

(Adapted from Breaking Ranks In The Middle, 2006)**Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment****Recommendation 19: Each school will identify a set of essential learnings - in literature and language, mathematics, social studies, science, and the arts- in which students demonstrate achievement in order to advance to the next level**

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Establish habits and standards of learning through extended conversations about the purpose of the school, so the school can develop rigorous standards against which student achievement can be assessed in multiple ways (e.g., testing, portfolios, projects)	The school is in the process of identifying or revising its vision and mission statements that delineate its perceived purpose relative to standards for student achievement	The school has a steering committee, curriculum council or similar group that regularly reviews standards for student achievement. The vision and mission statements have been recently review or revised	The school has a steering committee, curriculum council or similar group that regularly reviews standards for student achievement. The review is ongoing and systematic, includes high standards for all students and benchmarks for achievement	
Integrate discipline-specific staff into team structures to foster interdisciplinary planning and teaching that allows for the essential learnings to be taught across disciplines and through interdisciplinary projects	There are interdisciplinary units at each grade level that are co-operatively planned and coordinated	Interdisciplinary units at each grade level are co-operatively planned and coordinated. Exploratory subjects are included.	Thematic based integrated units are a significant part of the instructional sequence. These projects feature understanding of important concepts, development of essential skills and application to real-world problems	
Align coursework and standards with state and national standards	Standards and benchmarks exist in core areas of literature and language, mathematics, social studies and science	The standards and benchmarks are aligned with Connecticut curriculum frameworks (where they exist)	The standards and benchmarks are aligned with Connecticut curriculum frameworks (where they exist) Rubrics are used in all curriculum areas and students know what is expected of them.	
Work with elementary schools and high schools to establish a logical continuum of essential learnings (vertical alignment from kindergarten through high school graduation).				
Establish student-led conferences				
Define learning goals. Set clear expectations. Assess and revise goals as needed				
Provide professional development to help staff create and articulate essential learnings and measure achievement against those learnings.				

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Recommendation 20: Each school will present alternatives to tracking and ability grouping.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Use heterogeneous grouping at the school, grade, and class levels that includes ELL and special education populations.				
Consider looping of students and teachers.				
Consider use of multiage classes.				
Create interdisciplinary teams				
Provide time for remediation, enrichment, and support.				
Create a mechanism to combat parent misperceptions.				