



THE SHELTON WAY

The Vision of a Graduate



Shelton Public Schools

THEORY OF ACTION

If...

we design a pathway for student learning and growth, and guide our students step-by-step, each at their own unique pace,

Then...

they will grow into capable adults, confident and well-prepared to adapt to and thrive in the rapidly changing global society.



THE PATH

The life span of a human is often described using metaphor. It's a ride, a river, it's a play in seven acts, or a collection of chapters reflecting the seasons of life.

Our work as educators is to nurture and prepare our students for the challenges and opportunities they will experience as adults. In Shelton we see this as a path of learning and growth.

Teaching and preparing youth to be successful adults is fundamental to being human. Since the advent of homo sapiens, the elders organize methods to teach the young how to survive and prosper. Whether it means how to hunt, gather food, cook, and build shelter or how to code, analyze data or solve complex problems, it is a foundational aspect of being fully human.

Some might expand on this and note that other species prepare their young, as well. The elder ospreys teach their offspring how to hunt for fish, the elder beavers teach their youth how to build a dam, etc.

But for humans it is more challenging. In addition to teaching children **how** to meet their various **basic needs** (i.e., Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*) we have language, systems of writing and mathematics ...as well as arts and science, history, and at times civic life. We seek meaning. We create meaning.

To paraphrase *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari, 2011, humankind has changed **more** profoundly in the last two-hundred and fifty years than

during the millennia that preceded our time. In this moment in history, traditions will not be enough for the work and responsibility of guiding our children into adulthood.

The Committee of Ten, convened at Harvard, in the late 1890s, formalized the high school curriculum most of us are familiar with, favoring the study of science over Greek and setting expectations. That was on the eve of the 20th Century. Then, the transformation from an agricultural to an industrial society was underway. Massive migration to U.S. cities, including black citizens in the former slave-based plantation economy and new arrivals from European and Asian nations was changing American society.

We are now at another paradigmatic shift. It is our duty to prepare our youth for a future that is unimaginable!

Finally, what does it mean to be human?

In a rapidly **changing** world characterized by artificial **intelligence** (or learning machines), **algorithmic** mining and manipulation of big data, and robotic labor sources, that is not merely a metaphysical riddle. It is a philosophical question, but in the spirit of philosopher John Dewey, we must prepare our students to **grapple** with this question as they become adults and the future leaders, scientists, business chiefs, educators, doctors and artists.

THE MILESTONES

It is one thing to speak about a pathway, the word curriculum refers to a runner's path, but it is another thing to design a pathway that our students, their families, and our teachers all mutually understand. This is especially true for the disengaged, or bored, student. They need to know that they are in fact on a path. And, that they have choices. Choices, which reflect their interests. Choices, which will have consequences.

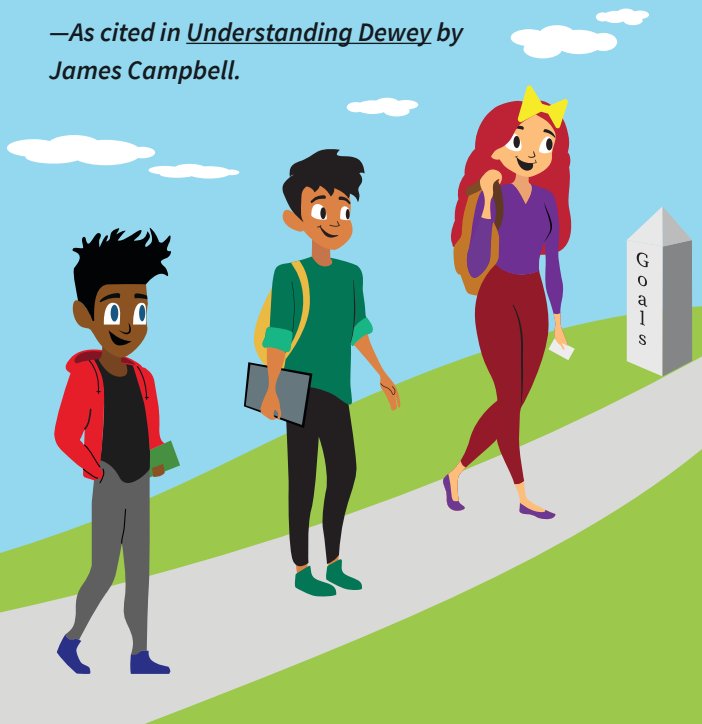
In order for the educators of the Shelton Public Schools to effectively teach, guide, and prepare our students, we have set up a series of milestones. These are defined points along the path of learning designed to provide opportunities for our students to demonstrate their abilities in areas we feel, based on extensive research, that are crucial to their preparation. Ranging from coding and keyboarding, to combining knowledge of history with presentation skills, to working as a competent team with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, it is our duty.

It is the duty of parents, teachers, community members, and the students themselves.

In a piece that is apt to this day, American philosopher and educator, John Dewey wrote that the surprise and delight one can find in life includes a sense of curiosity and inquiry as reflected in:

“[The] willingness to hold belief in suspense, ability to doubt until evidence is obtained; willingness to go where evidence points instead of putting first a personally preferred conclusion; ability to hold ideas in solution and use them as hypotheses to be tested instead of as dogmas to be asserted; and (possibly the most distinctive of all) enjoyment of new fields for inquiry and of new problems.”

—As cited in *Understanding Dewey* by James Campbell.





Principle #1

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Developing Solutions to complex issues by efficiently applying reason, persistency and original idea.

EXAMPLES OF MILESTONES

- By the end of grade 2, students will engage in the engineering design process by designing a bridge.
- By the end of grade 6, students will develop their critical thinking and problem solving abilities as measured by the math exemplar tasks outlined within the curriculum.

The School Community will:

- Give students time to develop and solve problems.
- Create open discussions for students to think critically and share their ideas.
- Create a safe environment.
- Provide opportunities to explore real life experiences.

Students will:

- Collect, assess and analyze relevant information.
- Reason effectively.
- Use systems thinking. (The ability to decipher factors in a system, analyze a problem, develop a system, structure, or strategy to address it).
- Make sound judgments and decisions.
- Identify, define and solve authentic problems and essential questions.
- Reflect critically on learning experiences, processes and solutions.



Principle #2

Creativity and Innovation

Embrace imagination as well as the process of change to shape the world.

EXAMPLES OF MILESTONES

- By the end of Grade 4, students will participate and complete a Connecticut Invention Convention project.
- By the end of Grade 11, students will complete a self-study project (i.e. Capstone) that includes a written and oral presentation component.

The School Community will:

- Provide structure in the curriculum and classroom environment for students to create.
- Encourage creativity through the use of student choice.
- Support students in making community connections to further their ideas.

Students will:

- Use a wide range of techniques to generate ideas.
- Evaluate, analyze and refine their own ideas.
- Demonstrate originality and inventiveness, while understanding real-world challenges to adopting new ideas.
- Understand that creativity and innovations are a long-term, cyclical process of small success and frequent mistakes.



Principle #3

Flexibility and Adaptability

Willingness to compromise and adjust to new situations.

EXAMPLES OF MILESTONES

- By the end of Grade 7, students will strengthen their keyboarding skills with 40 wpm.
- By the end of Grade 8, students will demonstrate their development of literacy to synthesize and report their findings clearly as measured in their personal narrative project.

The School Community will:

- Help students to develop the necessary skills to respond to uncertainty and change in their lives and the world around them.
- Provide students with effective feedback.
- Create opportunities for students to adapt to varied roles, jobs, responsibilities, schedules, and contexts.

Students will:

- Adapt to varied roles, jobs, responsibilities, schedules, and contexts.
- Work effectively in a climate of uncertainty and changing priorities.
- Give and receive feedback effectively.
- Deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism.
- Understand, negotiate and balance diverse views particularly in multi-cultural environments.



Principle #4

Initiative and Self-Direction

Assess & identify progressive action(s) to work independently with an inner passion.

EXAMPLES OF MILESTONES

- By the end of Grade 8, students will complete a college/ career experience that could include a college/university field trip, written summary experience, job shadow activity or a Naviance related career research.
- By the end of grade 11, students will complete a self-study project (i.e. capstone), related written components, & presentation (digital media, hands-on).

The School Community will:

- Allow opportunities for students to set their own learning goals.
- Create opportunities for students to demonstrate initiative and time management.

Students will:

- Set goals with criteria for success.
- Balance short-term (tactical) and long-term (strategic) goals.
- Utilize time and study skills to manage workload efficiently.
- Monitor, define, prioritize, and complete tasks without direct oversight.
- Go beyond basic mastery to explore and expand one's own learning and opportunities; self-directed learning.
- Demonstrate initiative to advance skill levels towards expertise.
- Demonstrate commitment to learning as a lifelong process.



Principle #5

Collaboration

Working with others efficiently to strategically produce or create.

EXAMPLES OF MILESTONES

- By the end of Grade 2, students will participate in a community project that allows them to work collaboratively with community members and complete a service activity.
- By the of grade 5, students will complete a performance-based learning task in which they will work collaboratively to produce a work product.

The School Community will:

- Provide opportunities for students to work as part of a group.
- Allow students to work with their peers to personalize their learning experiences.
- Provide opportunities for student to collaborate beyond their individual school (i.e. other communities, organizations, schools in other countries)

Students will:

- Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.
- Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.
- Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member.



Principle #6

Empathy

Ability to listen and understand others' perspectives, needs and culture.

EXAMPLES OF MILESTONES

- By the end of Grade 9, students will complete a personal narrative/autobiography that allows them to share their story.
- By the end of Grade 6, students will complete a study on how to prevent pollution in the Long Island Sound.

The School Community will:

- Explore social justice issues and provide students with experiences to participate in the democratic process.
- Provide opportunities for students to address school, community and global issues that may impact society.
- Through curriculum and experiences, support and encourage cultural understanding.

Students will:

- Understand others' perspectives and needs.
- Listen with an open mind to understand others' situations.
- Engage in actions to promote multi-cultural activities, community service and world citizen.
- Build relationships to encourage inclusion.

Plans are useless, but planning is everything.

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower

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Word of the Week - Career theme

PEOPLE:

Tom Minotti, Anne Gaydos, Darlisa Ritter

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Dan Ebert, Joan Tichy, Dina Marks, Lorraine Rossner

Think Tank: Courtney Dishian, Martha Parkins, Christine Purcell, Carrie Frederick, Mike Merati

RESOURCES

SUGGESTED LINKS:

EdLeader21:

<http://www.edleader21.com/>

Portrait of a Graduate:

<https://portraitofagrgraduate.org/>

Habits of Mind:

<http://www.habitsofmindinstitute.org/>

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Leading Modern Learning: A Blueprint For Vision Driven Schools

McTighe, J. and Curtis, G. (2015). Solution Tree

Schooling by Design: Mission, Action, Achievement

Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J. (2007)

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

The Leader's Guide to 21st Century Education: 7 Steps for Schools and Districts

by Ken Kay and Valerie Greenhill (2013) Pearson



APPENDIX A

Strategic Planning Committees

HUMANITIES

Making Connections across Disciplines

Co-Chairperson: Kristen Santilli and Jim Colandrea

S.T.E.A.M.

Including Refining our K-12 Scope & Sequence for Technology Skills.

Chairperson: Gavriela Ziu-Pires

CAREER PATHWAYS

True College & Career Readiness, with Emphasis on Mid-Range Achievers.

Chairperson: Dr. Beth Smith

INNOVATION

How we can meet the needs of our students in our rapidly changing world.

Chairperson: Ken Saranich

COMMUNITY

How we can serve and respond to our diverse community.

Chairperson: Kathy Riddle



OUR SCHOOLS

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Principles for a pathway to student learning and growth



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