse provides teaching staff with information about allergies/medical issues.
- Provide training for students about safe procedures when blood is present.

## Basic Human Needs

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### Grades 5 and 6

#### Preteens need warmth, sleep, and good nutrition

(continued)

At school,

- Have school emergency response plans.
- Practice drills for fire, wind and bus emergency.
- Call home if any health concerns, including excessive sleepiness, are noted.
- Provide outdoor recess when weather permits.



### Computer Safety

Children in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade age range are regularly looking outside their families for social interaction and for information. It is a good idea for them to use the computer, but important for you as parents to restrict computer use and stay involved. Here are some ideas to consider:

- **Put the computer your child will use in a common area** where you will be able to supervise what is happening. Never put it away from the family in the child's room.
- **Establish family rules** by age for computer and Internet use. Make sure your child understands why you are establishing these rules. Web sites such as <http://kids.getnetwise.org> or [www.staysafe.org](http://www.staysafe.org) or [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) can give you suggestions for rules to establish. <http://www.safekids.com/kidsrules.htm> is a site that has rules ready to print out.
- **Educate yourself** about Internet safety -- [www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org) provides a newsletter for parents to help you stay up to date.
- **Consider using a filtering program**, a child-friendly browser, or electronically restrict sites your child can go to. Most internet browsers have the ability for you to block access to certain sites. You may list specific sites that you feel are inappropriate for your child to reduce the likelihood of them being exposed to inappropriate content or engaging in social networking (blogs, instant messaging, chat rooms, etc.).
- **Talk to your children about the dangers of social networking sites and technology.** Anyone they haven't met in person is a stranger, and the rules of talking to strangers should apply to anyone who tries to contact your child via blogs, email, instant messaging, chat rooms, or similar technologies. If your child wishes to communicate with a stranger, ask to speak with them yourself via telephone prior to communication and monitor any and all discussions between your child and the individual.



## Basic Human Needs

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### Grades 5 and 6

#### Computer Safety

*(continued)*

- **Restrict the amount of time** your child spends on the computer or using computer-type games to no more than an hour or so a day. Physical activity supports healthy brain development – get them out to play as well as spending time reading and with electronic media.
- **Learn about BLOGS** – A **blog** is a Web site where the host can write whatever he/she wants, then visitors to the site can add comments if they like. You may have heard about MySpace.com which is a blog site used by many kids (and by sexual predators as well.) Children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade are not old enough to have a blog, but some falsify their age to gain access to this social network. To keep your child safe, learn how to talk with him/her about blogs, supervise all computer use, and learn search skills to find out if your child has a blog. We will offer a parent workshop about Internet safety and blogs or check [http://www.staysafe.org/parents/hot\\_topics/blogging.html](http://www.staysafe.org/parents/hot_topics/blogging.html) for ideas.
- **Be aware that the Internet can bring about cyber-bullying.** It is easy for students to type in a reaction or a snide remark and hit send before thinking. This site <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/tweens/index.html> has some suggestions about what to do about cyber bullying.

**The three key things to do are EDUCATE yourself, COMMUNICATE, and SUPERVISE computer use.**

## Basic Human Needs

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### Grades 5 and 6

#### Early Intervention Substance Use and Prevention

Children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade are beginning to relate more to peers than to adults, they want to explore new experiences, and yet their pre-pubescent brain development does not let them be concerned about the consequences of their actions in the future. As younger children, they thought about one thing at a time and it was easy for you, as parents, to interrupt a potential problem by moving them into another activity. Now their developing brains are allowing them to predict your actions, so they may plot and plan in a way you have not experienced.

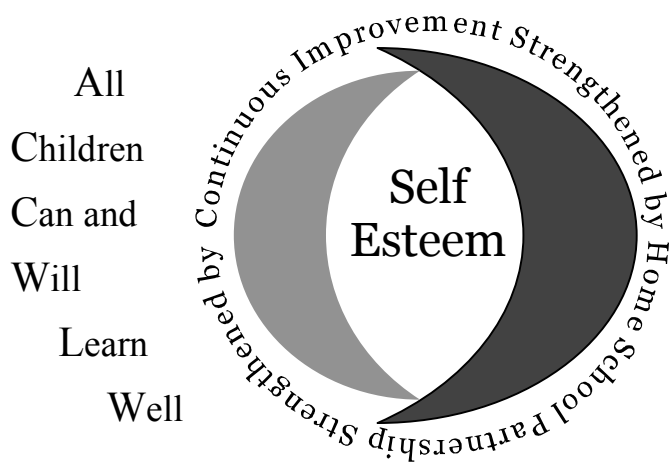
#### **NOW IS THE TIME TO PREVENT LATER DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE.**

This is a prime time for you to build the assets with your child that can protect him/her from substance abuse later on. The web site, <http://www.search-institute.org/families/>, lists the 40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood that will help your child grow up to be healthy, caring, and responsible. Download these assets or attend a workshop provided at RIS each winter to help you become more consciously aware of your child's strengths and needs. The Town has a federal grant that enables us to offer 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade families evening workshops that help to improve family communication (strengthening families) and develop workable rules and boundaries. The parents and their child who have attended the workshop series have enjoyed a closer relationship and improved communication – one of the key factors for substance abuse prevention.

Sometimes it is difficult to know what to say to your child. This site, <http://talkingwithkids.org/>, can give you “practical, concrete tips and techniques for talking easily and openly with young children ages 8 to 12 about some very tough issues: **sex, HIV/AIDS, violence, drugs and alcohol.**”

Last year we collaborated with the Parent Connection to have Isabel Burk talk about inhalant prevention. This site offers her presentation with slides and sound, <http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/hyler/>. Ms. Burk's own site <http://www.healthnetwork.org/> offers slide shows that can be purchased and the curriculum she wrote for the Virginia Department of Education.

The U.S. Department of Education site <http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/drgfreept1.html> gives an overview for parents, articles to read, and concrete suggestions of activities to do with your child.



## Grades 5 and 6 The “Tween” Years

*Preteens with high self-esteem are competent, honest, responsible, compassionate and loving.*

A student who has high self-esteem is enthusiastic and shows a desire to acquire knowledge. They stay focused to complete a task and are accountable and responsible for their actions. A confident preteen demonstrates optimism when faced with challenges and works towards self-improvement. They have faith in themselves and their ability to meet challenges head-on. They value themselves.

---

Here are some examples of ways that parents and teachers can foster positive self-esteem and help preteens continue to grow as eager and successful learners.

**A preteen with positive self-esteem is “connected” to the people and world around them.**

*At home,*

- Create fair and predictable boundaries for behavior.
- Give guided responsibility – babysitting, lawn mowing, etc.
- Eat meals together with the television off.
- Support a healthy social life with family and with a few selected friends.
- Do a charitable act.

*At school,*

- Encourage participation in clubs and other extracurriculars.
- Have students work in small study groups or with a partner.
- Develop class traditions.
- Provide “getting-to-know-you” activities and opportunities to share major events or qualities.
- Engage in school-wide charitable functions.
- Get to know students as individuals.
- Provide Guidance counselors to help students who have difficulties with social connections.

# Self Esteem

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## Grades 5 and 6

**A preteen with positive self-esteem recognizes and celebrates the “uniqueness” of themselves and others.**

*At home,*

- Tell family stories at meal times.
- Celebrate family traditions at holidays such as making gingerbread houses.
- Encourage practice and perseverance when learning a skill, such as playing an instrument or learning a new sport.
- Have them decorate their own rooms to reflect their personal interests.

*At school,*

- Set up opportunities for students to share special skills.
- Celebrate cultural traditions.
- Provide two or three choices within group work. Flexible rubrics allow for creativity.
- Have students profile their strengths and/or learning styles and use them to plan instruction.

**A preteen with positive self-esteem feels capable of doing what he/she needs to do.**

*At home,*

- Give household responsibility.
- Allow guided access to Internet, telephone, etc.
- Give appropriate allowance of money and teach money management.
- Have your preteen pick out their own clothes, do laundry.

*At school,*

- Teach students to analyze the quality of their work and set personal goals.
- Help students learn to manage their time through timelines for projects, binder and backpack management and regular locker clean-out.
- Use rubrics to help students learn to self-monitor and to set clear expectations.
- Teach study skills that help students link effort and strategies with results.

# Self Esteem

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## Grades 5 and 6

### Developing an Independent Learner

This is also a critical transition time that can affect how your child performs in school. If a parent has over-facilitated schoolwork for his/her child, this is often the time when conflict breaks out. A student who is seeking independence but who has come to rely on his or her parent too much to be able to be independent will experience frustration or anger. As an intermediate school, we want to work with parents to help them support the development of a successful independent learner.

It is easy to teach children to be dependent on our help without even being aware that we are doing it. It is instinctive for parents to want to sit with their child to help him/her do homework. They notice what the child is doing wrong, tell him it is wrong, show him how to do it right, then stick with him to make sure he does it correctly. What this process actually teaches the child is that he requires help in order to do the work. It undermines his self-esteem because he does not feel competent.

Now, what do I do, you say? There are three things that you can do to help your child become motivated and learn to feel competent. PRAISE, PROMPT, and LEAVE.

#### **PRAISE**

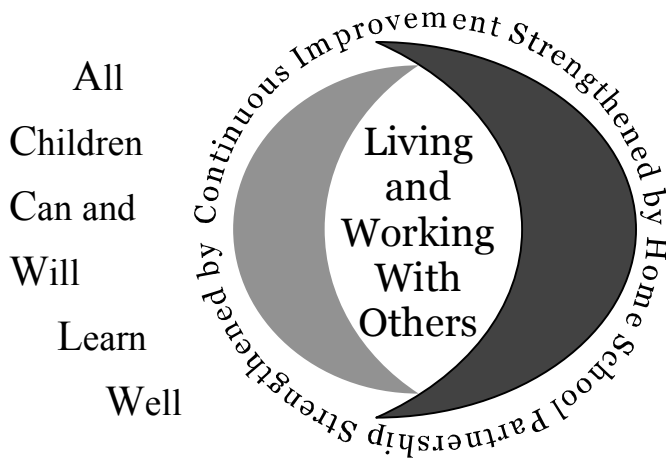
To start with, you are going to change the way you approach what your child is doing. Find something specific that he/she is doing right and make a positive comment such as, "Good, you're getting ready to do your homework." or "I see you're looking up your assignments." Every time you approach your child to see how he is doing, you are going to START WITH A POSITIVE COMMENT. It is usually about something that he has done right so far. You may have to adjust your goal of perfection and have a goal of improvement from the point where he is, in order to be able to think of a positive comment.

#### **PROMPT**

If your child is doing fine, then just say, "Keep up the good work!" If you have noticed something that needs support or your child appears stuck, give a brief, clear prompt of the next step to take. It should be brief and not start with the words "But," "However," or "Instead of." Begin with, "The next thing to do is..." or "Have you tried checking your notes from class?" Your prompt should be short and sweet – not a long, drawn-out explanation that will only confuse him.

#### **LEAVE**

If you hang around, you are communicating to your child that you believe that he will need more help. This leads him to believe he can't do it without you. So you are going to smile, turn, and leave. This is a good time to take out the trash or load the dishwasher or check email or fix a cup of tea.



## Grades 5 and 6 The “Tween” Years

*Preteens learn about themselves and others in everything they do. Parents and teachers can help them understand the value and importance of living and working with others.*

Home and school are the natural environments for preteens to learn about themselves and each other. What are our goals? Parents and teachers can work together to help them consistently:

Show respect and concern for others.

Understand the impact of his/her behavior on others.

Understand the needs of others and be able to respond to those needs.

Understand and respect individual differences.

### **Respect and concern for others.**

*At home,*

- Participate in the care of siblings.
- Care for a pet.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Help a neighbor (pick up the mail, companionship for the elderly, flowers for a lonely neighbor, proper greeting of a neighbor, common courtesy.)
- Value simple chores as an integral part of helping the family (without competition).

*At school,*

- Model respect by showing it to the students and to each other.
- Participate in the care of class pets and plants.
- Assign students class jobs (class news, maintenance, class librarian) on a rotating basis.
- Require students to not interrupt when another person is speaking.
- Recognize other student contributions by name (i.e. “I understand what Suzy said about India. I think this.”)
- Help students recognize when it is appropriate to share with adults important information/necessary information about another student.
- Help students understand that school materials belong to all of us and leave them as you found them.

# Living and Working With Others

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## Grades 5 and 6

### Understand the impact of behavior on others.

*At home,*

- Participate in the care of siblings.
- Hold family meetings or have discussions over dinner.
- Provide logical consequences for behavior (if you broke something, fix it).
- Hold children accountable for making things “right” or living up to an agreement.

*At school,*

- Use the restitution process. The idea is for the child to “repair the damage” in some way when he/she has a problem. Read the book Restitution by Diane Gossen, 2001.
- Hold class meetings and discussions to solve problems.
- Role-play difficult situations and talk about alternative choices.
- Use literature and curriculum to help students see different points of view.

### Understand and respond to the needs of others.

*At home,*

- Show interest in other people by asking questions and really listening.
- Don’t always meet your child’s needs first so that he/she becomes aware that other people are part of the same universe and their needs may come first at times.
- Help your child notice the needs of family and neighbors and praise him/her for efforts to help.
- Talk about why it is important to come to activities when called and praise when it happens quickly.
- Encourage your child to help a sibling with homework when appropriate.

*At school,*

- Guide discussion or conflict resolution in situations between two students, allowing each to speak and share his/her point of view.
- Teach strategies to help students be prepared and come to class on time.
- Participate in community activities that have charitable intentions (Interact Club, Pencils for Peace, Jump Rope for Heart).

### Understand and respect individual differences.

*At home,*

- Expose your preteen to different types of people or religion through books, videos, or experiences.
- Model respect.
- Discuss news from different perspectives.

# Living and Working With Others

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## Grades 5 and 6

### Understand and respect individual differences.

*(continued)*

*At school,*

- Teach the diversity units through curriculum-related study, then talk about why it's important to respect individual differences.
- Help students understand what is happening in puberty with both genders and stress the importance of privacy and respect.
- Develop understanding about bullying and reinforce strategies frequently (from [Bullyproofing Your School](#)).
- Develop understanding of differences through the study of world religions.
- Teach specific bullying unit (Grade 6) and developmental guidance lessons in bullying.



## Bullying and Sexual Harassment

Board of Education Policy 8-605 prohibits bullying in schools. Bullying among children is aggressive behavior that is intentional and is repeated over time. Bullying in fifth and sixth grade usually involves name-calling or not allowing a child be part of a group. Bullying may cause children to feel lonely, anxious, or sick. Sometimes children do not tell the school or their parents they are being bullied.

### If your child tells you he/she is being bullied.

- Be supportive and gather information about the bullying. Never tell your child to ignore the bullying. Find out who was involved, what happened, and where it occurred. Do not encourage physical retaliation as a solution.
- Contact your child's teacher and/or principal. Keep your emotions in check. A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Give the school person the basic information you have gathered. Expect the person from school to get back to you. If the bullying doesn't stop, contact school authorities again.
- Help your child become more resilient to bullying. Teach him/her how to seek help from an adult when he/she feels threatened. Help your child to develop a sense of self-worth by developing talents or positive attributes. Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his class. Ask yourself, "Is my child being bullied because of a lack of social skills?" If your child easily irritates people, help him/her learn the social rules of his/her peer group.



# Living and Working With Others

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## Grades 5 and 6

### **Bullying and Sexual Harassment**

*(continued)*

#### **What if your child is the bully?**

Children who bully their peers tend to be impulsive, be easily frustrated, lack empathy, have difficulty following rules, and view violence in a positive way.

- Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously and that you will not tolerate this behavior. Develop clear and consistent rules – then praise and reinforce your child for following rules. Do not use physical punishment for discipline. Instead, remove privileges or add jobs around the house.
- Provide as much parental or adult supervision as possible. Put an immediate stop to any bullying you observe. Then have the child act in a more appropriate way.
- Emphasize praise and positive feedback. Reward the child for caring and appropriate behaviors.

#### **Sexual Harassment May Occur During this Time of Early Puberty**

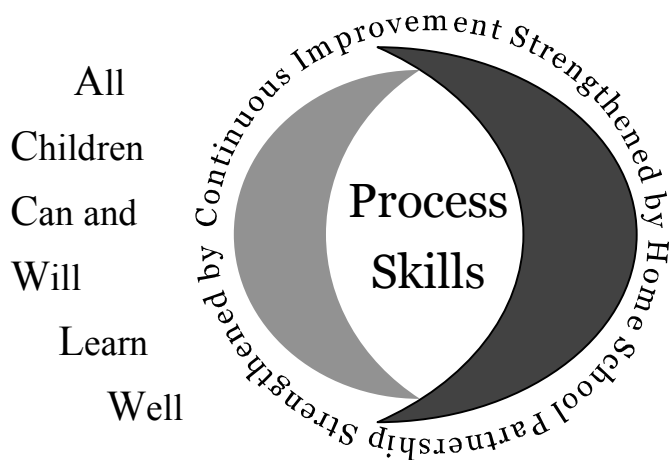
Board of Education Policy, State and Federal Laws forbid sexual harassment in schools. Some examples of behaviors that may occur at the intermediate level that may be considered sexual harassment are:

- Staring or leering at parts of someone else's body.
- Comments, gestures or jokes of a sexual nature.
- Displaying of sexual pictures or objects.
- Spreading rumors or commenting about sexual behavior.
- Touching, grabbing, pinching.

#### **If you believe your child is being sexually harassed at school, on the bus, or in school activities...**

- Take action and get help from the principal or assistant principal. Ignoring sexual harassment is not an effective way to stop it.
- Whenever possible, guide your child to tell the harasser verbally or in writing what the specific behaviors are that he/she finds offensive and ask him or her to stop.
- Report the offensive behaviors to a teacher, counselor, or school administrator.
- Keep a detailed record of the harassing behavior to share with school officials who investigate your complaint.

We want to help our students form appropriate, respectful ways of relating with each other. Part of this development is being very clear about the behaviors that are not permitted and why. It is also important to help them learn more positive ways of getting attention and relating to each other.



## Grades 5 and 6 The “Tween” Years

*When preteens grow as critical thinkers, problem solvers, and decision makers, they master the curriculum and become accomplished learners.*

Parents and teachers can work collaboratively to teach preteens how to think critically, solve problems and make decisions. What’s the result? Young teens who can imagine, invent, elaborate, predict, reason, reflect, take risks and justify solutions.

---

Here are some examples of how parents and teachers can provide ways for children to develop process skills.

**Critical Thinking** – is the analysis of various points of view, the evaluation of data, and synthesizing this with prior knowledge to move towards a conclusion.

*At Home,*

- Talk about different points of view. Allow each family member to give his/her point of view or opinion about something that has happened or something that the family is trying to decide.
- Gather data to make decisions. If the child says “everybody is doing it” conduct a survey of his/her friends to see what the data says.
- Discuss the news and advertising, analyzing points of view and looking at the data.

*At School,*

- Have students analyze the point of view of each character in novels.
- Gather data and make a variety of graphs using Excel.
- Have students support their opinions with evidence from the text, give facts, or describe observations.

**Decision Making** – is the process of considering alternatives in order to draw conclusions and make thoughtful choices.

*At Home,*

- Offer choices, usually two or three options – it could be what to do in free time, extracurricular activities, or items to purchase. Then help your child weigh the positives and negatives of each choice before deciding.

## Process Skills

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### Grades 5 and 6

#### Decision Making

*(continued)*

*At Home,*

- Talk about decisions that you are making and what you are thinking.
- Have your child make predictions of what would likely happen next if a particular choice is made, then watch to see what actually happens.

*At School,*

- As a class, brainstorm choices or solutions to a problem, then discuss the pros and cons of each.
- Examine the decision-making of characters in stories. Guide children to make predictions of what they think will happen next, then read on to validate/invalidate their prediction.
- Allow the class to generate ideas for activities for a particular afternoon, then weigh the pros and cons of each option.

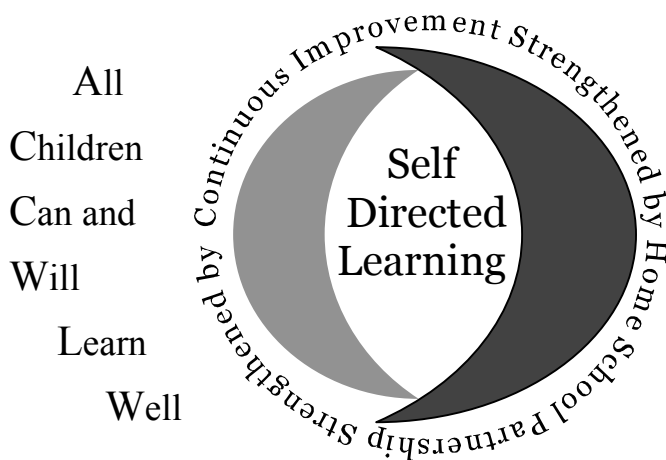
**Problem Solving** - when faced with a situation where no clear answer is evident, students recognize and name the problem, identify and describe the alternatives, generate a set of steps needed to solve the problem, combine the steps into a workable strategy, and draw conclusions

*At Home,*

- Encourage your child to identify problems that exist. Instead of suggesting a solution, ask questions to guide your child to think through the process of solving the problem. Examples of questions include, "What do you think the problem is?", "What are some things you might try to solve the problem?", "Which do you think would be the best choice?"

*At School,*

- Have students learn and use the scientific method: develop a hypothesis, investigate, test, adjust.
- Encourage students to work together as a class or as a small group to solve problems that occur in the classroom or on the playground.
- Provide open-ended problems that have many possible solution in math, science, and social studies.



## Grades 5 and 6 The “Tween” Years

*Preteens become self-directed learners by actively participating in the learning process and taking responsibility for their learning.*

In order for students to learn, they must be actively engaged in the learning process. When this occurs, preteens become imaginative, open-minded, confident, curious and independent. The skills and attitude of a self-directed learner are essential to the development of a student’s self-esteem and his/her desire to succeed.

A self-directed learner will:

- Observe the world and interpret it through discussion and critical thinking.
- Seek opportunities.
- Find and use resources.
- Set goals and make plans to achieve those goals.
- Self-evaluate accurately and learn from experience.
- Persevere.
- Link effect and strategy with results.

Some ways to foster growth as a self-directed learner:

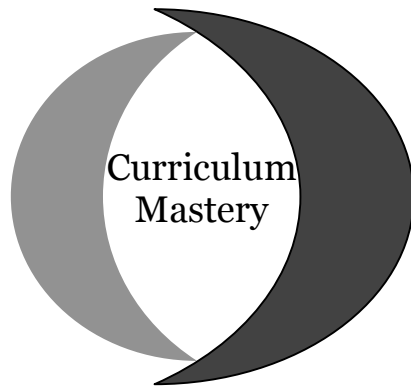
*At home,*

- Provide a comfortable setting for study and the materials they need for daily assignments. Give them a work area free of distractions and television.
- Offer help in understanding directions when they need it. Praise what they are doing right, give one short suggestion, and leave them to do it.
- Encourage your preteen to explore his world.
- Help your preteen develop a routine or time plan for getting things done.
- Contact the teacher to discuss concerns if your child cannot complete *independently* most homework assignments.

*At school,*

- Give students opportunities to examine their efforts and accomplishments. Have them reflect on their work and ask what they might change, if anything.
- Incorporate the use of different resources into assignments. Have them use the library, newspapers and magazines and the Internet.
- Have students set goals and plans for long-term assignments.

All  
Children  
Can and  
Will  
Learn  
Well



## Grades 5 and 6 Curriculum Overview

*Curriculum mastery, also referred to as cognitive achievement, results from quality instruction, an opportunity to learn, prior knowledge, and a willingness to persevere.*

Curriculum mastery is a continuous process that begins in kindergarten and continues throughout your child's formal education. The essential knowledge and skills that your child acquires becomes the basis for new learning. Enduring knowledge is our shared goal. Standards and objectives are used in every subject at every grade level and aid in measuring progress. Mastery of the curriculum depends not only upon a student's ability, but also by the effort and persistence of our children, their parents and teachers.

Presented on the following pages are summaries of the content standards and expected performances for Grades 5 and 6.

### Fifth Grade Curriculum Overview

This table gives some general information about what is taught in the fifth grade program. The specific objectives are listed in the curriculum documents posted on the district website [www.newtown.k12.ct.us](http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us). Our district is committed to helping every child learn well through differentiating the curriculum whenever possible.

<b>Art</b>	Students in 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade attend art classes once a week for the full school year. In addition, they participate in art an additional time a week as part of the rotation courses. Students add the concepts of space and rhythm to the visual and tactile qualities of their work and are expected to explain how and why a piece of art is effective using the language of the principles and elements taught in younger grades. They are expected to make connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum. They discuss works of art from Ancient cultures, the Renaissance, Impressionism, and Modern periods and look at them in the context of a time line. Students are expected to reflect about their work and refine works in progress.	
<b>DARE</b>	Students attend Drug Abuse Resistance Education once a week in one of the rotation periods. DARE is taught by a Newtown Police Officer who has been specially trained to teach this program. DARE helps preteens develop the skills needed to recognize and resist the subtle and overt pressures that cause them to experiment with drugs or become involved in gangs or violent activities.	
<b>Health</b>	Safety	Students learn to recognize risky situations and alternate ways to respond.

## Fifth Grade Curriculum Overview

<b>Health</b>	Social/Emotional	Students learn to recognize and avoid sexual harassment, handle bullying situations appropriately, and cope with the changes of puberty.
	Substance Use/Abuse	Students learn about the physical changes that happen to the body when drugs or alcohol are used.
	Healthy Body	Students learn to select physical activity for stress management, disease prevention, and fitness. They analyze their diet for nutrients and sort foods into healthy/unhealthy based on the labels.
	Disease Prevention	Students link diseases to poor health habits and describe personal responsibilities for disease prevention and the consequences for not using strategies they know (such as don't touch another person's blood).
<b>Information Literacy</b>	Gather Information for a Specific Purpose	Students learn to develop guiding questions for research, to develop a plan, locate the resources using search strategies to narrow or expand the focus.
	Analyze and Evaluate Information	Students learn to verify accuracy and validity of web site information. Students put the information they find into their own words and provide appropriate MLA citation.
	Evaluate both the Process and the Product	Students reflect on the research process, the thoroughness of the content and the quality of their product.
<b>Mathematics</b>	Algebraic Reasoning: Patterns and Functions	Students extend and compare numerical and geometric sequences. They use variables in simple equations and inequalities to express mathematical relations and solve problems. They organize data in tables, graphs, and scatter plots in order to identify trends and make an analysis.
	Numerical and Proportional Reasoning	Students develop their number sense through estimation and solve multi-step problems. They investigate prime and composite numbers and perfect squares. They are expected to know the multiplication and division facts. Students learn to use models to understand equivalent forms of fractions, decimals, mixed numbers, and percent. They compare ratios using fraction and decimal equivalents.

## Fifth Grade Curriculum Overview

<b>Mathematics</b>	Geometry and Measurement	Students work with polygons and solids and estimate and measure lengths, angles, perimeter, and area. They solve problems involving conversion of measures with customary and metric systems and elapsed time. They create and interpret scale drawings, work with line symmetry and congruent figures, plot points on a rectangular coordinate system, and develop the formula for the volume of a rectangular solid.
	Working with Data	Students use various tables and graphs, including stem-and-leaf plots to identify the range, mode and median of a set of data. They learn that data collection methods can affect the nature of the data set, how to organize data to see trends, and solve problems involving the organization of data.
<b>Music</b>	Students elect to take a band instrument, a string instrument, or participate in general music twice each week. They also have an instrument specific lesson once a week during their learning lab. In addition all students use the music technology lab to learn about composition once a week for one of the 12-week rotation classes.	
<b>Physical Education</b>	Students have physical education twice each week and participate in Project Adventure classes as one of the rotation classes. They work on specific motor skills, complex movement sequences, fitness, game skills, and social skills. The Project Adventure program is designed to foster trust, cooperation, support, appropriate risk, communication, problem solving, and teamwork.	
<b>Reading</b>	Read for Information and Understanding	Students distinguish important information from minor details to create a summary, connect to their own experiences and knowledge, and identify the theme or main idea of a work.
	Read for Critical Analysis and Evaluation	Students analyze how author's bias or personal experience can influence the reader. They make reasonable inferences from explicit and implicit information and support opinions about text with relevant references.
	Read for Aesthetic and Personal Response	Students explain the impact of foreshadowing, metaphor, and symbolism on the reader. They construct meaningful and specific connections to the aesthetic qualities of a variety of texts.

## Fifth Grade Curriculum Overview

<b>Reading</b>	Read Strategically	Students use reading strategies including surveying the text to identify what it is about, making predictions, and asking questions. They apply knowledge of root words, prefixes, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and words with multiple meanings to determine the meaning of words and phrases. They record and organize information to support understanding.
<b>Science</b>	Students study sound and light (pitch and loudness, transmission, absorption, and reflection). They learn the structure and function of the human senses. They study the Earth in the solar system, looking at the causes of day and night and the changes in the appearance of the moon. They compare the structure of the human to the camera and other instruments.	
<b>Social Studies</b>	Students learn about ancient civilization in North and South America, the exploration of the Americas, Native American cultures, and the colonization of North America.	
<b>Technology</b>	Students learn to organize files into folders, troubleshoot simple computer problems, revise writing using spell check and use a thesaurus. They use information and equipment responsibly, citing sources by giving credit for pictures, text, or audio they use. They use technology for research and problem solving, develop and publish printed and multimedia projects, and create spreadsheets that can be used to show data as several types of graphs. They use techno-communications to communicate and collaborate with students and/or experts from another class, town, state or country.	
<b>Writing</b>	Technical Practical Writing	Students write literary analysis, science and math explanations, and expository works. They are expected to elaborate fully with accurate details.
	Range and Versatility of Writing	Students compose to explain, inform, describe, or narrate an experience. They use reader's response journals, write expository works, and start to write persuasive pieces.
	Reflective Writing	Students analyze their works and set personal goals with increasing independence, incorporating teacher guidance, analytical rubrics, or portfolio guidelines.
	Writing Strategically	Students use frameworks to help them plan their writing. They revise content, organization, tone, syntax, and word choice.
	Mechanics/Conventions of Print	Students are expected to write legibly in cursive. They use capital letters and commas correctly and are expected to correctly spell commonly use words in their writing. They learn about subject/verb agreement with an intervening phrase and write in all three verb tenses. Students practice quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing accurately and citing sources properly.



## Sixth Grade Curriculum Overview

This table gives some general information about what is taught in the sixth grade program. The specific objectives are listed in the curriculum documents posted on the district website at [www.newtown.k12.ct.us](http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us). The district is committed to helping every child learn well through differentiating the curriculum whenever possible.

<b>Art</b>	Students in 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade attend art classes once a week for the full school year. In addition, they participate in art an additional time a week as part of the rotation courses. Students add the concepts of space and rhythm to the visual and tactile qualities of their work and are expected to explain how and why a piece of art is effective using the language of the principles and elements taught in younger grades. They are expected to make connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum. They discuss works of art from Ancient cultures, the Renaissance, Impressionism, and Modern periods and look at them in the context of a time line. Students are expected reflect about their work and refine works in progress.	
<b>Health</b>	Safety	Students learn to evaluate their personal behaviors for potential risks and consequences.
	Social/Emotional	Students learn to cope with changes of adolescence and strategies to relate appropriately with peers including assertiveness and coping with cliques and rumors.
	Substance Use/Abuse	Students analyze the influences of peer groups, media, and role models on adolescent decision- making. They learn about the effects of addiction on the individual and the family and resources they can turn to for help with drug/alcohol related problems.
	Healthy Body	Students learn about the elements of fitness and analyze their diet for nutrients, serving sizes, and calories.
	Disease Prevention	Students learn to describe symptoms using appropriate vocabulary and link water treatment to disease prevention.
<b>Information Literacy</b>	Gather Information for a Specific Purpose	Students learn to develop guiding questions for research, to develop a plan, locate the resources using search strategies to narrow or expand the focus.

## Sixth Grade Curriculum Overview

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<b>Information Literacy</b>	Analyze and Evaluate Information	Students learn to verify accuracy and validity of web site information. Students put the information they find into their own words and provide appropriate MLA citation.
	Evaluate both the Process and the Product	Students reflect on the research process, the thoroughness of the content and the quality of their product.
<b>Mathematics</b>	Algebraic Reasoning: Patterns and Functions	Students understand and describe patterns and functional relationships. They represent and analyze quantitative relationships in graphs, tables, equations, and inequalities. They use operations, properties, and algebraic symbols to determine equivalence and solve problems.
	Numerical and Proportional Reasoning	Students learn that a variety of numerical representations can be used to describe quantitative relationships. They compare quantities and solve problems using ratios, rates, and percents. They use numbers and their properties to compute flexibly and fluently, and to reasonably estimate measures and quantities.
	Geometry and Measurement	Students use properties and characteristics of two- and three-dimensional shapes and geometric theorems to describe relationships, communicate ideas and solve problems. They develop and apply units, systems, formulas, and appropriate tools to estimate and measure.
	Working with Data	Students collect, organize, and display data using appropriate statistical and graphical methods. They analyze data sets to form hypotheses and make predictions as well as to understand and apply basic concepts of probability.

## Sixth Grade Curriculum Overview

<b>Music</b>	Students elect to take a band instrument, a string instrument, or participate in general music twice each week. They also have an instrument specific lesson once a week during their learning lab. In addition all students use the music technology lab to learn about composition once a week for one of the 12-week rotation classes.	
<b>Physical Education</b>	Students have physical education twice each week and participate in Project Adventure classes as one of the rotation classes. They work on specific motor skills, complex movement sequences, fitness, game skills, and social skills. The Project Adventure program is designed to foster trust, cooperation, support, appropriate risk, communication, problem solving, and teamwork.	
<b>Reading</b>	Read for Information and Understanding	Students are expected to distinguish important information from minor details, link to their prior knowledge, and identify similar main ideas or themes with multiple texts.
	Read for Critical Analysis and Evaluation	Students examine what creates bias in a text and how it influences meaning. They defend, qualify, or dispute differing interpretation of a given text, consider a text from a variety of perspectives, and return to the text to support reasons with relevant references.
	Read for Aesthetic and Personal Response	Students examine irony as a technique used by authors and explain the impact on the reader.
	Read Strategically	Students recognize text structure/pattern, the characteristics of a genre and use it to plan how they will read. They use knowledge of root words, prefixes, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and words with multiple meanings to determine the meaning of words and phrases as well as inferring meaning from overall context. They make predictions based on text and prior knowledge, and visualize text as they read.

## Sixth Grade Curriculum Overview

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<b>Science</b>	Students study the properties of matter including common elements, simple compounds, and separation of mixtures. They learn about populations in ecosystems including abiotic factors, predator-prey relationships, and common food webs. They study weather including the effect of heading, conditions that affect weather and the cause of winds. They explore the effect of human activity on water, septic systems, and sewage.	
<b>Social Studies</b>	Students study Asia (including the Mid East), Europe, and Africa. They analyze government, religion, regional history and climate. They learn to think globally and examine bias.	
<b>Technology</b>	Students learn to manage projects in shared network folders and to use the digital camera, scanner, and microphone. They use information and equipment responsibly, citing sources by giving credit for pictures, text, or audio they use. They use technology for research and problem solving, develop and publish printed and multimedia projects, and create spreadsheets that can be used to show data as several types of graphs. They use techno-communications to communicate and collaborate with students and/or experts from another class, town, state or country.	
<b>Writing</b>	Technical Practical Writing	Students compose lab reports, math explanations, expository writing, and persuasive writing.  They develop a thesis statement with teacher support and support with main ideas, relevant details, and technical vocabulary specific to content
	Range and Versatility of Writing	Students compose to explain, inform, describe, persuade, or narrate an experience for peers, teacher, friends, family, and members of the community. They write journals, essays, lab reports, poetry, and persuasive pieces.
	Reflective Writing	Students analyze their work using rubrics and samples of student work, set personal goals, develop and carry out a plan to improve their writing.
	Writing Strategically	Students consult a variety of sources, use a writer's notebook, and frameworks to organize their writing. They revise content for topic sentence, supporting details, extraneous material, logical order, tone, and redundancy of ideas. They also revise for syntax and word choice.
	Mechanics/Conventions of Print	Students are expected to write legibly in cursive, use capitalization and commas appropriately, have subject/verb agreement, correct pronoun reference, and consistent verb tense. They learn to quote, paraphrase and summarize accurately and cite sources properly using MLA citation.

District Quality Council is a committee made up of parents, teachers, administrators, and a Board of Education member who provide leadership for implementation of the Success-Oriented School Model. This document is a product of many hours of work by the following committee members:

Teri Alves, Teacher  
Kathy Boettner, Asst. Principal  
Lisa Chaloux, Parent  
Karen Craig, Parent  
Kristen Delgado, Teacher  
Stephanie Demore, Teacher  
Al Finelli, Teacher  
Michelle Hankin, Parent  
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Helen Miller, Teacher  
Jeanetta Miller, Teacher  
Fran Peters, Parent  
Peg Ragaini, Career Center  
Michael Regan, Director Pupil Personnel  
Carla Tischio, Teacher

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Summer 2006

**NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**CORE BELIEFS**

**TRUST**

confidence in the actions of others

**RESPECT**

preservation of dignity and acceptance of individual differences

**FLEXIBILITY**

exploration of alternatives, adaptation to new situations  
acceptance of change

**RESPONSIBILITY**

accountability for individual and collective action  
self direction

**INCLUSION**

the opportunity to learn is an entitlement that will not be  
determined by individual differences  
high expectations and high standards for all

**INTERDEPENDENCE**

community, parents, teachers and students working together for success  
students, parents and teachers learning from each other

**COMMUNICATION**

open exchange of thought  
clear definition of goals and expectations

**SUCCESS**

continuous improvement and quality achievement

**RISK TAKING**

daring to take action  
the right to make mistakes