We’ve unified our district’s behavioral expectations message.

The Newark Central School District has embarked upon a new, unified approach to reinforcing behavioral expectations for the 2100 Pre-K through 12th grade students attending Newark Schools.

The various behavioral expectation acronym logos or mottos that have been the watchwords for students in each of the five schools for several years have been replaced with one unifying objective “Newark Pride.”

Translated, the expectation for all students is their behavior will be safe, responsible, respectful and will foster a sense of community in their schools.

The district team that devised the “Newark Pride” re-branding in recent months envisions the simple, cohesive message will resonate with NSCD students because everyone will be on the same page regardless of what school they currently attend and know exactly what is expected of them in terms of behavior.
Newark Superintendent Matt Cook explained the why of the logo continuity initiative in his August NCSD newsletter column.

“As we think about how to help every student, every day to become the best version of themselves, we need to take the whole child into account.

“Under a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), we will be looking to provide our students a high-quality academic program and the kinds of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) they need to be successful. You may recall that two years ago and last school year, we surveyed staff, students and families on a wide variety of topics. We took the feedback seriously and noticed a few data points that are driving our planning. First, the areas in which we placed most of our efforts seemed to show the most improvement. This is encouraging, as it indicates that when we focused on things like learning targets and ways to improve instruction, we made demonstrable gains in those areas. The area that remains the most problematic has to do with behaviors interfering with instruction. So that is why we will be focusing on social and emotional learning (SEL), restorative practices, cultural humility and PBIS as we move into the 2019-20 school year.

“A major part of this initiative will be ensuring that all five school buildings and all staff are using the same language in referencing behavioral expectations for students. We are launching Newark Pride” where we will be a safe, respectful, responsible community of learners. A goal is for this image, created by Newark High School art student Kylie Lewis this summer, to become synonymous with our efforts and the more families and places in our community that are willing to adopt this language and these expectations, the easier it will be for our students to benefit from the consistency.”
That’s where Laurie Palmisano, Assistant Principal at NMS and Kelley School as well as the new SEL Coordinator for the NCSD and Sandra Ordan, MTSS Coordinator for the district come in. They’re tasked with not only promoting awareness of the newly-aligned expectations, but have set up a system to insure they are being integrated into school life and followed, including by having a team of teachers, parents, counselors in each school who will be meeting each month to monitor data regarding their effectiveness.

The new logos and age-appropriate signs related to behavioral expectations are posted in each school building and application of them is being uniquely incorporated into classroom instruction and school assemblies.

One example.

Lincoln School Principal Stephanie Miller developed a creative video, with the help of NSCD Technology Integration Coach Aaron Sweet, involving the district mascots _Sparkle Bear, Red, the Dog and Foxy_ and Lincoln School Counselor Kris Anderson _that was presented at the Pre-K through second grade school’s first Farewell Friday assembly to acquaint students and staff with the new logo. See it here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxarVUAsos&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxarVUAsos&feature=youtu.be)

It’s also hoped the behavioral expectations initiative will be embraced throughout the entire Newark community including at such places where students gather like the Alex Eligh Community Center and the Newark Public Library.

“Introducing and reinforcing these aligned expectations is a huge team effort of the part of all district staff,” Palmisano said.

“Part of every building plan for excellence has aligned expectations,” Ordan said. “‘Newark Pride’ gives us the road map we need to follow so we are all going the same direction.”