

PORTSMOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL NARRATIVE

These bullets summarize the narrative that was developed from the work of the Middle School Facilities Committee and faculty and staff of Portsmouth Middle School. The timeline was October 2003 to June 2004. The educational narrative is driven by the needs of the programs offered to grades six, seven, eight at Portsmouth Middle School.

- Teams of teachers and students are the heart of a Middle School.
- Each grade at the Middle School is organized into two teaming teams. A team has five teachers who work with approximately 100 students.
- Each team has a teacher who is a specialist in the adaptation of instruction to the learning needs of individual students.
- Teaching teams meet during the school day to plan instruction collaboratively and to discuss the progress of each student.
- Having a “team space” or area especially for the team and its teachers helps to build a community of learners.
- Team planning areas in each cluster of rooms are necessary for parent conferences and team planning.
- Flexibility in the classroom space, such as tables and chairs that can be moved easily depending on the activity is a necessary component.
- Each team cluster needs bathroom facilities, space for student storage (lockers or cubbies) and common space for team meetings.
- Adolescent development requires large spaces for movement and educational activities.
- Students try harder and achieve at a higher level if they feel their teacher is interested and supportive, and that they belong to a group of peers and adults that encourages them to succeed and provides help when it is needed [Turning Points 2000].
- Belonging within a supportive web of relationships motivates young adolescents to make the effort and to take the intellectual risks that produce high level learning [Turning Points 2000].
- Adolescents is a time of exploration, therefore, unified arts are critical at this age. These would include art, computer education, music, family and consumer science, international language, physical education, health, and technology education.
- The media center/library needs to be the focal point of the facility, so students, teachers and staff can have easy access to library programs and electronic networks that support the educational program.
- The very successful band/choral programs, with over half the student body participating, requires large spaces for instruction.
- An auditorium is needed to accommodate the entire student body and staff for assemblies, concerts, and drama productions.
- A gymnasium that supports the ever increasing athletic and physical education programs is required.
- A cafeteria must support adolescent development and their nutritional needs.
- Adequate space is required for the developmentally disabled and emotionally handicapped programs.
- Additional space requirements for: administration, guidance, nurse, school supply and custodial needs.