

"I feel like North Hampton laid the perfect foundation for the skills I'm building on by allowing us a feeling of being on our own, but keeping a safety net in place in case there were mistakes (which happened a lot because growing up is always a learning experience). I think elementary school is really important in helping you become the person you are in the present. It's an experience that molds who you become in high school, in college, and eventually in the world. Without the skills I learned at NHS I don't think I could be the type of independent learner and thinker I am today." (Alumnus)

The story of North Hampton School is one that gets re-written by each student who comes through our doors. No two students are alike and therefore no two educational experiences can be exactly the same. Each child experiences a personalized journey that comes from the dedication of our staff, parents, and community to create an environment and curriculum honoring the experiences, learning styles, and needs of each student. Students have the opportunity to explore all aspects of their learning, define their own parameters for success and find a voice for expressing their achievements.

"NHS teaches our children to love learning! The school fosters an environment in which they are allowed to learn via methods that they can relate to. This opportunity is extended to each child in each classroom so that they feel successful as students and can coach each other through more difficult lessons. These methods allow them to empathize with each other's struggles and celebrate each other's successes." - parent

The whole child-centered culture at NHS allows children to realize they have something to offer the world and encourages them to realize that one person can make a difference. Our goal is that students leave our school with the knowledge, skills and self-awareness necessary to face future challenges and have a positive impact on their community. Toward this end we strive to create an environment that empowers

students to have an active role in every aspect of their education from setting their own goals to self-assessing their progress and performance. Students at all ages engage not only in the learning of curriculum, but also in learning about who they are and where they are going.

At North Hampton School we recognize the importance of standards-based education, and know we will not soon be doing away with the tests that measure mastery of standard knowledge. However, we have decided to meet those standards by striving for much more. Our efforts are to challenge each individual student to maximize his or her fullest potential academically and personally. We support each student in discovering his or her personal talents and passions. To that end, we encourage each student in becoming an active participant in

"The education our children receive at North Hampton School is not the same animal it was when we were growing up. It is anything but one-size-fits-all... it is as individual as the child—recognizing and embracing the unique qualities that each child has to offer while at the same time emboldening the student with an enthusiasm for learning as a lifelong quest."(parent)

"My teachers are able to understand my learning strategies and help me to make my experiences at North Hampton School enjoyable and meaningful."

a democratic society by living it everyday in our classroom and school communities. Together the student, teachers, parents and community members co-construct a dynamic, responsive curriculum that enables students to gain knowledge and apply it in increasingly meaningful ways. As a result, North Hampton students are encouraged to actively engage in school and community-based service learning projects, participate in the democratic decision-making process of the school, and, be an integral part of designing their own custom learning situations through such activities as integrated, inquiry-based projects.

This journey of self-discovery unfolds each year with a process of setting goals, continuous reflection, and sharing the knowledge gained throughout. At the beginning of the year evaluations are done *with* the students, not *to* them, through a process that helps them recognize areas to improve upon and select challenges to maximize learning. Members of the

child's school community, including parents and former teachers, are involved in the process to complete the picture of the student. This collaboration among teachers, parents and the student lays the foundation needed to establish appropriate, individualized goals based on curriculum expectations, learning habits, social needs and students' individual interests. Throughout the school year students reflect upon and revise their goals as they evaluate their progress and performance. Students receive the support and input of their teachers, parents and even peers as they continue to revise their understanding of their own learning. They share their discoveries through conferences that occur at different points during the year.

It is the students' goals and a standards-based curriculum that drive the instruction and experiences in classrooms. Setting their own goals empowers each student to connect with the curriculum and develop an individualized purpose for his/her learning. Students use what they know about their own learning styles to access the curriculum and create a unique and meaningful understanding of the content. This gives purpose to what they are learning and motivates them to take risks and focus on the areas of the curriculum that are a struggle for them. Having this control over their education encourages students to push themselves beyond the content to make meaningful and authentic connections between the content and their own lives and long-term goals.

"Being able to make realistic goals, follow through on them, and critically analyze your success is probably the most important thing I took from my NHS education."

As the year continues, students begin to achieve some of their goals and start the process of evaluating and revising their goals and sharing their progress. Students at each grade level are involved in age-appropriate reflections and exhibitions of their learning that they share with their teachers, parents, and the community. Students provide examples of their work to demonstrate

"I like leading my conference because it lets me be a part of what kind of grade I get and I get to see what I need to work on which helps me to be a better student."

the progress they are making and they share what they see as the next steps in their education. This process holds the student accountable for their goals while providing an authentic audience to lend them support and constructive feedback. This process extends even to their report cards, as students are involved in meaningful reflections on their progress and performance as part of their growing awareness of their achievements and individual progress toward their goals.

Each year, the cycle culminates with a student-led conference where students share the growth they've made during the year, the work they have done, and the insights they've gained into their own learning. The student sets the agenda, chooses what to share, and leads the conversation surrounding his/her work with an appropriate audience including teachers, parents, and community members. In addition, students set goals for the summer and the next year so that they begin to see education as an ongoing process, not one that is completed within one school year. This process is carried out throughout the school at all grade levels so that by the time students reach the end of their journey at NHS they have a comprehensive collection of their work and evidence of how they have changed over time. Reflecting on this work is an important part of helping students define who they are, where they've come from, and where they still need to go.

Another integral part of each student's experience at NHS is the opportunity to nurture their curiosity by pursuing their own lines of inquiry. They develop questions and ideas for what they want to discover that are inspired by the curriculum as well as from

"I like to pick my own inquiry topic, because if everyone studied the same thing, it would be boring. We learn a lot from the others in our class and I love inquiries because they're so much fun!"

their passions and interests outside of school. Through this process students learn how to apply the skills they've developed to learn about topics of particular interest to them. This puts the student in the driver's seat and lets them experience education on their own terms while allowing them to see that learning is not just something that is done for school, but that it is an invaluable skill for living.

At North Hampton School, we continue to seek opportunities to create a unique and fulfilling educational experience for each child who comes through our doors. Our innovative approach to assessment, which involves the child and our initiative to create opportunities for students to direct their own learning, are key experiences for students on the path to independent, life-long learning. However, there are many other ways that we work to best meet the needs of our students. We reflect on our practices and collect information from stakeholders in our school including current students, former students, teachers, parents and community members using a variety of sources including surveys, reflections, and collaborative meetings. The data that we've collected from these means as well as from standardized tests and other trends helps us make informed decisions about how to improve education for all our students. This assures us that our methods and philosophies are producing solid, identifiable results.

We have evolved from special education as 'separate' education to a fully inclusive model in which all teachers work collaboratively on behalf of all students. Each grade level has its own case manager who works directly in the regular education setting. Over the past decade, the percentage of students who are identified has remained consistent (12%) although the severity of the disabilities appears to have intensified. Despite this rise in need, fewer than 25% of our students who are identified receive any instruction out of the classroom and that is usually for one hour or less each day. Regardless of the challenge a student may present, we have not placed any students out of district during the past decade.

During the past four years of NECAP testing, North Hampton School has consistently ranked well above the state target on AYP Proficiency Scores in Reading and Mathematics and has demonstrated small but steady gains as illustrated in the chart below.

	State Target	AYP Proficiency	State Target	AYP Proficiency
Mathematics	'06	Level - NHS	'09	Level - NHS
	76	90.8	82	93.5
Reading	State Target	AYP Proficiency	State Target	AYP Proficiency
	'06	Level - NHS	'09	Level - NHS
	82	91.9	86	96.1

We are always searching for ways for our students to develop deeper understandings, more intellectual curiosity and the independence to undertake the challenges of our changing world. Therefore, we have implemented key practices to maximize the performance gains of all children on the NECAPS and beyond. To bolster those that struggle, we embrace the concept of intervening early to identify learning gaps in the younger grades. Providing such support can boost student confidence and maximize learning potential in the future years. In addition, we seek to challenge those that are already succeeding. We've pursued innovations that move us closer to our goal of a personalized educational experience for each child. (Improved test scores have been a fortunate byproduct!) Some of the initiatives we've undertaken are:

- altering part of our Title One service model to include before and/or after school tutoring time for students in grades 1-3, including some in-home educational support
- designing part of the Title One service model such that upper grade students in need are assisting younger students in need under the direction of a Title I Teacher

- reworking the Mathematics GLEs and classroom curriculum in grades 5-8 to reflect an integrated Algebra I experience by the end of grade 8, yielding positive results for many
- deepening teacher and student understanding of the thinking strategies that contribute to reading comprehension has been one of our eminent school-wide goals for the past two years
- providing enrichment opportunities that were once relegated to the top 5% of our population to 100% of our students
- morphing World Language from a survey experience for just the upper grade levels to an inclusive opportunity engaging over 99% of our students in grades 1-8. NHS is committed to the importance of early introduction of a second language for our students who will be global citizens

So far we've provided you with a more global picture of our school. We hope that we've given you a sense of how the indicators in the School Selection Rubric are interwoven in the philosophy and practices of North Hampton School. We wanted to be sure to include some specific examples that you would see if you came to visit NHS. These activities are the way we put our philosophy into action every day.

In order to build and maintain strong relationships with all members of our community, we...

- invite parents and community members to school for curriculum nights, student-led conferences, and academic events, and special assemblies
- use weekly newsletters, blogs, websites, electronic calendars, and weekly packets to communicate with parents
- ensure that all members of our community are represented on our Council including parents and school board members
- include all voices in our community in our process of re-developing our Vision Statement and Guiding Beliefs by holding multiple sessions for staff, parents and the community at large to shape these foundational documents

In order to support and hold each child to rigorous individual standards we...

- provide students with clear rubrics developed by grade level teams in a variety of disciplines to provide clear expectations for students
- ensure that our students are in classrooms with small class sizes with certified Special Educators and Educational Assistants at each grade level
- utilize technology throughout our school as a tool to promote and capture student learning
- participate in Task Forces comprised of teachers and administrators looking and re-looking at our learning and teaching
- focus school-wide on thinking comprehension strategies

In order to provide relevant, engaging experiences for each child we...

- create integrated learning experiences so students see how their skills and knowledge apply across curricular lines
- staff our building and classrooms so that each child's individual needs are met, and the curriculum is accessible to all
- meet as grade level teams, and in small professional groups to discuss teaching and learning
- integrate intern teachers from the University of New Hampshire and other institutions into our building to bring fresh perspectives
- assist students in making positive lifestyle choices through healthy foods, DARE, Life Skills classes, and physical education classes

- extend learning beyond the classroom with field trips, outdoor classroom experiences on the Nature Trail/ropes course

In order to ensure that each child is an active participant in their education, we...

- provide student choice in all aspects of the curriculum
- continue to modify our report card so that it reflects individual process, performance, and progress
- encourage students to exceed grade level expectations whenever possible
- modify the curriculum to promote the success of all students

In order to ensure that teachers are empowered to accomplish these goals, we...

- do not require teachers to use canned programs or follow scripted textbooks
- provide staff with the resources necessary to develop their own approaches to support all children
- schedule weekly time when grade level teams can meet within the school day
- encourage integration between Unified Arts and classroom experiences
- provide many in-house professional development opportunities, some offering graduate level credits
- employ a shared governance decision-making model by including teachers, administrators, school board and community members as representatives on our School Council
- observe each other's classrooms to improve our practice
- participate in professional organizations
- share our practices at state, regional and national conferences; act as adjunct faculty members at our state's colleges

The empowerment of our staff enables us to share ideas and approaches with colleagues and tap resources that may provide new and unique perspectives or opportunities for further development. This kind of professional outreach and participation exposes our staff to developing trends and enables us to act as ambassadors and stewards of our many programs and initiatives. If chosen as this year's recipient of the EDies award for K-8 school, we would open our doors to the educational community at large by inviting others to join our continuing conversation about keeping the child at the center of education. We would be delighted to host a symposium on child-centered education in which visiting educators could sit in on classes in our school and participate in conversations that will lead us all to new perspectives and new realms of inspiration. To follow up, we will establish lines of communication to allow everyone involved to continue working toward the goal of improving individual education.

The story of NHS is still being written. No two students are alike, and the world continues to change around us, so we must remain flexible and adapt our approaches to give our students the skills they need to meet the challenges they'll face. We are committed to the ever-evolving process that we call learning. North Hampton School is constantly growing and changing to assure that every student is accepted, We explore every learning style; consider every opportunity; respect and champion individual and collective needs; continue to set new expectations and achieve our goals as part of a dynamic continuum.

We are proud of what we have accomplished to this point and we appreciate the opportunity you have provided for us to pause on our journey and reflect on our successes and future challenges.