

MAINE REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT #67

Chester, Lincoln, Mattawamkeag

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION, PK-4

The natural learning process that begins at home continues in the pre-kindergarten program* through Grade 4. In a safe, educationally challenging environment, students continue to explore and interact with their surroundings in order to expand and enhance knowledge, skills, and attitudes and to acquire a love of learning. This process is developmental; proceeds at an individual pace; and includes learning to take responsibility for the consequences of one's decisions. As students work individually and collaboratively, they are taught to respect themselves, other students, adults, and the environments in which they work and play.

Believing that all students can learn, educators provide a curriculum solidly based in language arts and mathematics, extended to and integrated with the sciences and humanities. This integrated curriculum provides the necessary foundation for subsequent learning, supports the students' search for meaning, broadens their understanding of the world, promotes problem-solving, and creates an awareness of current technologies. As facilitators of learning, educators provide stimulating, safe, and positive learning environments and employ varied instructional methods that encompass curricular expectations and student interests. Educators also provide students the freedom to express and discuss their ideas creatively and opportunities to develop thinking and problem-solving skills. To do so, educators and students need timely access to adequate, appropriate, and equitable resources; current information and technology; and the skills to utilize resources, information, and technology effectively.

Each learning day includes time for students to grow intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. This whole-person, student-centered approach continues as students are flexibly grouped for various learning activities. When appropriate, students are asked to demonstrate what they know and can do by completing meaningful tasks, reflecting on and taking pride in the results of their work, and applying new learning to subsequent experiences. Student accomplishments are recognized whenever and wherever they occur.

Educators, PK-4, consider effective communication between the home and the school an important part of a child's first years in education. Educators and parents/guardians endeavor to set high expectations for students and hold students accountable for their work. All stakeholders are encouraged to share learning; to visit classrooms; and to engage in creative, constructive conversation regarding all aspects of a student's educational experience. Such collaboration—coupled with periodic, consistent, system-wide assessment of individual students and curricula—is a vital part of maintaining quality educational opportunities for all.

*The M.R.S.U. #67 Program for Four Year Olds is an important part of the total school program for young children who are developing socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. The Program is aligned to the Maine Department of Education's *Early Childhood Early Learning Guidelines*: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/learning.doc>.