

December 4, 2023

Dear NSD Families and Staff,

The middle school project is about not only bricks and mortar but also excellence and equity in education for all middle schoolers.

I am writing to let you know the Middle School Steering Committee has been working since December 2022 looking into how we teach middle schoolers. One of the recommendations from the steering committee is to eliminate leveling or homogeneous grouping from [current policy](#). Research shows that putting students in groups, no matter how that placement is based, too often influences, or predetermines how the students will perform in class.

I support the recommendation of the Middle School Steering Committee, and we believe the change is long overdue. We are committed to making sure each middle school classroom is inclusive and each class has the same high expectations for all learners. We do not want a student to be overwhelmed or underwhelmed but to recognize their highest potential, excel in class, and demonstrate how they meet the standards set for proficiency.

After taking the time to delve into research, listen to colleagues' varying views on instructional strategies, and engage in numerous, healthy discussions on the topic, the steering committee recommends deleveling and embraces the practice of making sure each student, regardless of strengths and weaknesses, receives the additional support and resources to be successful in the classroom. Recommendations also include allowing grade 8 students to take advanced high school credit bearing courses toward their high school diploma.

Deleveling, high school credit for advanced courses, and other recommendations to policy IMBD will again be on the Board agenda for a second reading as part of its upcoming Monday, December 18 meeting. We anticipate the Board will be deciding that evening on the recommendations of the Middle School Steering Committee.

In the meantime, we recognize you may have questions about the recommendations. If so, please email middleschoolproject@nashua.edu and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools
