

Educational Philosophy and Mission

The RSU 26 board considers itself and its employees primarily as advocates for the children educated in our district. The board recognizes that the thorough and efficient education of its children is its primary statutory-based responsibility. To this end, the Board considers proper and adequate support of schools to be a civic responsibility shared by all citizens.

The RSU 26 board recognizes that a central organizing goal is to promote student growth and achievement. Specifically, we identify three main community-derived values around student growth and achievement that should be used as touchstones to guide educational decisions:

- 1) We “meet our students where they are at, and then move them forward”, i.e.:
 - a) We will teach to support growth in each student so that each advances from the diverse achievement levels at which they arrive in our classrooms
 - b) We are primarily focused on ensuring that each student achieves the maximum potential growth in a year rather than how their achievement conforms to age or grade standards
- 2) We focus on the whole student, including their physical, social, creative, emotional and intellectual growth and achievement
- 3) We want students to have a lifelong growth mindset and to learn how to learn. To help achieve this, we will work with students to:
 - a) Identify individual strengths and opportunities
 - b) Challenge themselves and to get out of their comfort zone

The RSU 26 board believes that as the strategic leaders of the district, they are responsible for keeping the district focused on student growth and achievement. Working with the superintendent, and in consultation with the staff and community, they will regularly assess and set expectations around student growth and achievement in accordance with these values.

To facilitate this mission and these priorities, the RSU 26 board and superintendent will work together to:

- Continually develop an inspiring common vision for the future of our learning community and work together to achieve it.
- Ensure that technology is consistently used to increase and enhance student learning.
- Ensure that our facilities are designed & maintained to support our students’ learning.
- Provide our staff the resources and professional development needed to support student learning.

The RSU 26 Board recognizes the important role of professional staff as the body that is legally charged with the responsibility of providing education to all children in our schools. Jointly the superintendent, principals, and staff are charged to ensure that all children will learn and demonstrate achievement of proficiency in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, history, and technology consistent with Maine’s system of Learning Results and its Guiding Principles RSU 26 also greatly values the visual and performing arts and world languages and charges the superintendent, principals and staff to provide robust instructional programs in these areas and to work towards identifying appropriate learning standards in these areas. In keeping with our values of educating the whole person, the board charges jointly the superintendent,

principals and staff to ensure that children will receive instruction meeting national standards for Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Suicide Prevention.

The RSU 26 board believes that in order to achieve our goals and to implement this philosophy, all schools must secure the involvement of the community, students, staff, parents, and citizens. Educational responsibility must and will be shared with important community institutions. We strongly believe that our school system's success depends on good rapport and cooperation with our community and its institutions. The board will ensure that stakeholder inclusive, consultative processes are used wherever possible in decision making.

The Board fully accepts the responsibility of formulating policies and acquiring adequate funding to support the education process. The Board will always consider the welfare of students as the single most important factor in making decisions relative to educational policy.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA, §§ 1001(1-A); 4511(3)(A)

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