

Souhegan High School - Guiding Documents



Souhegan High School Mission Statement

Souhegan High School aspires to be a community of learners born of respect, trust and courage.

We consciously commit ourselves:

- To support and engage an individual's unique gifts, passions, and intentions.
- To develop and empower the mind, body, and heart.
- To challenge and expand the comfortable limits of thought, tolerance, and performance.
- To inspire and honor the active stewardship of family, nation, and globe.



Souhegan Six - Souhegan High School Behavioral Expectations

- Respect and encourage the right to teach and the right to learn at all times.
- Be actively engaged in the learning; ask questions, collaborate, and seek solutions.
- Be on time to fulfill your daily commitments.
- Be appropriate; demonstrate behavior that is considerate of the community, the campus, and yourself.
- Be truthful; communicate honestly.
- Be responsible and accountable for your choices.



Ten Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools

1. The school should focus on helping young people learn to use their minds well. Schools should not be comprehensive if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose.
2. The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that the students need, rather than by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "less is more" should dominate: curricular decisions should

be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort to merely cover content.

3. The school's goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of students.
4. Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than 80 students in the high school and middle school and no more than 20 in the elementary school. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.
5. The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker, rather than the more familiar metaphor of teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.
6. Teaching and learning should be documented and assessed with tools based on student performance of real tasks. Students not yet at appropriate levels of competence should be provided intensive support and resources to assist them quickly to meet those standards. Multiple forms of evidence, ranging from ongoing observation of the learner to completion of specific projects, should be used to better understand the learner's strengths and needs, and to plan for further assistance. Students should have opportunities to exhibit their expertise before family and community. The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation - an "Exhibition." As the diploma is awarded when earned, the school's program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of credits earned" by "time spent" in class. The emphasis is on the students' demonstration that they can do important things.
7. The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused) and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized. Parents should be key collaborators and vital members of the school community.
8. The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in but one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and a sense of commitment to the entire school.
9. Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total student loads per teacher of 80 or fewer pupils on the high school and middle school levels and 20 or fewer on the elementary level, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff, and an ultimate per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent. To accomplish this, administrative plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided students in many traditional schools.
10. The school should demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. The school should honor diversity and build on the strength of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity.



Souhegan High School Academic Learner Expectations

Knowledgeable Person

- Acquires and integrates the critical information necessary for success in academic and non-academic domains.
- Effectively utilizes the strategies and skills necessary for success in academic and non-academic domains

Complex Thinker

- Effectively translates issues and situations into manageable tasks that have a clear purpose
- Effectively uses a variety of complex reasoning strategies

Skilled Information Processor/Consumer

- Effectively interprets and synthesizes information
- Effectively uses a variety of information gathering techniques and information resources
- Accurately assesses the value of information
- Recognizes where and how projects would benefit from additional information

Effective Communicator/Producer

- Expresses ideas clearly
- Effectively communicates with diverse audiences
- Effectively communicates through a variety of mediums
- Effectively communicates for a variety of purposes
- Creates quality products

Self-Directed Learner

- Seeks different perspectives and considers choices before acting
- Pushes the limits of his/her ability and perseveres when faced with difficult situations
- Establishes clear goals and manages progress toward achieving them
- Generates and pursues personal standards of performance

Collaborative Worker

- Works toward the achievement of group goals
- Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills
- Contributes to group maintenance
- Self-assesses and monitors own behavior within a group

Responsible Citizen

- Shows willingness to work toward improvement of the community