Portrait of a Graduate

Newburyport Public Schools

Building a Shared Vision
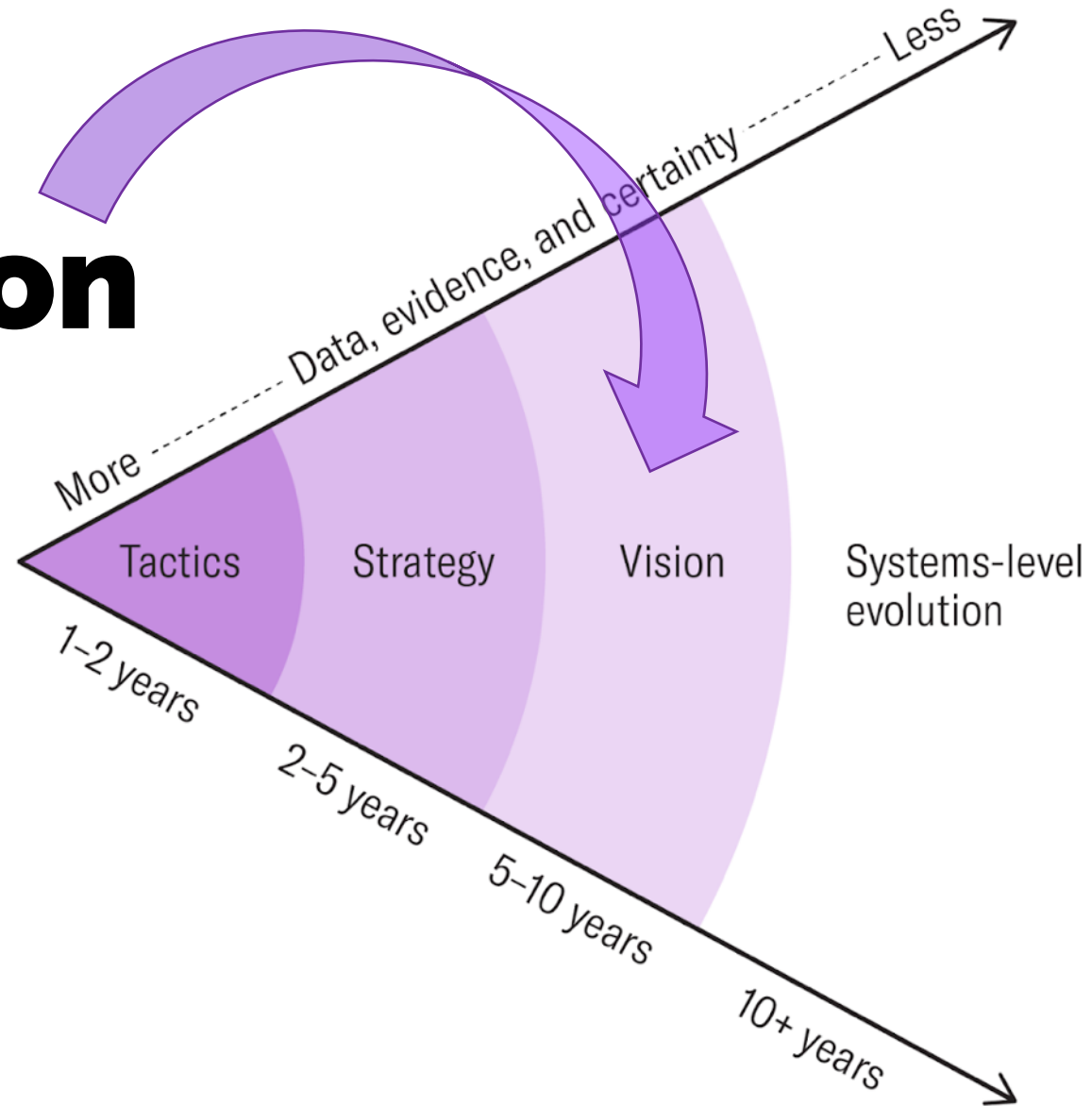
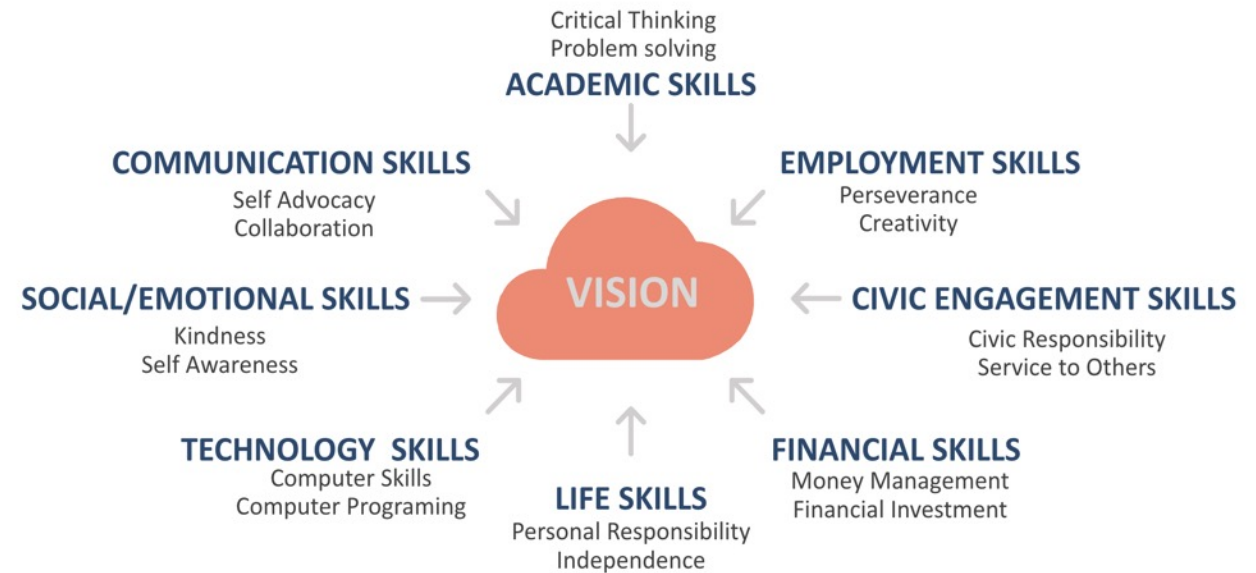## Portrait of a Graduate

In the 2018-19 school year, the NHS faculty embarked on a process to create a vision of a graduate.

VISION OF A NHS GRADUATE

Critical Thinking
Problem solving
ACADEMIC SKILLS

COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Self Advocacy
Collaboration

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS
Perseverance
Creativity

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SKILLS
Kindness
Self Awareness

VISION

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SKILLS
Civic Responsibility
Service to Others

TECHNOLOGY SKILLS
Computer Skills
Computer Programing

LIFE SKILLS
Personal Responsibility
Independence

FINANCIAL SKILLS
Money Management
Financial Investment

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Overview

In the fall of 2021, over 700 students, staff, parents, guardians, city officials, and interested community members joined this process to establish a District-wide Portrait of a Graduate.

Participants explored economic, technological, demographic, and environmental trends.

Focus groups were asked to identify the skills, mindsets, and knowledge they felt NPS graduates will need to be successful after graduation.

The community shared hundreds of comments and ideas.

What follows is a summary of our work.

The comments and ideas for each area (skills, knowledge, mindsets) were categorized and ranked using a qualitative analysis process.

Skills Categories

Creativity, collaboration and problem solving	91
Life skills	30
Financial literacy	24
Reading, writing, speaking, listening	22

Thinking critically	22
Communicating	12
Researching	12
Technology skills	10
Civic engagement skills	10

Mindset Categories

Empathetic and accepting	41	**Strong work ethic**	18
Growth mindset/positive	38	**Creative and innovative**	15
Resilience/perseverance	24	**Community oriented**	14
Self advocate	20	**Wellness**	14
Open minded	19	**Passionate and happy**	11

Knowledge Categories

Personal Finance	40	**Work Force Ready**	18
Social Sciences	37	**Health and Wellness**	11
Global Understanding	23	**Environmental Science**	12
STEM	20	**Media Literacy**	10
Info and Data Analysis	18	**Executive Functioning**	10

Within each category, comments were reviewed.

Empathy Comments

Label	Value
empathy	9
compassion	3
kindness	2
empathetic listener	2
civil mindset due to the diversity of beliefs and values I may not agree with	1
helping other people out	1
thinking of others	1
anit-racist	1
honor and understand differences	1
destigmatize mental health and neurodiversity	1
respectful of others opinions	1
emapthy	1
accept diverse political opinions	1
emotional intelligence	1
helping others	1
caring about others' opinions	1
how to have conflicting ideas and debate	1
mindset that is loving, selfless and empathetic	1
accepting	1
patient	1
perspective taking	1
respect for all people	1
respectful	1
equity and access, understand diversity	1
teach others they can think differently	1
follow the Golden Rule	1
use empathy to find common ground	1
health, be careful about the health of others	1
help others	1

Resiliency Comments

Label	Value
perserverance	7
resiliency	4
resilience	2
coping with stress	1
reslience	1
resilient	1
able to overcome obstacles	1
accepting criticism	1
resilience and grit	1

Collaboration Comments (skills)

Label	Value
collaboration	7
conflict resolution	2
negotiation	1
how to learn collaboratively	1
teamwork	1
build relationships	1
methods used to accomplish common goals	1
ability to work with others	1
talking to each other	1
work collaboratively with a team	1
bridge builders	1
ability to relate and connect	1
finding commonality	1
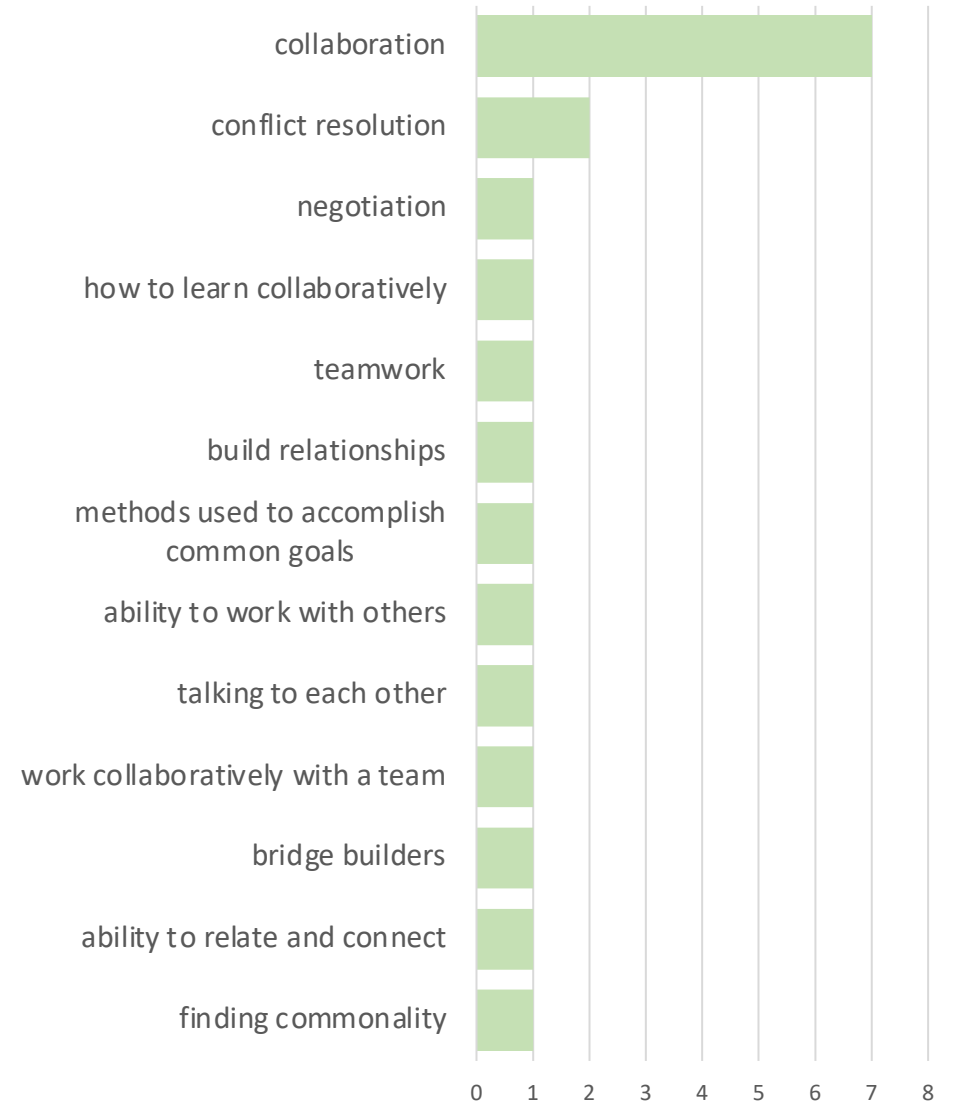
A Sampling of Comments

Global Learners… "graduates should be able to speak at least two languages"

Civic Engagement… "understanding data on gun violence and the political barriers to reducing given violence," "having the power to create change or be an agent of change," and "having the knowledge so that they can participate in decision making in a democracy"

Workforce Ready… "more options for alternative educational experiences" and "more certificate style programs offered to students as an alternative to 4-year college"

Science, Technology, Engineering, Math… "knowledge of scientific breakthroughs e.g., genetics" and "using coding and technology for career and activism"

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- "there are others that think, believe, look and act differently. These differences should be embraced"
- "we need the ability to question assumptions"

Health and Wellness

- "destigmatize addiction and mental illness,"
- "techniques to deal with stress and anxiety,"
- "know how to say no"

Lifelong Learners

- "teachers are not the ultimate source of knowledge"
- "choose your teacher wisely"

Comments were also analyzed for common ideas across the skills, mindsets, and knowledge categories.

_____

Overwhelmingly, participants recommended programming that allows our graduates to...

Develop physical, social, and emotional wellness skills

Become literate across the disciplines

Practice creation, innovation, collaboration and problem-solving

Engage civically

Prepare for life after graduation

Develop physical, social, and emotional wellness skills

Able to self advocate

Embraces a growth mindset and positive attitude

Empathetic and accepting

Resilient and persevering

Passionate and happy

Adaptable and flexible

Socially, physically and emotionally healthy

Become literate across all disciplines
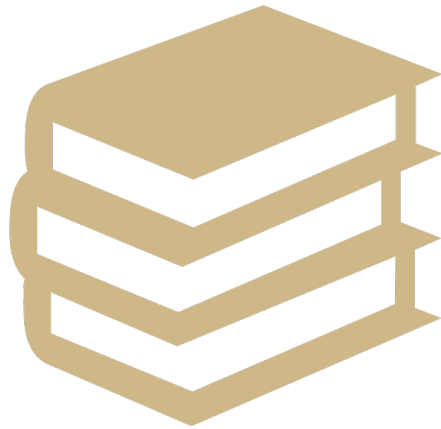
Passionate reader, writer, speaker and listener

Strong multi-media communicator

Engaged student of...literature, mathematics, science, social sciences, languages, and the arts

Curious and critical scholar

Practice creation, innovation, collaboration, and problem solving

Creator and innovator

Problem solver

Collaborator

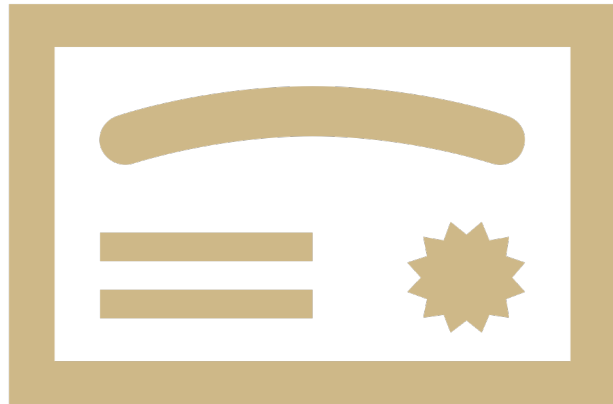Critical thinker

Effective researcher

Engage civically

Community oriented

Strong understanding of civics and how American government works

Aware of and connected to our global world

Environmentally engaged

Prepare for life after graduation

Lifelong learner

Motivated to set goals

Able to independently navigate the world to meet their goals

Strong work ethic and healthy work-life balance

Newburyport's Portrait of a Graduate

NPS Graduates Are...

- Physically, socially and emotionally well
- Literate across many disciplines
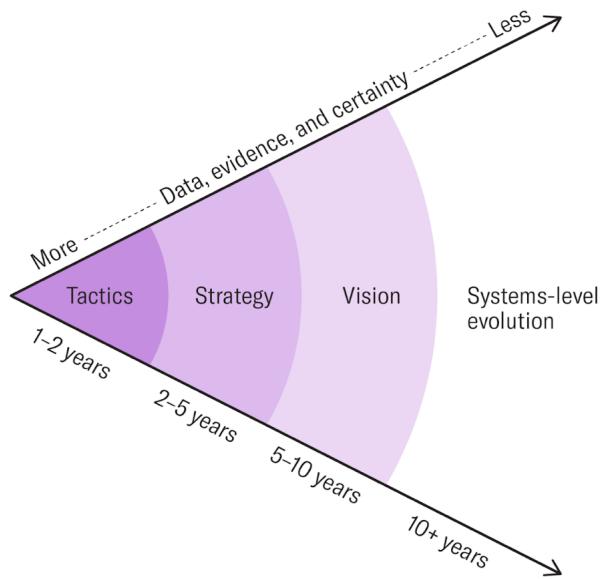- Creative, innovative, collaborative problem-solvers
- Civically engaged
- Prepared for life after graduation

NPS Planning for the Future

Source: Amy Webb, Future Today Institute

HBR

One Vision: Portrait of a Graduate

Seven Strategic Objectives: Reimagine

Continuous Tactical Cycles: District Goals, School Improvement Plans, Educator Goals

REIMAGINE
A COMMUNITY OF STAKEHOLDERS

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

UNION PARTNERSHIPS

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

Students, staff and families across the district are collaborating with Culture7 Consulting to ensure that a cultural competency framework guides our work. Through professional development programs for staff, community read projects (e.g. Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson), city group participation (e.g. Human Rights Commission, Commision for Diversity and Equity), and the establishment of parent-teacher groups (e.g. Middle School Parent-Teacher DEI Professional Learning Community), NPS has committed to the *ongoing work of creating a culture of belonging.*

Strong connections between district leaders and NPS school associations promote creative problem-solving and effective operations. With the success of students [...] school years, the NP[...] *together."*

Through partnership [...] Rotary Club, the Gu[...] Environmental Stew[...] *opportunities to c[...] and engage in civic [...]*

Whether through th[...] Special Education P[...] and guardians are e[...] supporting the distr[...] *parent community [...]*

REIMAGINE
ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN AND OPERATIONS

LATER START TIMES

IN-DISTRICT STUDENT SUPPORT

Operational and staffing patterns were reexamined to allow for implementation of *later start times at the Newburyport High School and Rupert A. Nock Middle School.* After many years of community-wide discussion and planning, later start times became a reality.

By reallocating resources, we expanded *in-district special education programming and invested in systems* to provide enhanced support and intervention for all students. Reading, math, and literacy positions were strategically expanded throughout the district. In consultation with experts, we are building specialized langu[...] across all grades.

Each year the superintendent and [...] examination of existing structures [...] student needs, budget requireme[...] goals guide recommendations for [...] school and district level.

We analyze staffing patterns, prog[...] that our budget is focused on hig[...] developing cost-effective educatio[...] support program growth, and eva[...] operational savings.

REIMAGINE
A CULTURE THAT CULTIVATES THE BEST IN ALL OF US

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The District Leadership Team and building principals/assistant principals meet regularly to share best practices, learn from each other and make connections across the grade levels. *Teacher leader teams* at each building help guide operational and educational decision-making. And our Student Voice programs support us in furthering our *goal of enhancing student influence* on district decision-making.

School Committee Student/Staff Recognition Program: Our School Committee has *celebrated student and staff good news* with a recognition program scheduled at the start of every school committee meeting.

[...] Media: Principals at all schools launche[...] the Bresnahan School started a Faceboo[...] ll develop a comprehensive plan for mo[...] channels.

[...] News: The Superintendent meets regul[...] Newburyport Daily News and The C[...] red several times on local radio and ca[...] Hub. Through partnerships with the NCl[...] ms have been broadcast to the greater[...]

[...] uperintendent has reallocated resource[...] or of Communications and Instructiona[...] alyzing our communication strategies, e[...] orating with families, staff, and student[...] *access to information.*

REIMAGINE
SUPPORTS SO ALL STUDENTS ARE READY AND ABLE TO LEARN

TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

The Edward G. Molin School became a *trauma-sensitive school.* Eighteen educators enrolled in Lesley University's trauma-sensitive certification program and thirteen are currently certified. Teachers use the BIMAS (Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System) regularly to identify students who may need additional social-emotional supports.

The Newburyport High School *partnered with the Positive Alternatives to Student Support (PASS) Program to offer an alternative to suspension.* This innovative intervention program connects young people to resources and supports to help them both academically and behaviorally. Through the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Programs, schools have used the *School Wide Information System (SWIS) to track and analyze disciplinary trends,* allowing PBIS teams to create effective [...] prevention and intervention plans.

[...]or and Intervention Systems (PBIS) in grades PK-8 allowed [...] build shared approaches to *creating safe, supportive, and [...] learning environments.*
[...] Bresnahan and Molin School have incorporated a [...] *classroom model* with daily morning meetings to build [...] d positively support classroom management.

[...]e growing needs of our students, the Superintendent [...] district level position to allow NPS to further *social-emotional [...] rams,* provide professional development to staff, and [...] *specific behavioral needs* of all our students.

REIMAGINE
TEACHING & LEARNING

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, & ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT

TEACHER LEADERSHIP

VISION FOR BILITERACY

LITERACY INSTRUCTION

In the winter of 2018, NPS launched a *multi-year process to develop skills-based curricula.* With a focus on engagement, skill development and data, this approach changes how our teachers design, deliver and assess instruction. To date, four cohorts of teachers have participated in workshops and teachers across the district have redesigned and reimagined *hundreds of new units of study.*

Investments were made to support *strong teacher leadership.* Curriculum Education Leaders (CEL) at the PK-8 level and Instructional Leaders (ILT) at the high school level are *facilitating professional learning communities* to guide the development cycle for curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

With investments in the budget, we are pleased to have added four world language teachers at the Nock Middle School, allowing us to move forward on our aspirational vision of *providing all students with a pathway toward biliteracy.*

Elementary educators worked with literacy consultants from Hill for Literacy, Crafting Minds, and Keys to Literacy. PK-5 teachers began implementing *new literacy screening assessments, monthly data workshops, interventions to support identified students,* and a new word study program.

REIMAGINE
SELF-DISCOVERY & PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

STUDENT VOICE

STUDENT ADVISORY PROGRAMS

WELLNESS PROGRAMS

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

A collective focus on student voice has created opportunities and structures for student input on policy, curriculum and school culture. Capacity for expanding civic engagement and dialogue has been built in partnership with Essential Partners, Anti Defamation League's World of Difference Program, and other civic education projects. Educators across the district participated in *Student Shadow days,* dialogues, and professional development to build a *student-focused culture.*

Faculty at Nock Middle and NHS have developed and implemented Advisory Programs, creating opportunities for every student to meet regularly with a trusted adult. These evolving programs include *individual goal setting, community building and academic coaching.*

With the support of Jacalyn Bennett and the Newburyport Education Foundation, NPS designed and built a combined *wellness-fitness center in the Nock/Molin School and a fitness center at NHS.* These innovative spaces allow us to reimagine our physical education curriculum and support the expansion of our social emotional programming.

Nock Middle school began a 1:1 Chromebook program in the fall of 2017. Since that time, students are *using technology to explore and create,* and educators are incorporating new technologies to bring their curricula to life. The pressing needs of the past school year forced us to rapidly innovate, and we continue to pursue our goal of using technology to provide students in all grades with *flexible, personalized learning opportunities.*

REIMAGINE
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESOURCES

DUAL ENROLLMENT

NEWBURYPORT EDUCATION FOUNDATION

SWASEY FOUNDATION

SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS

Through these programs, students can enroll in college courses at Endicott College, Southern New Hampshire University, and Northern Essex Community College as early as their sophomore year. This year over *30% of NHS students were enrolled* in AP or Dual Enrollment classes.

Generous support from the *Newburyport Education Foundation* allowed us to move forward with a number of *aspirational initiatives:* expanding PK-12 STEM Education (materials, machinery, NHS Tech Club, Sailbot), developing the Merrimack River Research Station, expanding place-based education programs, implementing a summer reading book project, supporting elementary literacy and instructional technology purchases, funding visual and performing arts festivals, and building the NHS Career Pathways Initiative.

With the generous support of the Swasey Foundation, *educators across the district participate in hundreds of courses, workshops, and conferences every year.* We are proud to be a community of educators dedicated to creating a culture of learning.

Enhancement of our PK-12 *social emotional resources* included the development of Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) programs, the expansion of Signs of Suicide and the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referal to Treatment (SBIRT) programs, the addition of counseling/social work staff at the Bresnahan and NHS, as well as the addition of wrap around services for youth (in partnership with Home For Little Wanderers and the Middlesex Partnership for Youth).

Ongoing Steps

Ensure our strategic and tactical work is guided by the Portrait of a Graduate Vision.