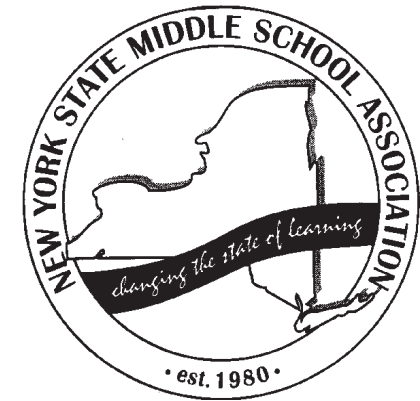


A Network of Support Resources

- The Search Institute is the one conducting the research on the 40 Developmental Assets — concrete, common-sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. The development of these assets has the power, during critical adolescent years, to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults. You can find a list of the 40 Developmental Assets, the research that supports them, and resources to help you at searchinstitute.org.
- Get inspired and motivated with *Tag, You're It!*, written by Kathleen Kimball-Baker. This handy book, a great resource for every advisor in your school, offers 50 common-sense ways to connect and build assets with young people. Each inspirational idea contains a reference to a supportive research study or expert opinion and includes action items to help you journey toward positive change.
- *Great Places to Learn*, by Neal Starkman et al, offers a practical, pro-active approach to helping students succeed both academically and developmentally. The book shares interesting and encouraging real-life stories and strategies for building asset-rich school communities. Handouts, charts, and action lists give you the tools needed to actively and intentionally build networks of support.

NYSMSA gives permission to its membership to reprint copies of this pamphlet.

NYSMSA
P.O. Box 53
Pleasantville, NY 10570



NYSED's
*The Essential Elements of Standards-Focused
Middle Level Schools and Programs*
Adopted July 2003

An Introduction to Essential Element 6

A Network of Support

**Professional Pamphlet
Series 10 Issue 6
2004-2005**

**New York State
Middle School Association**

P.O. Box 53
Pleasantville, NY 10570
Phone/FAX (914) 747-9241
E-mail: nysmsa@aol.com
Web Site: www.nysmsa.org

An Affiliate of National Middle School Association

Essential Element 6: A Network of Academic and Personal Support

A network of academic and personal support available for *all* students

Essential Element 1: Philosophy and Mission tells us that we must be committed to the development of the “whole” child, including the intellectual, academic, personal, social, physical, and emotional needs. Effective middle schools recognize the interdependence of these needs and are dedicated to working to meet them.

There must be a common, agreed-upon commitment to supporting children, but commitment alone won’t get the job done. There must also be an explicit and comprehensive system of supports in place to ensure that the support gets to those who need it. It is imperative that this system be based on current research and best practices.

All of the in-school support networks (AIS, advisors, teams, counselors, psychologists, etc.) must include communication and collaboration, and they must interface with community support structures and agencies. For this to happen effectively, there must be a deliberate effort made to work together. Turf issues must be put aside to ensure that no student falls through the cracks.

The network of support must be designed so that all students get the sup-

port they need. No one-size-fits-all approach will work. Students with special needs, including students with disabilities, at-risk students, gifted/talented, etc., need additional supports. It is crucial that their education services be seamlessly connected to the overall educational program.

In many schools, a pillar of the system of support for students is a healthy, thriving advisory (advisor-advisee) program. The fundamental premise for advisory is that every single student must have an adult advocate who knows him/her well and advocates for having his/her academic and personal needs met. In the absence of a formal advisory program, effective middle-level schools design alternate systems to meet those needs. Students who feel they belong have a greater likelihood of success. Counseling and guidance services are essential in assisting students and their families in making life, career, and educational choices.

Another pillar of the network of support for students in effective middle schools is a strong, positive youth-development program. Sometimes referred to as character education, positive youth development means making a concerted and continual effort to promote the well-being of the youth in your community. The 40 Developmental Assets are becoming the universal language

for talking about positive youth development. The research on the assets is clear and undeniable: the more Developmental Assets a student has, the more likely he/she will succeed by any measure (school, family, friends, work, wealth, etc.). If you aren’t familiar with the 40 Developmental Assets, take the time to learn about them and incorporate them into your middle-level program (see Resources section on reverse).

Within a network of academic and personal support...

- **Adults and older youth provide positive role models**
- **Respect and caring engender a feeling of self-worth, self-confidence**
- **Opportunities arise to discuss and understand the changes associated with early adolescence**
- **Counseling and guidance services assist students in decision-making**
- **Trained professionals and community resources assist those who have special needs or require special services**
- **An adult mentor, formally (advisory program) or informally, assumes responsibility for individual students**