

Educational Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Newark Public Schools is to provide a rigorous educational program that meets the needs of all students and fulfills the requirements of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards. The mission of this educational program is to engage students in a life long exercise in learning that will ensure they graduate with a high school diploma and give them the resources they need to compete and be successful in a constantly changing economic and social environment. The District's educational program addresses many of the concerns delineated in the National Governors Association's publication, "An Agenda for Improving America's High Schools". To that end, the District has developed a number of coherent and enabling strategies based on past successes of Newark's high achieving magnet high schools and most successful elementary schools.

ACADEMIC CHOICES & FAMILY INVOLVEMENT: The Newark Public Schools has adopted a Pre Kindergarten to 8th grade facilities model that will foster continuity and family involvement in school issues and create increased community collaborations. Once the LRFP is fully implemented families will no longer have children placed in multiple schools prior to high school. They will also be able to utilize the Pre-Kindergarten Wrap-Around Programs for their younger children. In addition, Parent Liaison Rooms have been allocated to each building to give parents a home base of support for materials and resources for better communication throughout the community. The building structures are being organized around three discrete age groupings with shared commons spaces, accessible to all. The goal is to achieve a small school environment with small class sizes that create a welcoming educational environment and can support both creativity and accountability throughout the curriculum and various age cohorts.

Students start participating in more academic choices when they enter the middle school component of the Pre-K through 8th grade facility. Classes in grades 6 through 8 are departmentalized and students are given the opportunity to consider possible careers through the Career Exploration Lab, Career Lab and mentoring programs available to them in their home school. As they prepare for high school, they will become knowledgeable of the various school academies housed in all of Newark's community high schools, magnet and careers programs. Instructors will use interactive communication technologies, mentors and community collaboration to provide all students with significant information on both career and academic choices.

The District currently has twelve high schools, with one additional school (History High School) scheduled to open within the next two years and a fourteenth (a new high school included in the North Ward) included in the LRFP. The "School to Career and College Initiatives" program in its present structure has been a model for providing successful transition of high school students to the world of work, college, or post-secondary education, while offering students highly structured, technology based curriculums that support active learning connected to career pathways.

The District has also developed thematic academies or Small Learning Community programs in each of its six comprehensive high schools. These academies will be available to students throughout the District and have been designed to accommodate a number of different educational alternatives while still maintaining the core curriculum mandates. The current magnet schools all have strong academic programs with historically high graduation and post-secondary enrollment rates. These facilities will continue in their mission to provide specialized educational programs and be enhanced with more educational choices. A Johns Hopkins University study published in 2004, "Locating the Dropout Crisis", highlighted these schools as models of successful high schools servicing mostly minority students. The architectural design of these facilities is purposefully meant to enable educators to structure a curriculum around a student population of approximately 300 students with support services easily accessible, as in, guidance, teacher workrooms and meeting rooms for parent involvement. Students will have more access to educators and the ability to make choices about their academic programs. These programs have proven to be successful but require more square feet per student to accommodate academic choice and easy access to services.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: The State of New Jersey's mandate to educate all 3 and 4 year old children in the Abbott Districts is an exciting educational opportunity for our students. The NPS Long Range Facilities Plan calls for a capacity of approximately 2,400 students in District Early Childhood programs. To that end, each District Pre-K through 8 school will house between 45 and 90 Early Childhood students, with the large majority being 4 year olds. Early Intervention and 3 year-old classes will also be available in selected District schools. (It is the goal of NPS to have the large majority of students eligible for Early Intervention programs housed within the District's schools. Rooms designed particularly for Pre-Kindergarten Special Education have been designated throughout the District.) The Pre-K Wrap-Around program will be incorporated in the section of the building that will house students from Pre-K through 2nd grade. Accessibility issues have been addressed including separate entrances, user-friendly furnishings and ability to use

outdoor play areas and library spaces specifically structured for very young children. Many children in these programs come to school two hundred and fifty-four days a year and stay at school for over ten hours a day. As such, the role of our schools has expanded from not only an educational facility but as a provider of child-care services.

In addition to the Early Childhood programs in the District schools, Newark also has contracts with approximately sixty local providers at over one hundred locations. These providers will continue to service over 4,000 students throughout the City of Newark. These programs will be monitored, not only by the Department of Human Services, but also by the District and the state's Department of Education, in order to maintain high standards of education, health and safety.

SPECIAL EDUCATION: Students classified to receive services under an Individual Education Plan will have access to a more student friendly environment. All buildings are being designed to meet or exceed ADA compliance. Self-Contained Special Education Classrooms are being designed to have toilet rooms, acoustical modifications, furnishings that will help children focus, and easy access to technology. Resource rooms, therapy spaces for speech, physical and occupational treatments will be available in all new buildings. Physical Education Development Centers will be available in all Pre-K through 8 buildings that exceed 620 students, Gyms will house PE equipment for specialized needs, and outdoor play areas will be available in most schools. All schools will have uniquely designed spaces for the Special Education population and schools like John F. Kennedy, Bruce Street and Samuel Berliner will continue to serve students with unique needs. The continuing goal is to have Special Education students housed with regular education students and provided with as much inclusion as possible throughout the day and provided with the most appropriate resources possible.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING: The District continues to research and develop alternative schooling options for its student population. Newark recognizes that its student body has non-traditional needs and has tried to find solutions for those students. To this end, the District has a Twilight program that allows students a later schedule to accommodate students with family responsibilities, work programs or other significant challenges, a Gateway program for students that have had to be transitioned back into school from penal programs, and a number of other programs housed in the community high schools that have been developed to give students opportunities for a non-traditional educational course. Alternative schooling is also addressing the needs of the immigrant population that comes to the city without formal education and who are in the middle school age cohort or above.

INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING: The Newark Public Schools instruct approximately 42,000 students from ages 3 through 18 each school day. Each of those students requires oversight of their individual educational accomplishments and is instructed in grade level appropriate material that adheres to the curriculum. All grade levels from kindergarten through twelfth grade have specific curriculum guidelines and educational goal and objectives. The educational specifications and facilities models for all Newark's schools have been designed to provide effectively educational environment for all students.

Kindergarten Rooms – are designed to provide a varied school day with stations for Literacy/Language Arts, Math, Science, Arts/Crafts and Dramatic Play, and contain a Toilet Room.

General Classrooms – are designed to offer as much flexibility as possible, so that, educators can use various instructional modalities.

All students will have frequent instruction in Science Labs, Art Studios, Music Rooms, Computer Labs, and Gymnasiums.

Middle School Components will have separate entrances and be organized as Small Learning Communities with team teaching and “School to Career Initiative” programs. Middle school students will have frequent use of Science, CAD, Technology, and Career Exploration Labs and other specialized spaces.

All students in the Pre-Kindergarten through grade 8 model schools will have use of Library Media Centers with rooms for tutoring/group research areas, story corners, multi-media technologies and valuable collection of library materials. Some schools will have rooms to utilize Interactive Educational Resources. Students will have access to various types of Small Group Instruction areas designed for math, writing, resource and specialized instruction. Each building is designed to have an Auditorium with stage, that can allow schools to perform curriculum rich instruction for performance arts, and all curriculum disciplines that require large group instruction. All students will have access to Cafeterias that can provide hot nutritional meals and be effective meeting spaces for Newark's After School Enrichment programs. These programs service thousands of Newark's elementary age children with significant homework-help, curriculum tutoring and other enrichment activities. Research shows that many of these programs have allowed students to improve their test scores significantly.

All of the educational spaces described above should allow instructors to implement proven learning techniques of diverse learning styles, multiple intelligence instruction and educational accountability testing mandates.

Newark's high schools are all dedicated to providing a quality education that will give students the knowledge and skills necessary to be productive citizens. The high schools offer a broad spectrum of educational choice:

Comprehensive Community High Schools with theme-based academies: Barringer, Central, East Side, Malcolm X Shabazz, North Ward (proposed), Weequahic, West Side

All of these schools will be designed around three to four Academies (Small Learning Communities). Academy themes include, but are not limited to: Health Sciences, Technology, Business Education, Humanities, Urban Leadership, Construction and Engineering.

Careers/Vocational High Schools: Academy of Vocational Careers, and Newark Vocational.

These two schools offer students the choice of a career-based curriculum: automotive, information technologies, retail sales, graphic arts, and many other specialized programs.

Magnet High Schools: Arts, Science Park, Technology, University, and proposed History HS.

The magnet schools serve about 25% of the total Newark 9-12 population with rigorous programs in very defined areas of study. These programs offer students both rigorous college prep programs and courses in specialized areas of study, such as, Robotics, Advance Placement Science, Ensemble Theatre Arts, Constitutional Law or Engineering Technology.

Throughout this entire network of schools the “School-to-Career and College Initiative Program” is a key component of Newark’s philosophy that establishes the infrastructure for an educational system that supports active learning environments connected to the world of work and life-long learning.

The *high school facilities model* is designed to follow both the guidelines formulated by the District and the state requirements for Small Learning Communities. Each theme-based academy will have approximately 300-400 students and be organized around educational spaces specifically outfitted to instruct students in a coherent program that will take them

four years to complete. Each academy will be serviced with: guidance, teacher prep rooms, parent conference rooms and other service areas. The goal is to have students in a small school atmosphere with significant support opportunities. Schools will have science labs, art and music studios, and technology labs to support a rigorous curriculum. The Newark network of academies should be able to give all students numerous educational choices with the appropriate amount of support to achieve their goals.

HEALTH SERVICES: Every district school will service the students and their families through a system of “hub” and “spoke” Health Clinics located in the school buildings but with separate entrances. The Health Clinic hours should be sufficient to allow for good coverage and easy access. In addition, all schools will have an associated Nurse’s Office to provide for health care needs during the school day.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGIES: The NPS Technology Plan is integrated with the educational goals and the facilities infrastructure design. The development of a long- term technology infrastructure that meets both instructional and administrative needs has been a consistent goal of NPS. These technologies are part of the daily curriculum and used to enhance instructional modalities, permit more individualized learning and develop more holistic learning opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: The NPS model has been developed to include spaces that can be utilized for Staff Development functions either as dedicated or multi-purpose spaces. The model has also addressed mentoring and tutoring mandates from No Child Left Behind but most importantly as effective learning tools.

CONCLUSION: The educational strategies listed above together with a well planned facilities program has the potential of creating a new dynamic of increased family involvement, student achievement and teacher quality for Newark Public Schools.