

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY:

Enhancing Learning Opportunities for all Students in the Essex Junction Schools

4/3/08

What improvements are being made to the delivery of instruction for next year?

A schedule has been developed to support and enable the delivery of World Languages, technology, computer literacy, and health and wellness (also known as “21st- century skills”). This schedule will also:

- Ensure minimum daily 60-minute math blocks and 90-minute literacy (reading and writing) blocks
- Minimize the double-scheduling of students (i.e. instrumental music during math and literacy blocks)
- Give teacher teams the opportunity to share students to better meet their students’ needs
- Give time for teachers and classroom specialists to plan together to meet the variety of needs of all students
- Allow students to receive additional support as needed
- Establish a consistent daily routine for all students
- Maintain current practices, such “Morning Meeting” and all-school assemblies

Are there changes to the delivery of the arts?

Music and music lessons are extremely important to students, the community and the district. While some music lessons will continue to be offered during the school day, others will be offered immediately after school. Great care has been taken to ensure that the instrumental lessons schedule continues to cover the current variety of instruments being offered. The purpose of the new schedule is to ensure students are not being pulled from core instructional times. Under the current lessons schedule, students are required to either make-up work or miss essential learning opportunities. Students should not have to give up other essential learning opportunities in order to receive lessons.

The new schedule is also designed to expand art learning opportunity for students. It provides classroom teachers and art teachers the opportunity to plan together so art can be an integral part of the curriculum. This will allow art instruction to be more meaningful and relevant to the students’ learning experience and foster a greater understanding of the importance of art. The frequency in which students are exposed to the arts will actually increase beyond the designated art block. In addition to the art integration within the classroom, the All School Assemblies are also scheduled to take place on those days in which the Art teacher, Music teacher, and World Language teacher are available to participate. This will enable the assembly to have an art and culture focus, adding to the students’ exposure in these areas.

Why is it important to add World Language and Cultures at the K-5 grade levels?

In order to succeed in a global society, students will need as much exposure as possible to world languages and cultures. Research shows the earlier a student is exposed to world language, the greater the possibility is of retention and fluency of that language. Children in foreign language programs tend to demonstrate greater cognitive development, creativity, are more equipped to solve complex problems, and develop a greater openness to other cultures at a young age.

“We need to educate students for their future, not our past.”