

The Salem Middle School Success Initiative

The Middle School Success Initiative is a community-wide effort to rethink the district's current middle school model and consider ways we can refine and improve our existing system. A task force made up of parents, educators and community members has been formed to work together over the next several months to:

- Review middle school strategies that have been successful in similar communities, including how they work and why
- Collect input from the Salem community on what works in Salem middle schools, what doesn't, and how we can improve
- Present their recommendations to the School Committee by March 2014

Why do we need the Middle School Success Initiative?

Salem middle schools currently suffer from slow student progress and declining enrollment. Current problems include:

- All three of our middle schools perform below the State average in grades 6 and 7 on MCAS
- Student performance varies widely across the three schools
- An increasing number of students are transferring out of our system after grade 5

Salem families need confidence that their students will receive a high quality education, no matter which school they attend. This is the primary goal of the Middle School Success Initiative.

How will the Middle School Success Initiative Task Force work?

The Task Force will meet regularly over the next several months to review research and community feedback, and to develop recommendations for improvements to Salem's middle schools. This will be done in collaboration with the National Center for Time and Learning, which is already working closely with teams at Collins and Bowditch to expand the school day beginning next year.

The mayor and the superintendent have agreed to consider all reasonable, affordable options for improvements. All recommendations will be developed by the Task Force and presented to the School Committee in March 2014 for initial implementation in September 2014.

How will the community be engaged in this process?

Community engagement, input and feedback will be critical to this process, so multiple opportunities have been created to enable widespread participation, including:

- All task force meetings are open to the public
- Focus groups for students, teachers, parents and principals will be held the week of November 18
- Community survey to be released week of November 25
- All written feedback and questions can be submitted to middleschoolsuccess@salemk12.org